



**TRUST FOR  
PUBLIC  
LAND™**

Connecting everyone to the outdoors™



## **E Lohe Mai I Nā Leo O Ka ‘Āina (Listen to the Many Voices of the Land)**

**Grass Roots Community Engagement Report  
Nā Pāka no Ka Lāhui – Parks for People Program Hawai‘i**

## Introduction:

With the support of many funders and partners, Trust for Public Land brought its national Parks for People Program to Hawai'i at the end of 2020, beginning with a pilot project at 'A'ala Park. Although challenged by COVID-19 pandemic gathering restrictions and peoples' reluctance to meet in-person in 2020-2021, Trust for Public Land partnered with community organizations, service providers, and public agencies working in and around the park, embarking on a year-long grass roots community engagement effort. This report summarizes those findings as Trust for Public Land transitions in 2022 to engaging the surrounding community in an interactive participatory design process for park improvements and programming and interim park activations. Mahalo to the many funders and partners who made this work possible as we listen to and lift community voices to transform the park into a welcoming, vibrant place for all!

## Funders

American Savings Bank  
Atherton Family Foundation  
Robert Emens Black Fund of the Hawai'i  
Community Foundation  
HawaiiUSA Federal Credit Union Foundation  
Island Insurance Foundation  
Howard Hughes

Finance Factors Foundation  
HEI Charitable Foundation  
City and County of Honolulu Grant-In-Aid  
Program  
Bank of Hawaii Foundation  
Central Pacific Bank Foundation  
First Hawaiian Bank Foundation

## Partners/Contributors

Sarah Amman  
Adult Friends for Youth  
Better Block Hawai'i  
Blue Zones  
Dr. Vanessa Buchthal  
Dr. Donna Camvel  
City & County of Honolulu Department of Parks  
& Recreation  
City & County of Honolulu Prosecutors Office  
City & County of Honolulu Office of Housing  
and Homelessness  
Family Promise of Hawai'i  
Fringe/Art Space  
Hawai'i Health and Harm Reduction Center  
Hawai'i Institute of Public Health  
Institute for Human Services  
Malia Kaia  
Kalihi Media  
Kalihi Palama Health Center

Kamehameha Schools Mural Club  
Ka Po'e Kaka'ako  
Kekaulike Courtyard  
Jenna Kilgren  
KVIBE  
K-Nard Narruhn  
O'ahu Intertribal Council  
Project Koa Yoga  
Project Vision Hawai'i  
Aura Reyes  
RYSE Hawai'i  
Soused Productions  
Saint Elizabeth's Episcopal Church  
State of Hawai'i, Department of Health  
Susanna Wessley  
We Are Oceania (WAO)  
Weed and Seed  
Ximena Healing

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# KA HO'OLAUNA – NĀ PĀKA NO KA LĀHUI (INTRODUCTION – PARKS FOR PEOPLE HAWAI'I)

Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

For over 45 years, we have partnered with communities across the country to protect the lands that people value and create the close-to-home parks, trails, and green space where families connect with nature. In Hawai'i, we have been connecting communities to the outdoors and to each other since 1979, protecting over 59,000 acres of park and natural land, working farms and ranches, coastlines, native forests, and important cultural landscapes across the state.

We protect land and create or improve parks where they are needed most. More than **80 percent** of Americans live, work, and play in cities. However, many city residents lack close-to-home access to nature and the outdoors. People in cities also experience tremendous social challenges—poverty, isolation, crime, pollution, inequity, and health disparities. Our holistic approach to community based park development and activation can help to address these issues from a unique perspective.

At Trust for Public Land, we believe that everyone should have access to a quality park, playground, trail, and other natural outdoor area within a 10-minute walk from home. Parks and nature are where we come together—to play and build strong, healthy bodies, to visit with neighbors, and to celebrate our traditions.

On the continent, Trust for Public Land has a rich history of partnering with cities and engaging communities in designing, building, activating, and stewarding innovative park projects in New York, San Francisco, Dallas, Denver, Seattle, Los Angeles, and many more. More than **8 million** people across the country already live within a 10-minute walk of a park or open space protected or activated by Trust for Public Land.

In Hawai'i, we are adapting our parks expertise to urban Honolulu and launching a pilot park project at **'A'ala Park** in Downtown–Chinatown to build a foundation for park and community success that can be replicated and used as a model for other park and public space projects. We are working with city and business leaders, neighborhood groups, and residents to create parks that communities need to improve their health, celebrate shared history, and strengthen social connections.

## **E Lanakila Kākou (Everybody wins)**

Trust for Public Land supports communities to build and revitalize parks that anchor neighborhoods. When children have the chance to learn from and play in nature, when neighborhoods have a safe community gathering spaces to enjoy the outdoors, and when neighbors of different backgrounds connect and build community bonds—**everybody wins**.

When undertaken strategically, parks creation, improvement, and activation can transform communities. By analyzing health, social, and environmental data, and listening to community-articulated priorities, we can support the creation of parks that will maximize benefits for residents. Our focus on equity actively engages schools, senior centers, low-income populations, and immigrant communities to ensure that we reach the whole community.

Study after study reveals that access to the outdoors and green space improves human health, happiness, and well-being, beyond the measurable benefits of reducing pollution, cooling air temperatures, and filtering stormwater. Research demonstrates that converting vacant lots to quality

green space reduces crime and increases trust among community members. By building, improving, and activating quality parks in underserved areas and partnering with local residents, we are investing not only in economic growth, but in community growth.

### **Ka Manawa Kūpono ma ‘A‘ala Pāka (The opportunity at ‘A‘ala Park)**

‘A‘ala Park is a 6.69-acre City-operated park in the heart of an exceptionally dense and underserved community. This urban ‘āina (land) is located in the ‘A‘ala ‘Ili (traditional smaller land division) of the Kou Ahupua‘a (traditional Hawaiian land division roughly from the mountains to the sea) of the Kona Moku (district) of O‘ahu, part of a historical breadbasket in present day ‘Iwilei, Honolulu Harbor, Sand Island, and Pearl Harbor. The area was famed for a complex of Hawaiian fishponds, intensive irrigation systems, agriculture, and wetlands.

The Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Association led the establishment of ‘A‘ala Park in 1900-1904 as part of an island wide playground movement and later turned the park over to the City. The park thrived as a political rallying place, a site for ethnic festivals (e.g., sumo wrestling) and community sports leagues (e.g., ethnic baseball leagues), and was a bustling hub of small business activity (shops, bakeries, laundries, theaters) and residences next to the City’s main train station where plantation workers gathered to organize the first labor unions in Hawai‘i. In the early 1990s, the City used the park as a “tent city” for the houseless, which was dismantled after well-publicized reports of a crime spree originating at the park. It is also considered a birthplace of modern skateboarding in Honolulu. Historical and social challenges continue to shape the park.

Today, over 18,000 people live within a ten-minute walk of the park. **Fifty-three (53) percent** of those households are low-income. The area is ethnically diverse, with over **fifty-five (55) percent** of residents speaking a first language other than English. The Downtown-Chinatown area lacks close to home, safe, welcoming public spaces for families to reconnect with nature, cultural resources, and other community members. The area also suffers from inequitable social, economic, environmental, and health issues such as poverty, houselessness, drug use, urban blight, disproportionately high rates of diabetes and pre-diabetes, and crime and public safety concerns— challenges that are likely to worsen as temperatures rise, and as urban heat island effects and severe storm events intensify.

Despite these challenges, ‘A‘ala Park is a beautiful park with a storied history reflective of Hawai‘i’s history and ethnic diversity. Community led park improvements, programming, and usage provide an opportunity to lift up community voices and empower residents to improve their health and quality of life, utilizing Trust for Public Land’s community-focused **Parks for People** strategies to facilitate an interactive community participatory design process and community driven park activation and

### **Park Statistics**

- 100 million+ people nationwide do not live within a 10-minute walk of a park or open space.
- 31% of Honolulu city and county residents do not have a close-to-home park.
- 18,000 residents live within a 10 minute walk of ‘A‘ala park.
- 53% of those residents are low income.
- 45% of those residents were born in another country.
- 55% of those residents speak a first language other than English.
- 38% of those residents are youth or seniors.

Source: Trust for Public Land, Parkscore <https://www.tpl.org/parkscore> and Parkserve <https://www.tpl.org/parkserve>.

programming. Surrounding residents and businesses will have the opportunity to come together to articulate a shared vision for the park that honors its past and looks toward a shared future.

## KE KĀLAI & KE KA‘AKĀLAI (OUR APPROACH & STRATEGY)

At Trust for Public Land, community is at the heart of everything we do. We believe that everyone deserves access to the benefits of nature and the outdoors. We understand that land and people are intimately connected. Often, the traditional approach to park development involves inconvenient public hearings that check regulatory boxes. Our work takes a different approach based on our experiences in similar settings. Working hand-in-hand with communities, we support the efforts of historically marginalized groups to access the outdoors by delivering park and green space solutions that lift up community voices and help to address wide-ranging challenges from a unique perspective.

In our community centered work at ‘A‘ala Park, Trust for Public Land is committed to incorporate a lens of health, equity, and climate, identifying all segments of the community and including them in the decision-making processes affecting their surroundings and environment. We take the time to listen to all voices: residents living within a 10-Minute Walk of ‘A‘ala Park, surrounding businesses, park users, people passing through or near the park, and the community at-large from keiki to kūpuna. The ‘A‘ala Park community is comprised of a diverse fabric of groups and people. We want all of them to feel

Photo Credit: John Bilderback



welcome, share their memories of this historical gem, facilitate community leadership of creating a vision for the future, and inspire others. We work with and alongside community, nurturing deep partnerships.

At the end of 2020 and in the midst of the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, Trust for Public Land launched our Parks for People program in Hawai'i, starting with a three-year pilot project at 'A'ala Park. In Year One (late 2020-2021), we sought to deeply engage the community that lives and works around 'A'ala Park. Our grass roots community engagement efforts were hindered and delayed by the pandemic, lockdown, meeting restrictions, peoples' reluctance to gather, COVID-19 variant surges, and Zoom/digital "meeting fatigue." However, we pivoted and partnered with public agencies, community organizations, and service providers to conduct "listening" sessions in and around the park, solicited survey responses (informally and via an intercept survey) of park users and surrounding community and business members, met with different community and business groups, interviewed focus groups in a partnership with American Savings Bank and the University of Hawai'i, and measured park usage using the System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC).

This report summarizes the grass roots community engagement results. These results will serve as the basis for Year Two (2022) activities that will focus on community based interactive participatory design – small and large group meetings, iterative community feedback sessions, and workshops/charettes. We will also focus on interim park activations informed by the grass roots community engagement completed thus far, and work with the City on deeper public/private partnerships. Year Three will include raising funding for potential community desired capital improvements in the park and working out a sustainable plan to continue community led activations, events, and programming. We hope to create a replicable model that can be used in other communities and with other parks and public spaces.

Together, we will improve community health and equity, enhance personal well-being and connections to the outdoors, and promote environmental and economic sustainability in and around 'A'ala Park and the Downtown-Chinatown area.

### **E Lohe Mai I Nā Leo O Ka 'Āina (Listen to the Many Voices of the Land)**

Throughout our grass roots community engagement, Trust for Public Land listened to many voices of the land – the voices of the past, the voices of current park users, residents, and businesses near the park, and the voices of keiki, kūpuna, and 'ohana – using several qualitative and quantitative methods. By deeply listening, we have learned from the community and will lift up their voices in the next community participatory design and interim activation phase.

**NĀNĀ PONO (QUALITATIVE):** Our qualitative community engagement efforts included researching the park's and the land's history, holding listening sessions and "talk stories" at community and business meetings, partnering with "Park Listeners" - community organizations and services providers working in and around the park, and interviewing focus groups in partnership with a University of Hawai'i public health researcher.

**NĀ HELU (QUANTITATIVE):** Our quantitative community engagement efforts included conducting an intercept survey of 412 people, completing informal community-based surveys, and deploying the System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) to measure park usage. The following sections summarize relevant data from these grass roots community engagement efforts with the full data/analysis attached as appendices.

# NĀNĀ PONO (QUALITATIVE) RESULTS

## Nā Leo Kūpuna (Voices of the Past/Historical Research)

In partnership with Dr. Donna Ann Camvel, a lecturer at the Windward Community College, we researched the history of the park and the land, including the Kalihi, Mokauea, Iwilei, 'A'ala, and Kou areas, as the kahua (foundation) of informing our community-driven approach. The Native Hawaiian methodology of Papakū Makawalu, "A cognitive and empirical process that uses a Hawaiian ancestral lens to study and understand the interconnectedness of everything in the natural world," was employed to determine place-based specificities and their associative connections to place, which required the use of 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, or Hawaiian language. This process of understanding Hawaiian mo'olelo (story) of pre-contact 'A'ala included research of historical maps, and review of articles from various nūpepa Hawai'i (Hawaiian language newspapers). This research has revealed that 'A'ala Park has a shared, rich, and unique cultural history worth honoring and celebrating.

## Nā Palapala'āina (Maps)

'A'ala itself is an 'Ili (subdivision) in the ahupua'a (land division) of Honolulu located in the moku (district) of Kona, on the island of O'ahu bounded today by Nu'uaniu Stream, and King, Liliha, and Beretania Streets. Early maps of the area show the 'āina of 'A'ala is bordered by the 'ili of Kō'iu'iu makai, Nini, Kamakela, Kauluwela, and Kō'iu'iu mauka, and is connected to the ahupua'a of Kapālama and Nu'uaniu. The falls of Waipuia and Waipuilani fed the streams of Mo'ole, Makuku, and Lulumahu, which joined Nu'uaniu stream as it made its way makai toward the sea. The streams of Waolani and Pauoa converged makai at the mouth of Nu'uaniu stream to flow into the Bay of Mā mala and its fisheries located at Kou (now Honolulu).

According to Kame'eleihiwa, "In the 1880s on O'ahu, 78% of all Ahupua'a, or valley land divisions, were so extremely well-watered that lo'i kalo, or wet land taro terraces, were constructed from the back of valleys down to shoreline."<sup>1</sup> This is indicative of the vast food producing capabilities of the area prior to Western contact and is depicted in maps detailing the Honolulu ahupua'a. The bountiful fisheries of Ka'akaukui, Koholaloa, and Mokauea, flowed into the fishponds of Pāhou'iki, Auiki, Ananoho, Kapālama (a fishery), Iwilei (an ancient fishpond), Kawa, referred to as, "The King's fish pond," and other smaller inland fishponds.<sup>2</sup> 'A'ala Park's approximate location appears to have been next to an ancient inland fishpond known as Kūwili (which has several meanings, including swirling - as to spin in a dance; to move restlessly; embrace; caress<sup>3</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa, *Food and Power in Hawai'i: Visions of Food Democracy* (UH Press, 2017 revision to chapter 3), p. 2 [http://www.avakonohiki.org/uploads/1/2/5/5/12550111/2017.kameeleihiwa.kaulanaoahuaainamomona.pt1.1-20\\_---reduced.pdf](http://www.avakonohiki.org/uploads/1/2/5/5/12550111/2017.kameeleihiwa.kaulanaoahuaainamomona.pt1.1-20_---reduced.pdf) ("Kame'eleihiwa").

<sup>2</sup> Peter T. Young, "The Reef," *Images of Old Hawai'i*, September 16, 2015 <http://imagesofoldhawaii.com/the-reef/> (accessed 3/12/21). "On the opposite side ('Ewa) of Nu'uaniu stream was a fishpond, identified as "Kawa" or the "King's fish pond." Iwilei at that time was a small, narrow peninsula, less populated than the Honolulu-side of Nu'uaniu stream. The new prison was on a marshy no-man's land almost completely cut off from the main island by two immense fishponds. The causeway road (initially called "Prison Road," later "Iwilei Street") split Kawa Pond into Kawa and Kūwili fishponds." <http://imagesofoldhawaii.com/the-reef/>.

<sup>3</sup> Pukui & Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary* (1986)





location of the park indicated by the arrow. This area is the 'ili of 'A'ala. Maps of the area evidence that the 'A'ala 'Ili, adjoining Māmala and Kou, was part of the productive food basket that fed the chiefs and maka'āinana (non-chiefly people) before and after contact with the West. Nu'uaniu, Pauoa and Kapālama streams fed lo'i, māla (dry gardens), the makai muliwai, and loko i'a (fishponds).

### Nā Mo'olelo (Stories & Names)

Hawaiian language stories and place names of the pre-contact era include the story of Māmala (the original name of Honolulu Harbor) a mo'o wahine (Hawaiian deity) who played Kōnane (similar to Chess), surfed the waves, and protected the bay with her shark husband 'Ouhu until she left him and he became the shark god of Waikīkī and Koko Head.<sup>5</sup> Other highlights include stories naming the area a gathering place for ancient ali'i (chiefs) to play Konāne and the significance of the area's rich agricultural wetlands. In the song "Na ka Pueo,"<sup>6</sup> the name of the bay Māmala is juxtaposed to mālama, to protect: Ma ka 'ilikai a'o Māmala, mālama iho ke aloha, on the surface [of the sea] of Māmala, protect the love.

The name "'A'ala" means "fragrant" and an early story of the area references a grove of sweet smelling hala trees.<sup>7</sup> Later interpretations have attributed the name to sweet smelling laundries of the area .



1817 map by Otto von Kotzebue (arrow shows approximate location of park). Park

<sup>5</sup> Ben Finney & James D. Houston, *Surfing: A History of the Ancient Hawaiian Sport* (1996), p. 39 ("Finny & Houston"); William Drake Westervelt, *Legends of Old Honolulu* (1916), pp. 15, 52-54 ("Westervelt").

<sup>6</sup> Samuel H. Elbert & Noelani Mahoe, *Na Mele O Hawai'i Nei* (1970); Curt Sanburn, "The Gathering Place," *Hana Hou Magazine*, Issue 21.5, 2018. <https://hanahou.com/21.5/the-gathering-place>.

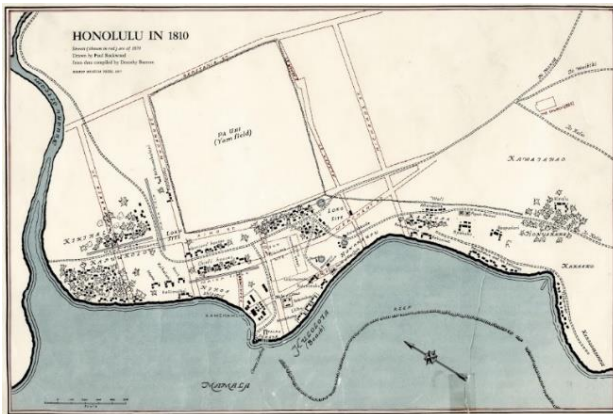
<sup>7</sup> Mary Kawena Pukui, Samuel H. Elbert, and Esther Mookini, *Place Names of Hawai'i Revised and Expanded Edition* (1974).

## Ka Mo‘o o ka Pāka – I ka wā mahope: Ho‘okūlanakauhale & Alahao

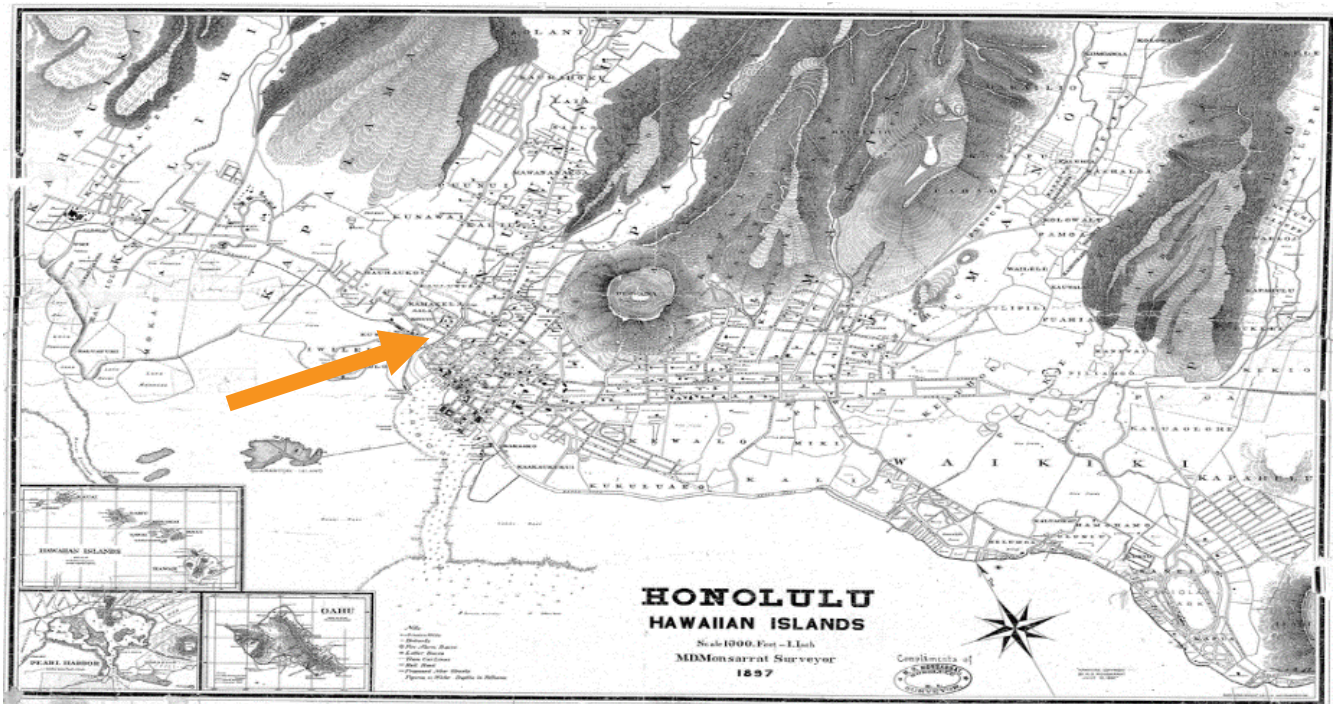
### Story of the Park – Post-contact: Urbanization & Railroads

#### Ho‘okūlanakauhale (Urbanization)

During the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, Kalihi, Mokauea, Iwilei, ‘A‘ala, and Kou, or Honolulu, were extensively developed and urbanized, rendering the topography nearly unrecognizable. Expansive dredging of the Honolulu Harbor and the filling of most fishponds, including Kawa and Kūwili, industrialized the area.



Reconstructed map of Honolulu in 1810 and Google overlay.<sup>8</sup>



1897 Map of Honolulu. Source: <http://www.avakonohiki.org/maps-kona.html> (arrow points to park location)

<sup>8</sup> Peter T. Young, *Reconstructed 1810 Honolulu Map*, Bishop Museum, Ho‘okuleana, LLC. <http://totakeresponsibility.blogspot.com/2012/03/honolulu-1810-map.html>

## Nā Alahao (Railroads)

O'ahu Rail and Land Company (OR&L), owned by Benjamin Dillingham and chartered on February 4, 1889, drove the industrialization of Iwilei. The historic OR&L Terminal remains today, located directly makai and across King Street of the park. "The property was first developed in 1889, with railroad tracks and a wooden, Queen Anne Style terminal building within the boundaries of the Kūwili Fishpond."<sup>9</sup> A historic building survey regarding the terminal stated:



O'ahu Rail & Land Company Terminal<sup>10</sup>

The OR&L Terminal parcel is situated directly opposite 'A'ala Park, just south of Kalihi Palama and just north of Chinatown. When OR&L Co. operations were at their height in the second and third decades of the twentieth century, the area around the OR&L Terminal was bustling, with the surrounding streets lined with shops and residences. Neighborhood residents benefitted from access to easy transportation, and shop owners' benefited from the steady influx of customers from outlying communities. It was customary for plantation workers from outlying areas of Oahu to ride the OR&L lines into Honolulu to do their shopping on Saturdays. Disembarking the railcars at the OR&L Terminal in Iwilei, it was a short walk across Nuuanu Stream to Chinatown. During the active OR&L Co. years, the 'A'ala neighborhood, Chinatown and downtown were shopping destinations for groceries, clothing or everyday items, in addition to souvenirs for military personnel. These neighborhoods were also recreation destinations, with movie theaters and restaurants for dates or family outings. The OR&L Co. Terminal was also a point where people transferred to streetcars for travel to destinations farther east, or take a train to the country for the day.<sup>10</sup>

The report described the area in detail:

'A'ala neighborhood was filled with shops and residences, and 'A'ala Street itself began almost directly in front of the building. 'A'ala was a natural meeting place. Honolulu Harbor was the port of entry for all immigrants. 'A'ala was also the gateway from Honolulu to Pearl Harbor and points Ewa. The OR&L (Oahu Railway and Land) train depot was located on King Street, just across Iwilei, so 'A'ala was the first thing people from the rural areas saw when they came to town on the train, and the last stop for late shopping before going home. The Dillingham-Liliha-King intersection was the primary route for vehicular traffic and the HRT (Honolulu Rapid Transit) streetcars and buses passed right there on King Street, and this was great for business...Minority groups tend to locate in ethnic enclaves just outside of areas occupied by the dominant mainstream where they often are not welcomed, and 'A'ala was a perfect low-rent area...So in the 1920s and 30s this place was alive and jumping, flourishing and exciting. The timing was

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<sup>9</sup> *Id.*, at 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*, at 13-14.

right and 'A'ala became the place to congregate, shop, share cultural values, exchange ideas and feel very comfortable in the process. 'A'ala Rengo was the shopping center with the best and the most for the Japanese and the salespeople treated their customers with class, just like in the old country. The 'A'ala Market had all the fresh produce one could wish for, as well as treats for the kids.<sup>11</sup>

## **Ka Mo'ō O Ke Pāka –Hānau 'Ia Ka Pāka 1970s: Pahuhopu, Rengō, & Hālāwai Hō'eu'eu Story of the Park – A Park is Born to 1970s: Homeruns, Rengō & Rallies**

### **'Ai Puni (Homeruns)**

In the 1890s, plans were laid for reclaiming this wetland section of Iwilei; and in 1898, the fill project began. By 1899, masonry work to contain the stream was completed and remaining areas were filled with sand and volcanic material. In 1900, the great plague fire of Chinatown displaced thousands of Chinese and Japanese residents and business owners. A few years later, the Free Kindergarten & Aid Association advocated for the completion of a park as part of a national park movement. Bounded on one side by Nu'uaniu Stream and by Chinatown - with its laundries, shops, slaughterhouses, rail yards, piers and tenements - on the other three sides, 'A'ala Park was born.



'A'ala Park circa early 1900's, (Saga, Scott), ©2020 Ho'okuleana LLC.

According to research by Wendie McAllaster and Don Hibbard in a presentation for the Historic Hawai'i Foundation, the park was a vibrant and actively used space:

The park featured a bandstand and two baseball diamonds and baseball became the park's defining image. Avid fans came out to watch their local teams - the Honolulu's, the Kamehameha's, the Punahou's, the Athlete's and the Maile Ilima's (the top five teams in 1902) - and weekends often found both fields full with simultaneous games...Until 1947, the train ran from Ka'ena Point into Honolulu, with the line ending directly across from 'A'ala Park. Jay Landis remembers, 'Every day the train would leave here, go down to Ka'ena Point, go to Kahuku, go to load up the sugar and pineapple in Waialua area, come around the point, stop in Makua to pick up cattle if they had cattle

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<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

and load up the sugar and go back to town.’ Chinatown and ‘A‘ala Park were the meeting place for urban and rural, land and sea, work and leisure, and cultures from all over the world.<sup>12</sup>

### Rengō (Merchant Cooperative)

The area around ‘A‘ala Park featured vibrant Japanese/Okinawan small businesses. The ‘A‘ala Rengō was a cooperative association of merchants who operated in and around Chinatown, River and Hotel streets, and the Waikīkī side of ‘A‘ala. Reporter Curt Sanburn noted in a story for Honolulu Magazine:

All around the park, two-story shops, hotels, theaters, dance halls, taxi stands and tenements sprouted to service the emerging urban hub. Enterprising Japanese and Chinese fish sellers and grocers established the open-air, harbor-oriented Aala Market in 1918, with thirty food stalls under its big double roof. On the same block of King Street, Japanese merchant families pooled resources and opened Aala Rengō (union), a sidewalk strip of dry goods and department stores geared to the domestic needs of the district’s then-predominant Japanese customers. On the other side of the park, along Beretania, a row of family-run hotels included the Saikaya, the Shinshuya, the Kobayashi, the Nakamura and the Yamashiro. As detailed in Michael M. Okihiro’s 2003 history, ‘A‘ala: The Story of a Japanese Community in Hawai‘i, these hostleries catered to mostly Japanese visitors, both local and foreign, at a cost of about \$1.25 per night.<sup>13</sup>



Merchants in Chinatown. ©2020 Ho‘okuleana LLC

Oral histories from the University of Hawai‘i recall the area around the park as a vibrant business area. Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto shared the following,

<sup>12</sup> Hawai‘iHistory.org, ‘A‘ala Park, 2021 Info Grafik, Inc.

<http://www.hawaiihistory.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=iq.page&PageID=550>

<sup>13</sup> Curt Sanburn, “The Gathering Place,” *Hana Hou Magazine*, ISSUE 21.5: OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2018, <https://hanahou.com/21.5/the-gathering-place>

To me, the 'A'ala Department Stores, as they were called in English, and 'A'ala Rengo (Hyakka-ten) in Japanese, was formed primarily as an advertising togetherness, rather than one conducting business because each business was separate. They did have, as I recall, a back-to-school sale and Christmas or nenmatsu sales. And at these times, they advertised---I don't recall newspaper advertising, but I do recall advertising on the radio because I used to accompany Mr. [Noboru] Hino when it was his turn to talk on the radio. And Mr. Hino, at that time, wrote words to a then popular song, "Oka wo Koete," because we were (across) the bridge, right across the bridge that covered Nu'uuanu Stream. He started (this) song, and you know I'm the worst singer but .... [JK sings] Bashi, hashi wo koete yuko yo 'A 'ala no ....

And that's all, I'm sorry that I can't remember but there was a whole song connected that was used in the advertising. Outside of that we used to have---the building itself was decorated by the 'A'ala Department Stores at Christmastime. There were strings of lights all over the building. That was a pretty big building to have lights on. The monkeypod trees in 'A'ala Park were [also] lighted. So people from the rural areas, or even people from Honolulu had an opportunity to have a stroll in the area and then shop. (On) those Christmas sale days, the hours were very long. The stores stayed open way past ten o'clock as I recall. And they opened at the same time which was somewhere about 7:30 [A.M.] or 8:00 [A.M.]<sup>14</sup>

The 'A'ala Rengo functioned like a cooperative or a union, and merchant members would advertise, conduct sales and promotions for their wares and goods. A song was composed, "Oka wo Koete," which located the merchants across the bridge that covered Nu'uuanu Stream.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto, Oral History Interview with Jane Komeiji, April 15, 1992 Nu'uuanu, O'ahu.

<sup>15</sup> Id.

### Hālāwai Hō‘eu‘eu (Rallies)

The park hosted concerts of diverse bands, sumo wrestling matches, lei vendors, and food stands with mochi, saimin, and more. There were parades with pā‘ū riders and kāhili bearers. Celebrations were held to honor historical moments and cultural figures such as Jose P. Rizal (a Filipino nationalist) and the inauguration of the Commonwealth of the Philippines. The park also was the site of labor union and political rallies. Below is an image of Japanese and Filipino sugar workers striking together and displaying a placard with Abraham Lincoln's image as a symbol of unity and equality at a mass meeting at ‘A‘ala Park in 1920.



Hawaii State Archives



## MALAMAIA NA HOOMANAO NO KA LA HANAU O WAKINEKONA



NA MOIWAHINE O NA MOKUPUNI MAI KA HEMA MAI—MISS MUNDON O OAHU; MRS. MORTON O MAUI; MISS WILHELMINA O HAWAII; MISS MAHOE O MOLOKAI, A ME MISS SILVA O KAUAI.



O KAMEHAMEHA ME KONA MAU KAUKAULIHI A ME KE AKUA K'I.

Other nūpepa Hawai'i (Hawaiian language newspaper) research noted the park hosting exciting events such as the first Kūkini Race from Honolulu to Hale'iwa (28 miles), a march celebrating Kamehameha I (pictured above), the Queen Lili'uokalani Keiki Hula Competition, and theatrical plays. The park also hosted community rallies protesting against federal redevelopment of the area, evictions, and government corruption. In 1961, when the photo below was taken, the City counted 39 families, consisting of 239 people, and 77 businesses on the 4.1-acre lot bounded by Beretania and King.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Spiffy, sporty changes coming to Aala Park, It's About Time, Star Bulletin (Nov. 27, 200) <http://archives.starbulletin.com/2000/11/27/news/story7.html>



Photo by Terry Luke, Star Bulletin (1961)



Source: <https://www.hawaiipeoplesfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/REMEMBERING-CHINATOWN.pdf>

## Ka Mo‘o O ke Pāka – Kēia Wā

### Story of the Park: Present Day

The park’s recent history has been mixed. In 1990, in an attempt to address the growing houseless population, the City erected a temporary “Tent City,” which was a source of controversy throughout its existence until it was removed in 1993 after a well-publicized night of “wilding” in the park involving a murder and crime spree.<sup>17</sup> The park’s reputation as a place where poor and houseless individuals gather has been memorialized in a popular song by Johnny Noble dating from the 1930s, and sung by modern musicians today, “Manuela Boy”:

#### Chorus:

A-Manuel a-boy, my dear boy  
You no more hila-hila (embarrassment or shame)  
No more five cent (penniless), no more house (homeless)  
You go ‘A‘ala Park a-hiamoe (sleep outside in ‘A‘ala Park)



Screen shot credit: APB Productions

‘A‘ala Park holds a central place in modern Honolulu skateboarding history. Skateboarding began in the 1970s in the park in a roller rink velodrome that preceded the current skate park. Skateboarders erected plywood on the rink fence and used that as a “wave” to skateboard radical tricks. Parks staff added a concrete lip around the rink to deter unauthorized additions, but the ever inventive skateboarders used the lip for lip slides and other moves. In the late 1990s, Mayor Jeremy Harris proposed new investments in skateparks, including at ‘A‘ala Park. A nearby skateboard shop APB Boardshop is named after the original crew that skateboarded at ‘A‘ala Park during this time. One of the co-founders of APB Boardshop helped to design and renovate the skate park. The current

skate park was completed in 2002.

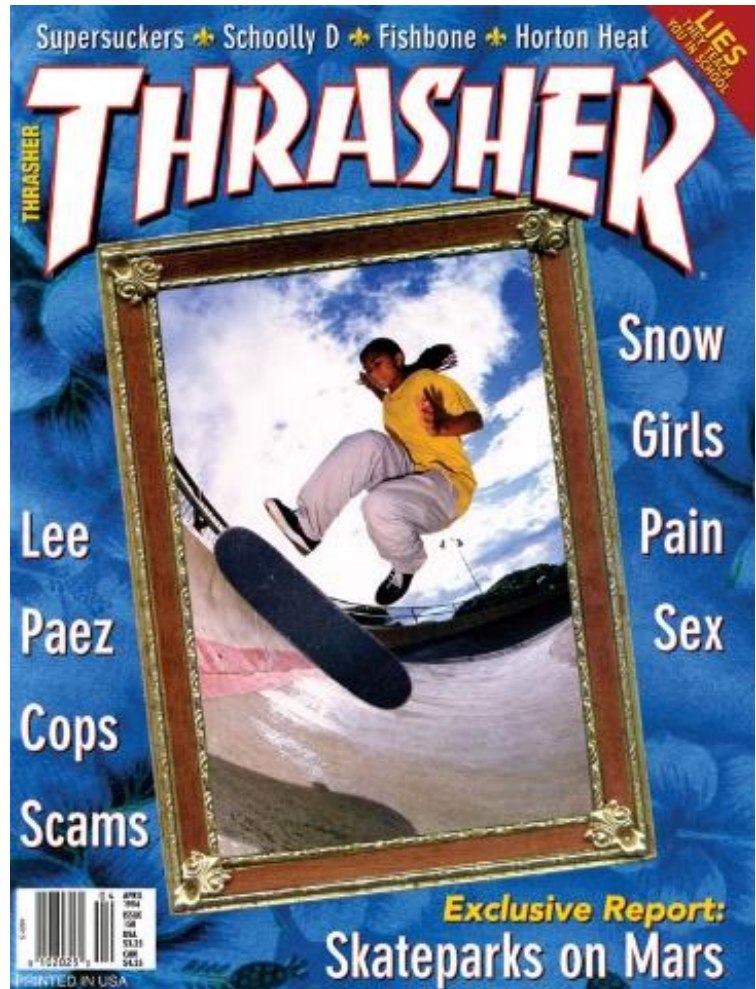
One of the few and first professional women skateboarders in the nation, Jamie Reyes, lived in the area near ‘A‘ala Park and was part of the early crew that first skateboarded in the park. She is one of three women to be featured on the cover of the national skateboarding magazine Thrasher and in the cover shot, appears to be skateboarding at ‘A‘ala Park.

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<sup>17</sup> Al Yamauchi, Honolulu Star Bulletin (1967)

In 2000, the City invested in major improvements in the park -- \$2.3 million which included the basketball court, softball field, parking lot, elevated grassy stage area, playground equipment and walkways. The City also began planning for a skate park that was eventually built and stands today.<sup>18</sup> More recently, in 2018, the City closed the park for two months and reopened it with a new off-leash dog park created with support from a public-private partnership between the City and a non-profit organization called the 'A'ala Dog Park Association. Additional improvements included grass fields and irrigation, a renovated comfort station, and renovated play court and playground.<sup>19</sup>

Current ownership of the park is divided between the State and the City. The State owns the 3.64 acre eastern section park located nearest to River Street (including the Skate Park), but has transferred the park to the jurisdiction of the City and County of Honolulu Parks Department via a Governor's Executive Order. The City owns the 3.05 acres at the apex of King and Beretania Streets.



Jamie Reyes, Thrasher cover, April 1994 photo: Starr

<sup>18</sup> Spiffy, party changes coming to Aala Park, It's About Time, Star Bulletin (Nov. 27, 200) [http://archives.starbulletin.com/2000/11/27/new\\_s/story7.html](http://archives.starbulletin.com/2000/11/27/new_s/story7.html)

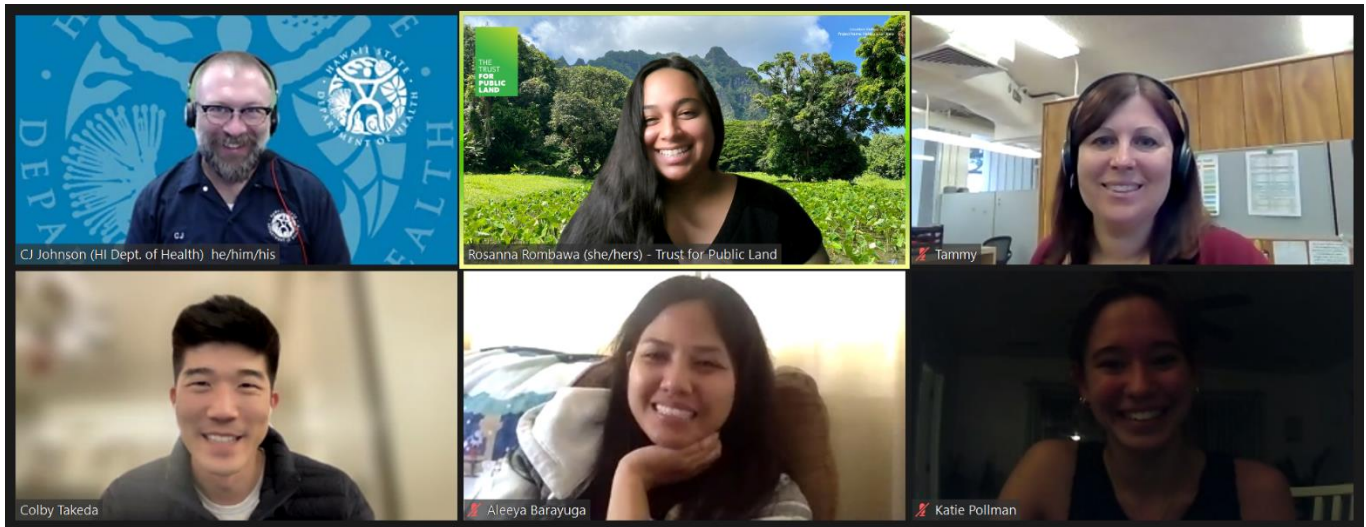
<sup>19</sup> New off-leash dog park opens at Aala Park, Star Advertiser, Nina Wu (March 11, 2019). <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2019/03/11/breaking-news/new-dog-park-is-now-open-at-aala-park/>

## Listening Sessions/"Talk Stories" & Ka Ho'olauna Lolouila (Virtual Visits)

Due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 thru early 2021, Trust for Public Land focused on organizing small in-person and virtual meetings with over thirty leaders across a broad range of sectors including local foundations, government agencies, businesses, social services, and nonprofits. We asked participants to share their experiences in the park and sought their input about the future of 'A'ala Park, and invited participation in future steering committee and stakeholder group opportunities. In many cases, these meetings led to referrals to individuals, organizations, community standing meetings, and other meetings. Organizations and leaders we met with included:

Age-Friendly Honolulu	Kids Hurt Too
Blue Zones	Kukui Children's Foundation & Center
Chambers Young Professionals Group	Kukui Gardens
Child & Family Services	Mediation Center of the Pacific
City and County of Honolulu, Department of Parks & Recreation (previous and current administration)	O'ahu Economic Development Board
City and County of Honolulu, Prosecutors Office	O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization
City and County of Honolulu, Office of Housing	Pacific Gateway Center
City Councilmember Radiant Cordero	PBR Planning
City Councilmember Carol Fukunaga	P.E.A.C.E.
Downtown-Chinatown Neighborhood Board	PHOCUSED
Farrington High School/Creative Digital Media	Polyline Urban Planning
Hawaii Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development	Project Vision
Hawaiian Community Assets	Punawai Rest Stop
Hawai'i Appleseed	Rotary Club of Honolulu members
Hawaii Community Foundation	State of Hawai'i, Department of Health, Chronic Disease & Health Promotion Division, Statewide Quickbuild Group, and Kūpuna 'A'ala Project
Hawaii Institute of Public Health (including additional meeting with Kūpuna Food Security Council)	State of Hawai'i, House Representative Daniel Holt
HawaiiUSA Federal Credit Union	State of Hawai'i, State Senator Karl Rhoads
Historic Hawai'i Foundation	The Fringe Art Space
HOME Project	Townscape
Hui Aloha members	We Are Oceania (WAO) (including additional meetings with Community Resources Team)
H3RC	UH Center on Aging
Interagency Council (IAC)	UH Mānoa Community Design School
Kalihi Interagency Group	Weed & Seed (Chinatown)
Ka Po'e Kaka'ako	

Mahalo to everyone for your time, consideration, and mana'o (thoughts)! We look forward to connecting with more community members as we move forward.



Trust for Public Land was also invited to participate in two community events where food was distributed to over 600 families in Chinatown and Kalihi in late 2020. TPL donated gift bags of essential COVID-19 PPE and snacks, and over 600 informational flyers about the 'A'ala Park pilot project. At nearly every virtual and event opportunity, TPL continued to share an informal online survey link and/or QR code to gather community input. We continue seeking more opportunities to share, present, and gather community feedback and welcome invitations to do so from all sectors.

These efforts also generated a list of over 300 potential partners, stakeholder groups, and/or steering committee members that we engaged or plan to engage. We organized our list as:

- Residents
- Health & Human Services
- Businesses
- NGOs
- Religious Organizations
- Community Groups
- Government
- Schools & Education

Stakeholder groups were ranked in order of priority based on distance to the park and current level of engagement with the park. We reached out to surrounding resident buildings soliciting feedback about park sentiments and suggested improvements through resident and resource coordinators, property managers, and association leaders. We offered to pay for newsletter ads, set up survey and collection boxes in common areas with CSA incentives from our 'āina-based partners, and present to their boards and/or residents. However, many building staff and residents had no extra capacity to facilitate contact with residents, gather feedback, or allow in-person meetings given the pressures of the COVID-19 global pandemic. We encountered challenges with some building staff living/working off-island or off-site, receiving no responses after multiple attempts to connect, and received many outright rejections letting us know these engagement methods were not options at the time due to internal COVID-19 policy restrictions.

Key takeaways from these primarily virtual meetings included:

- General consensus that the park had improved somewhat since recent improvements in 2018 and American Savings Bank's new headquarters being built across from the park, but continued concerns about safety, crime, drugs, and houseless in and around the park.
- Consensus that residents living near the park and park users should lead/guide the type of improvements and programming offered in the park: "The community should lead," stated one employee of HawaiiUSA Federal Credit Union.
- Concerns that, even if the park is improved, existing park staff cannot adequately manage and maintain the park and make it safe for all.
- Agreement that the park had an inspiring and diverse history that was not well known.
- Agreement that the park could be venue for community gatherings or other cultural or health/wellness activities to make the area more vibrant and welcoming.
- Consensus that parking was an issue – the lot is very small, and monopolized all day by people trying to avoid paying for parking.

In early 2021, many business stakeholders were also struggling under the weight of the pandemic and let us know they had no capacity to serve in an advisory role, stakeholder group, or steering committee for our efforts. As we began to share more opportunities for partnership with area community service providers (immigrant services, housing, health, youth, City/State), we realized the critical nature of their services to this neighborhood resulted in a lack of capacity to take on park listening projects unrelated to COVID-19 relief and vaccinations. As a result, Trust for Public Land shifted to working with community leaders and service providers that served underrepresented groups because they were actively present in the park and their community engagement objectives allowed us to gather input from stakeholders in the area. At Trust for Public Land, we understand the importance of responding in ways that keep community at the center of everything we do, and look forward to future opportunities in 2022 to build pilina (connection) while supporting community resilience in response to COVID-19.

## **Pāna'i Like – Lohe 'Āina, Hana, Mālama 'Ōpio, Ho'olauna Lolouila o 'A'ala Pāka Reciprocity – "Park Listeners," Activities, & Youth Engagement of 'A'ala Park Ka Lohe 'Āina ("Park Listeners")**

In response to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, Trust for Public Land partnered with other organizations providing services in and around the park as "Park Listeners" to help us listen to and record community sentiment about the park and its future while performing core social services. Initial meetings with Park Listeners indicated this largely low-income neighborhood was in the midst of a severe public health disaster. The top three community concerns according to outreach workers were COVID-19 positivity rates (vaccines were unavailable at this time), income loss, and an accompanying increase in food insecurity.<sup>20</sup> Community leaders in Kalihi were rising, mobilizing, and responding to immediate needs and providing disaster relief. Gatherings were still limited and local parks turned into hubs of relief and community responsiveness.<sup>21</sup>

By Spring 2021, we were fortunate to enlist community partners in the area to kick-off park listening sessions introducing our project to surrounding residents, businesses, and service providers to support

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/09/kalihi-has-the-worst-covid-19-outbreak-in-hawaii-heres-how-the-community-is-responding/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.tpl.org/parks-and-the-pandemic>.

building pilina (connections) in the community as COVID-19 restrictions eased. Partnering with community leaders already working in and around the park connected us to the community, established trust, and facilitated additional community relationships. Consistent physical presence in and around the park allowed us to engage the community deeply, to learn from the community about the needs at 'A'ala Park, and to build connections that may foster sustainable stewardship for future park improvements. Park Listeners engaged community members and park users through informal listening/talk story sessions, administering surveys, and sharing snacks, water, light meals, informational resources, and the mo'olelo of 'A'ala.

"Park Listeners" included organizations such as We Are Oceania (WAO), which provides critical resources to the Micronesian community in and around Kalihi. By working with WAO during its food and COVID-19 supply distributions, TPL built pilina (establish trust and relationships) with a partner who is already deeply embedded in the Kalihi area and responsive to Micronesian community needs. WAO had capacity to incorporate our ongoing engagement with their existing outreach efforts, a challenge that many providers cited as the reason for not being able to support our more traditional community engagement efforts.



We Are Oceania (WAO)





Photo credit: Ikaika Anderson

Park Listeners asked those who were willing, to share about their relationship to the park, what they loved about 'A'ala Park, and what improvements would create a safer, healing, and more welcoming space for all.

Other partners and volunteers in Park Listener efforts included Adult Friends for Youth, Papa Ola Lōkahi, Ximena Healing, UH Mānoa Women's Center, Child & Family Services, Sou'sed Productions, Project Koa Yoga, PAU Violence, The Fringe Art Space, Hawaii Community Bail Fund, Kimo's Catering Company, Aloha Lei Company, and even avid skaters from the skate park!

Park listening sessions often offered tailored engagement activities such as Native American arts and crafts, painting in the park, keiki coloring activities, "pizza Saturdays" for skate park users, shared stories with Sou'sed Productions (a Micronesian media company), health and wellness activations, a senior walk activity, and talk stories. All activities were led by Park Listener community partners, free of charge, and adjusted regularly to follow continually changing COVID guidelines.

Other Park Listeners included Ka Po'e o Kaka'ako (KPOK), an organization whose leaders have experienced houselessness, and P.E.A.C.E., an organization that provides outreach and community building services to Hawai'i's houseless. The O'ahu Intertribal Council (OIC), another Park Listener organization, led pandemic efforts to support the immediate needs of Native American and local residents, supplying light meals, water, and pandemic supplies in public parks. By partnering with and supporting community organizations like WAO, KPOK, P.E.A.C.E., and OIC in rising to meet the short-term needs of underserved communities affected by the pandemic, TPL was able to advance our community engagement efforts regarding 'A'ala Park. Groups like these, leading responsive grassroots pandemic relief, were able to incorporate TPL's community engagement efforts into their existing services.

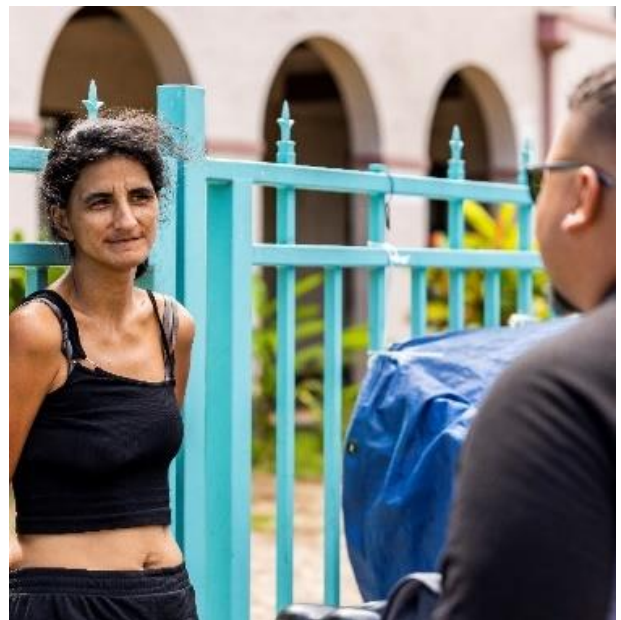


Photo credit: Ikaika Anderson



Photo credit: Ikaika Anderson

These collaborative community-driven efforts to build pilina (connection/trust) engaged 300 park users, facilitated donations of 100 free mini art kits and over 1000 meals donated to community groups, partners, and/or park users. Through our Park Listener partners, we are able to engage members of the houseless community, build trust, and promote positive engagement.

### Voices Collected By Park Listeners:

“These kinds of activities and this presence are so important for the community to feel welcome again. This park has always been about bringing different groups from the neighborhood together. Even my family from the Philippines know of this park by name. It’s a special place and we’ve lost sight of that.” – Mani P.

“A’ala Park presents an incredible missed opportunity to promote health and exercise in this neighborhood. I live around the corner but have to drive across town for equipment that lets me get a good workout in.” Quinn C. “I love this park and this place. People just don’t understand how much being unstable limits my ability to do other things or contribute outside of just surviving.” – Ria L.



Photo credit: Ikaika Anderson



Photo credit: Ikaika Anderson

## Ka Mālama 'Ōpio (Youth Engagement)

Based on the informal listening sessions and meetings and community surveys, a common theme emerged -- the importance of youth engagement. Youth are an important stakeholder group with a lifetime of park utilization ahead of them. They represent long-term opportunities for future stewardship of 'A'ala Park -- but how do youth from this community use the park now and how can we improve health outcomes for a group that is traditionally excluded from urban development processes?

Through our Park Listeners, we reached out to various youth organizations and classrooms for input and learned that youth struggling with houselessness, poverty, substance misuse, separated families, and/or sex trafficking survival are users of local parks (particularly 'A'ala Park). Community partners provided recommendations that we used to tailor our engagement activities for this group using safe, trauma-informed care, and best practices.

As a result, once we wrapped up in-park listening sessions due to the COVID-19 Delta variant surge and increased restrictions in late 2021, we enlisted Park Listeners to facilitate talk story sessions using culturally-relevant activities for six site visits. We visited Hale Kipa, Hale Lanipolua, Susannah Wesley, RYSE, and Farrington High School to engage students following staff recommendations.



Photo credit: Ikaika Anderson



Photo credit: Malia Kaio

Cultural arts classes included haku lei (lei making) and 'ohe kāpala (bamboo kapa printing) for at-risk youth service organizations to build pilina (connection, relationship) and learn more about this demographic's relationship to 'A'ala Park and promote the importance of 'āina (parks) to improved health outcomes. The youth were provided squares to paint, draw, and create designs using 'ohe kapala made for them. Squares were then sewn into a community quilt to be used for future activities at 'A'ala Park. This quilt and the paintings created both on-site and the park would have been displayed at the Oahu Intertribal Council's Honolulu Intertribal Powwow at Bishop Museum in 2021 and would have highlighted information about each partner, their projects, and information collected from the community from listening sessions. Each organization, participants, and their families would have received free tickets to Bishop Museum and a special meeting opportunity with World Wide Walls Hawai'i (formerly known as Pow!Wow! Hawai'i) co-founder Jasper Wong to view the display, visit the Honolulu Intertribal Powwow, and Museum. But all events in Hawai'i were cancelled due to

increased COVID-19 restrictions related to the Delta variant surge. Partners are now planning to display art during an exciting First Friday exhibit in Chinatown in early 2022.

Farrington High School students participated by producing coloring book pages based on historical research of 'A'ala Park. The coloring book will be used in future participatory planning events for elementary aged children at schools near 'A'ala Park.



Photo credit: Malia Kaio



Photo credits: Better Block Hawai'i & John Bilderback

Youth engagement continued through the end of 2021 with a Creative Placemaking opportunity for high school students of Kamehameha Schools Mural Club in partnership with Hawai'i State Department of Health, Better Block Hawai'i, and KVIBE. Students led the design and implementation of small scale mural art projects celebrating the cultural history near 'A'ala Park based on community feedback/vote. KVIBE prepared the site and painted solid colors on three bus shelters and four utility boxes next to 'A'ala Park. Creative Placemaking and authorized public street art build a sense of community, increase awareness/compassion among drivers, and draw attention to pedestrians increasing safety, enhancing safe pedestrian access to 'A'ala Park. This is a highly visible project that responds directly to the community input we have gathered requesting more cultural celebrations, art, and youth engagement in the area. Young people from the neighborhood will be invited to participate in future urban development related activations and stewardship opportunities.

**“Thank you Aunty Rose for letting us help the community. I feel calm.” – KVIBE**

**“Thank you Aunty for this experience and for feeding us” – KS Mural Club.**

**“Being able to help the community with art makes me so happy.” – Susannah Wesley**

## Focus Groups

In partnership with American Savings Bank and University of Hawai'i Associate Professor in Social and Behavioral Health Sciences Dr. Opal Vanessa Buchthal, focus groups and key individuals were interviewed. Dr. Buchthal completed 14 (30-90 minute) interviews in total – 7 focus groups, and seven one-on-one interviews by the time of this report, and more were in progress. The full report will be made available at a later date.

Focus groups included:

- St. Elizabeth's Church (Kalihi-Palama community) – majority Filipino and Asian parishioners (8 persons)
- St. Elizabeth's Church (Kalhi-Palama community) – majority Chuukese parishioners (7 persons)
- Service providers to houseless/stigmatized populations in Kalihi-Palama/Chinatown/Iwilei areas (8 persons)
- Middle-income Chinatown/Kalihi Palama condominium residents (9 persons)
- Chinatown community leaders (11 persons)
- American Savings Bank team members who work in the headquarters near 'A'ala Park (10 persons)
- Honolulu Prosecutor's office staff (4 persons)

Individual interviewees included:

- Ken Farm/Chair, Kalihi-Palama Neighborhood Board
- Amy Asselbayer/Director of Office of Economic Revitalization
- Eddie Flores/Long-term Chinatown business owner
- Wing Tek Lum/Long-term Chinatown business owner
- Karl Rhoads/State Senator for the district
- Laura Thielen/Director, City and County of Honolulu, Director of Department of Parks and Recreation
- Judy Lind/Kokua Center

Although Dr. Buchthal is scheduled to complete several additional individual interviews and one focus group, repeated themes have already emerged, including:

- **Social issues collide.** Stakeholders hold a wide range of views, but one area of commonality is that they see 'A'ala Park and Chinatown as being where Honolulu's most intransigent social issues collide: lack of affordable housing and inadequate access to mental health services, substance abuse treatment beds, re-entry services for folks coming out of the prisons, immigrant/refugee resettlement services, family support, etc.
- **It's not just the park.** Most stakeholders see the A'ala Park, College Walk, and River Street pedestrian areas as a single, common area that should be viewed as a unit. Assets, problems, and potential solutions are shared and spill across these spaces.
- **Safety.** Safety in/around the park was paramount for everyone interviewed. People feel that until this is addressed other changes are going to be difficult. This holds for the park in particular, but also for Chinatown and downtown sidewalks and public spaces. The park is viewed as an unsafe place for women and seniors at any time of day. What happens in the park at night impacts people's willingness to use the park during the day. The park's unsafe reputation has been passed down generationally -- people who grew up here described being

taught as children to regard 'A'ala Park and the College walk/River Street area as unsafe and "out of bounds."

- **American Savings Bank's positive impact.** People generally are aware of the bank's security in the park area, and overall felt that this supervision was instrumental in making the park safer and more usable. There is a perception that the bank's involvement in the park (exercise groups and events) has led to some positive changes in the park's atmosphere.
- **Dirty/unhygienic.** The park is perceived as "dirty." Parents discussed not wanting to let children play on in playground because they feel they need to police the area for syringes first. Adults reported a strong stench of urine in the playground during/after rains, suggesting that the play surface and equipment in the area are covered with dried human waste. Some adults reported that it was unsafe to sit on the grass or touch the grass in the park with bare hands or feet. Multiple people discussed seeing people openly urinating or defecating in and around the park.
- **Need for amenities and public outdoor spaces.** People perceive an urgent need for outdoor amenities and outdoor space in the area. The City/County of Honolulu's successive efforts to remove amenities (such as water fountains) in public spaces (in an effort to discourage the houseless) is perceived by many as having a negative impact on public spaces in the Chinatown and downtown pedestrian areas, making them uninviting/unusable for everyone -- impacting all stakeholders -- area residents, visitors, and local businesses, but particularly impacting seniors who live in the area. Specific things people wanted:
  - **Places to sit down, relax, and picnic --** not just in park, but also along College Walk, Sun Yat Sen Plaza, Fort Street Mall, and in other outdoor spaces in the Chinatown area. Again, older adults and seniors particularly missed the amenities (picnic tables, benches, water fountains, restrooms) that the City has removed.
  - **Clean, safe restroom facilities.** The unsafe condition of the comfort station was viewed as particularly critical for seniors and children to be able to socialize in or around the park.
  - **Parking.** Many noted that parking is a major barrier to using 'A'ala Park for youth sports, events -- any kind of activity that would attract the public. Parking is also viewed as a barrier for using the park for family picnics or get-togethers -- anything that involves transporting coolers, pop-up tents, folding tables, etc.
  - **Games.** Chinatown residents wanted seniors to be able to sit outside and engage safely in card games, checkers/chess, and other table games at picnic tables along the Nu'uaniu stream area. It should be noted that historically, this was a regular activity for men and seniors in public spaces around Chinatown and in 'A'ala Park. While there are concerns about gambling associated with these games, this is also a culturally-valued activity. Playing cards, mah-jong, chess/checkers, etc in parks/outdoor spaces is a very common form of socialization in both China and the Phillipines.
- **Park oversight, management, and activation.** There was a strong recognition that more people (and more diverse groups of people) need to be brought into these spaces overall, and that the park itself needs supervision and oversight on a daily basis, in order for conditions to change. Things that multiple groups/stakeholders suggested:
  - **Cultural events.** Partner with community organizations to use the park for cultural events that link 'A'ala Park, College Walk and Chinatown areas together. Things that were suggested were cultural food festivals, music concerts, sports competitions, New Year's and other events that celebrate the heritage of the diverse cultural communities in the area.

- **Tourism.** Work with the tourism industry and community to develop curated, culturally-informed experience of Hawai'i's historic Chinatown/'A'ala Park/College Walk area, like walking tours of the area highlighting the history of the neighborhood and specific features, and guidance to outdoor spaces, activities, and shops/restaurants. The idea was to use tourists to help increase the number of pedestrians on the street and in the park, building a vibrant street scene.
- **Skate Park.** Build on the skate park's strengths, which is viewed as one of the park's unique assets. It was suggested that the skate park be more actively promoted within the larger community, perhaps with neighborhood youth organizations, residents, and visitors. One suggestion from a local family was that neighborhood skate shops be encouraged to provide equipment rentals or skateboard loans, which could support usage among both local kids and serve visitors, which would boost foot traffic in/around the park. Other suggestions were to use the park for skate clinics, learn-to-skateboard classes, skate-themed parties, and exhibitions or competitions.
- **Fatigue.** Chinatown stakeholders express fatigue -- that there have been multiple studies and proposed initiatives to address the issues in the area that always seem to peter out, and they are concerned that this is just one more half-hearted gesture. (E.g., see: [2011 Chinatown Riverwalk Revitalization & Downtown Connectivity Study](#); [2016 Chinatown Action Plan](#); [2020 Downtown Neighborhood Transit Oriented Development Plan](#)).

## **Ka Pāna'i Like – Nā Po'omana'o, Nā Pilikia, a me Nā Ha'awina**

### **Reciprocity – Emerging themes, challenges, & lessons learned**

#### **Nā Po'omana'o (Emerging Themes)**

**Ka Wai (Water)** – Clear themes from stakeholders who use the park emerged immediately, such as the lack of drinking water and safe restrooms. “When you're exercising, skating, or walking around the neighborhood there's no place to drink water,” said one park user. This simple and immediate concern was repeatedly echoed by others. For example, while water fountains in the park are not working, bathrooms are also regularly closed or feel too unsafe to use on the rare occasion they are open. Access to water and consistent access to safe clean bathrooms were top community priorities in creating a safer, healing, and more welcoming space for all.

Trust for Public Land's staff also met with a health provider and walked from Kukui Cafe, down River Street, and through Chinatown, to solicit feedback and observe the incredibly challenging work service providers perform in the area. We learned about the various providers, outreach districts, and case management services. This service provider identified the need for water fountains and safe access to restrooms. The service provider also lamented the lack of affordable and easily accessible food stands in the area: “For those who cannot afford to purchase full meals but can afford small manapua man type snacks, they would still be contributing to the local business economy in a small way and can have the need for food met without being turned away by business owners here who understandably prefer customers that can afford a full meal.”

**Nā Mēheuheu & Nā Hana No'eau (Culture & Arts)** – Cultural celebrations and arts events continued to be suggestions for programmatic activation. There was consistent community member excitement learning about the area's mo'olelo or reminiscing about the park's history, and a palatable desire to celebrate the special history of the 'A'ala neighborhood. We heard from one excited resident, “There could be



Chinese, Vietnamese, and Filipino festivals to celebrate all the different ethnic groups and the many different religions in the neighborhood. We could even rent out sections with plots to grow gardens, parcels for artists in Chinatown to sell their art, and have the place across the street become a community center that teaches the history to tourists and local families with a gift shop and maps of things to try in Kalihi/Iwilei/Chinatown. We could really promote education by celebrating our past and cultural identity here in ‘A‘ala.”

One kūpuna shared that she would enjoy, “concession stands for eat and a place for kūpuna to sit and talk stories...We can have a Hawaiian garden with Hawaiian flowers where we sit down and admire the scenery...At our age we just like to sit, talk, eat, and maybe listen to music.” Where she grew up (across the street from ‘A‘ala Park), “there were a lot of Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Hawaiian folks and we all get together in my days with no discrimination. All the houses were all close together and we were all friends...There was no hatred...It was really good.”

Another park user shared hope, “There’s so much that can happen with community art because there are so many artistic people in the area. You could do anything from murals, painting, temporary art structures made from wood and decorated by community members, poetry workshops, to even putting on plays. It’s really unlimited.”

**Nā Hō‘ike & Nā Hana Ho‘o ‘eleu (Events & Activations)** – People in the park also expressed deep appreciation for all of the activities offered, the resources provided, and learning about organizations invested in community resilience. We learned that people in general are interested in and excited about the possibility for improvements to the area and activation events and programs in the park. Other themes included concerns, praise, and recommendations. Park users expressed concern about overdevelopment and development in the park of any kind. They also expressed having trust in Trust for Public Land and commended American Savings Bank, although some users have expressed concern and suspicions regarding business interests and development of the park (e.g., that development of the park will push out neighborhood park users in favor of higher end activities/programs). There were also mixed and/or opposing solutions to address concerns related to houselessness in the area such as evictions or sweeps and/or direct inclusion in traditionally exclusive urban planning spaces.

**Nā po‘e o ‘A‘ala Pāka (Support current park users)** – Skate park users share a unique culture and variable desire for engagement. The skate park community largely kept to themselves as an affinity group of hobbyists focused on skating who did not use other parts of the park with the exception of the parking lot. When asked what could be done to make ‘A‘ala Park a safer, healing, and more welcoming space for all, one avid skater replied, “Do events and clean up the park...we just come here to skate.” The few who shared opinions were most concerned with non-park users taking up stalls in the parking lot and a lack of water fountains and usable restrooms. On a positive note, an informal group of families regularly gathers with their kids to skate each weekend. This group organized their own ‘pizza Saturdays’ and keiki coloring activities during our listening engagement efforts. In short, there is great potential to support more community-led skate park activations and events that benefit and improve health outcomes for families across the island.



Photo credit: John Bilderback

### **Nā A‘a (Challenges)**

**Nā Lua (Restrooms)** –The restrooms were frequently identified as a challenge. Over and over again, we heard that park users did not consider the public restrooms as a safe option to relieve themselves. The restrooms are often closed for repairs and inaccessible to the public. The restrooms are dark and have no natural light, air, or light fixtures. Like many City park restrooms across the island, this very old restroom “is dark, has a concrete slab for flooring instead of nice tiling, no fresh coat of paint, and no fresh scents of lemon or orange,” as one grandparent explained as the reason he does not take his grandchild into the restroom. “It’s just not nice,” he shrugged. While this is common in many parks, the infrastructure issues and the stigma and other challenges associated with impoverished groups living near the park, and the visible drug use in and around the restrooms, make the restrooms an unsafe and unwelcoming place.

One caregiver shared about how she and her elderly mother were running errands and drove to ‘A‘ala Park only to find the restrooms closed. But most people shared how the restrooms feel unsafe to enter and are intimidated by people using the restrooms for illegal or dangerous purposes. One young woman living unsheltered near the park shared how she refused to use the restrooms after discovering a friend who died by suicide in the restrooms. Park staff also reported that the restrooms must be shut down regularly due to vandalism. Park staff assumed the vandals were houseless individuals removing or vandalizing pipes and toilets. Other houseless individuals and groups serving houseless communities assumed that the City park staff were removing restroom fixtures themselves to

avoid maintaining the restrooms. One woman who regularly skates at the park suggested posting security guards at the restrooms because she believed it would help address any drug use happening there.

A staff member of a non-profit that supports community relationship building between housed and unhoused populations on O‘ahu through initiatives like ‘Bathroom Brigades’ shared how her organization was able to enlist one woman to keep the restrooms clean if the organization donated the needed cleaning supplies to her. She said, “the woman lost hope and left to another park because of being ‘swept’ too many times and having her cleaning supplies confiscated.” However, she excitedly then shared more information about successful models on the mainland regarding innovative partnerships with parks and social service organizations: [How and Atlanta Park is Connecting People to Housing Through Place Based Social Services Provision.](#)

**\*\*\*Trigger Warning – Trauma survivors may find some content in the section below triggering.**

**Ka Hei (Substance Misuse)** – The one major concern that was consistently accompanied with less excitement and even a sense of hopelessness was articulated by one park user this way: “Drugs are a big issue here, there’s a big supply because there’s a big demand. All kinds of people [buy drugs]. Not just the obvious ones you see on the street using in the open because they’ve given up on life. Most people have an awareness of this including law enforcement. But it just seems like an accepted thing as long as each group sticks to their one spot with not a lot that can be done. That’s [drugs] really all anyone thinks of when they think of ‘A‘ala Park.”

Those who know of ‘A‘ala Park, but are not living in or who are not from the area, share these concerns. Virtual listening session participants identified drug use as the top barrier to visiting ‘A‘ala Park. This was especially true for parents, with the exception of those with children who enjoy the skate park. Individuals misusing substances were visible on various occasions during park listener engagements and largely kept to themselves. However, there was one unfortunate disturbance by a drug user during art mural installations by the Kamehameha High School Mural Club around the park – a man who appeared to be under the influence of drugs yelled at the adult chaperones, kicked a female adult chaperone, and then ran away. Although the chaperone reported the incident to the police, there was no follow up. Later, the man showed up again, police were called again, but there was no response. Luckily, the female adult chaperone did not suffer any major injuries.

Young people from underserved communities such as this are also more vulnerable to negative influences that occur in parks, particularly with respect to illicit substances. For example, Hale Lanipolua serves underage survivors of sex trafficking and stopped taking youth to nearby parks because traffickers were waiting to re-recruit victims there. One girl stated that “‘A‘ala Park was where I came the first time I ran away,” and where she “tried crack for the first time.” Other Mayor Wright residents remember seeing teens smoking crack at ‘A‘ala Park as a kid growing up. Youth participants in these programs who had never heard of ‘A‘ala Park were fascinated by the history, enjoyed learning about parks, and were not only proud to share their art, but proud to be considered by the community in planning opportunities. One youth even said, “We’re the throw away kids. We’re dispensable. But you guys came here treating us like we’re special or like our voice could make a difference.” One young man in transitional shelter expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate in his main passion of painting because it helped him cope with the diagnosis of his schizophrenia

These moments highlighted the need for continued deep community engagement and partnership in order to produce the longest sustaining and meaningful results. Individuals living with substance misuse are impacted by parks in many unseen ways. These issues are often compounded and exacerbated by other stigmas across social strata in parks around the state and country. At Trust for Public Land, we are committed to equity and understand the power of parks to transform communities for generations to come.

### Nā Ha‘awina (Lessons Learned)

**Ka ‘Ōpū Weuweu (Humble Homes).** One of the biggest lessons learned was about the wide spectrum of housing insecure individuals. We learned about houseless community members cycling in and around just about every park on the island and across the state. According to the National Coalition for Homelessness, there are three general categories of homelessness -- chronic homelessness, transitional homelessness, and episodic homelessness -- each with their own definitions and demographics. There is also general consensus around the leading causes of homelessness across the country such as a lack of affordable housing and poverty <https://nationalhomeless.org/about-homelessness/>. For example, in Hawai‘i, the 2021 hourly wage needed to afford a two-bedroom apartment is \$37.69, but the minimum wage is \$10.10, which is still higher than the national average of \$7.30 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/203384/us-two-bedroom-housing-wage-by-state/>. Other major factors that contribute to homelessness include lack of economic opportunities, a decline in available public assistance, a lack of affordable health care, domestic violence, and mental illness <https://nationalhomeless.org/about-homelessness/>.



Photo credit: Ikaika Anderson

One business owner who walks his dogs in the park explained it this way: “As far as improvements to this area, I think one place we could start given the folks around here are helping people who are living with undiagnosed and untreated mental illness.” He believed many of the houseless individuals nearby to be of different categories such as chronically homeless individuals living with mental illness and/or addiction. He believed dual diagnosis individuals such as these have the highest patient acuity and are the most challenging population to address. For example, one young twenty-two year old woman lived with her family and worked as a manager of a clothing store near Keeaumoku before she started hearing voices. The undiagnosed and untreated mental health related issues destabilized her entire living situation until she found herself living on the streets near ‘A‘ala, using illicit substances like meth, and walking in the road barefoot.

Another young woman had just turned 18 years old and became stranded after the Federated States of Micronesia closed its borders during the COVID-19 pandemic to mitigate the spread of disease. She

became emotional sharing her story, hoping to return home to her family soon. She thanked Park Listeners for the snacks. Unfortunately, during the following outreach, she appeared inebriated with

bruises on various parts of her body and did not wish to engage. Another woman in her late 40s explained effects of her mental health this way, “Being unstable just throws me off. People don’t realize how much being unstable actually effects what you’re able to do.”

Many other housing insecure individuals we spoke to in the park were also living with physical disabilities. One senior has been unable to find work due to increasing sight loss and works with his case manager to seek housing resources. Another elderly man who spent time with us was 73 years old and may have been living with age-related diseases prohibiting clear speech and coherent communication. Another woman thanked us for a water bottle and a snack for her husband: “I was at one point an officer when I was younger. But now my husband is sick and needs full time care. He’s in a wheelchair waiting for me [by the Rest Stop].”

One individual also shared how he simply prefers to “live outdoors” and was previously homeless in many places on the continent but moved to Hawai’i because it was, “easier to live outdoors here than the mainland” due to the mild climate. He enjoys the neighborhood for its convenient location near service providers who work specifically with houseless like the Institute for Human Services (IHS) and River of Life.



Photo credit: Ikaika Anderson

Another man said he needed to be alone to get back on his feet and being on the land was the best way for him to do so. He and his family were still struggling with the aftermath of the highly politicized murder of his teenage son, which revealed racial inequities and police tensions between the Micronesian community. He felt that when “the police come at 2am or 3am while everyone is sleeping and force us to get up and throw our stuff in the canal,” it doesn’t solve problems related to ending up on the streets. He believes, “we have to come together as a people and help each other.”

In Chinatown specifically, there is a high-density concentration of services for homeless clients including shelters, food provision, medical care, substance misuse, mental illness treatment, and case management services. This creates unique sets of challenges and opportunities to address community concerns for safety and increased access to basic infrastructure like water, sanitation, and restrooms. There is great potential for collaborative solutions between housed and unhoused community members to create safer park conditions through land-based stewardship and economic opportunities used in models across the country. <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/fort-greene-park/pressrelease/21863>

**Ke Aloha no ‘A‘ala (Love for ‘A‘ala)** – One of the major lessons learned in all of our park listener efforts was that, despite the overwhelming challenges associated with ‘A‘ala Park, there is a community consensus of love for ‘A‘ala. The community values this park as a gathering space that belongs to the neighborhood. Whatever the use – there is undeniable love for ‘A‘ala. There are also genuine concerns regarding gentrification of the area, the need for enhanced safety, and questions on how to sustain and manage long-term any improvements and programs.

We also learned about the critical role seniors play in remembering the rich cultural history of ‘A‘ala Park first hand and how excited youth feel in learning about and celebrating what kūpuna have to share. Overall, the gratitude, love, and excitement shared by the community was an inspirational contrast to the harsh realities faced by various segments of the population. It also highlighted the importance of Trust for Public Land’s community-driven model to achieve our anticipated outcomes of increasing community connection between groups and to place, improve health outcomes and park responsiveness over the next three years.



Photo credit: Ikaika Anderson

## NĀ HELUNA (QUANTITATIVE) RESULTS

Our quantitative community engagement efforts included conducting an intercept survey of 412 people, completing informal community-based surveys, and deploying the System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) to measure park usage. The following sections summarize relevant data from these grass roots community engagement efforts with the full data/analysis attached as appendices.

### **Anthology Group Intercept Survey**

Thanks to a partnership with the City and County of Honolulu’s Department of Housing, Prosecutor’s Office, and area banks (American Savings Bank, Bank of Hawai‘i, Central Pacific Bank, First Hawaiian Bank, and HawaiiUSA Federal Credit Union), Trust for Public Land was able to retain the Anthology Group to conduct an intercept survey of the area. The survey will be replicated in several years in order to measure community perceptions of the park after our and others’ interventions. The methodology and full deck of slides relating to the intercept are included as Appendix A to this report.

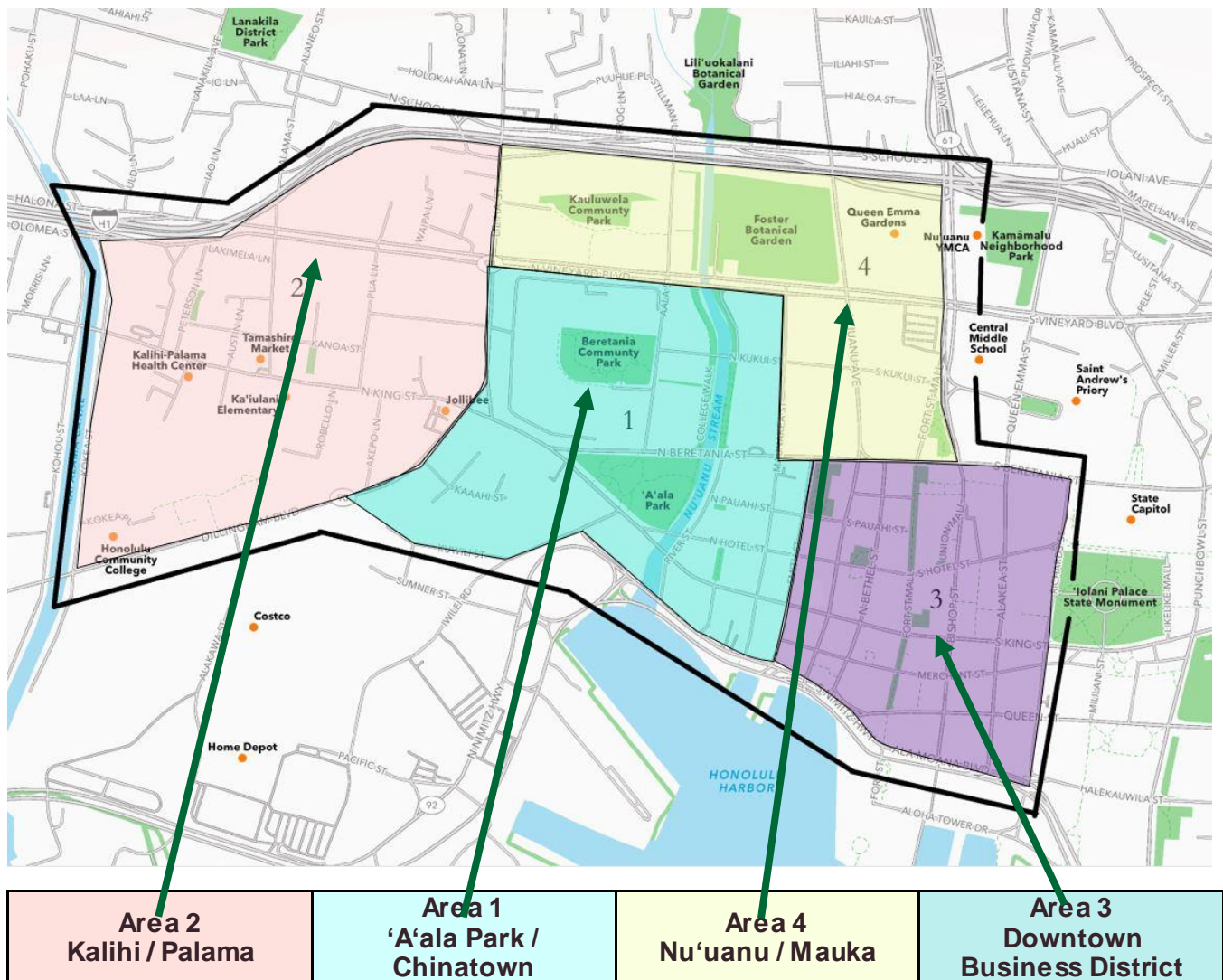
**Methodology:** Anthology conducted an intercept survey performed by trained professional Anthology Research interviewers using tablet computers and the Qualtrics platform. Respondents were handed an iPad and invited to self-complete the survey. Anthology interviewers assisted respondents when

needed. Each research respondent was given a small gift card as a thank you for participating. Anthology conducted a pre-test on June 9, 2021, and began actual field work beginning on June 24 and completed interviews July 1, 2021. Anthology completed 412 total interviews. The resulting margin of error for the total sample of n=412 is +/- 4.83% at a 95% level of confidence.

**Languages** – The survey was offered in English, Chinese (simplified), Tagalog, Vietnamese, Chuukese and Marshallese. Research respondents were able to “toggle” between languages as needed within the survey platform.

**Area Surveyed** – Research respondents were approached outdoors and surveyed in one of the four designated areas highlighted in the map below.

**Respondent Qualifications** – Respondents qualified to participate in the research if they fell into one of four classifications: area resident, business owner, worker in an area business or a transient (defined as being in the area to shop, dine, etc. or simply walking through on the way to another area).



**Park Users:** A complete breakdown of the socio-economic and ethnic background of the respondents and park users is in Appendix A. Of those people in the survey who identified as park users, Native

Hawaiians (23%) were the most frequent users of the park. Less affluent persons (homes with combined income of \$50,000 or less) were also more likely to be park users.

**Word Cloud:** At the beginning of the section of questions relating directly to ‘A‘ala Park, respondents were asked to write down the first word that came to their mind when thinking about ‘A‘ala Park. The results are presented graphically below in a word cloud. Those words mentioned by at least 10 respondents are highlighted in red. The more frequently the word was used, the larger it appears graphically.

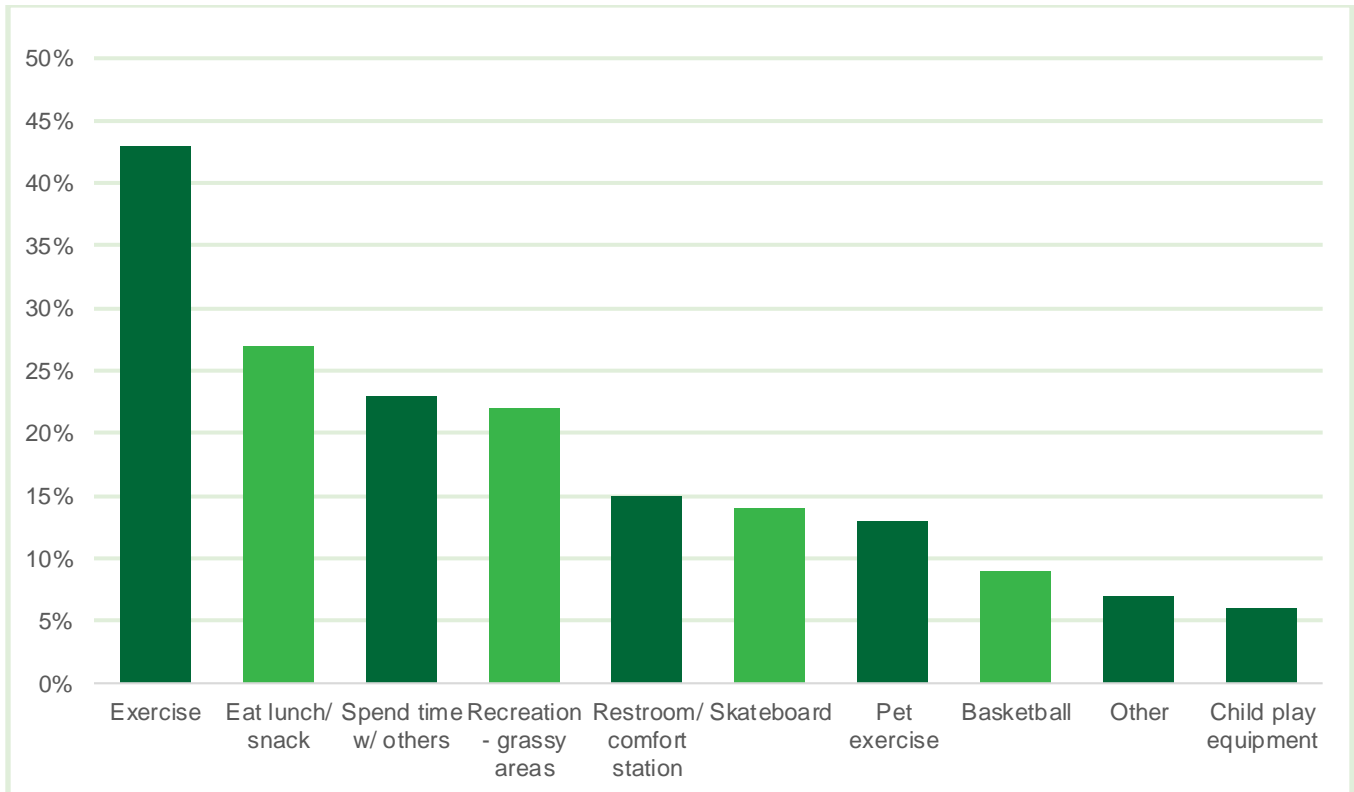


The graphic above reveals the general perception of ‘A‘ala Park is peppered with negativity. The top word chosen to describe the park was homeless, the first response given by 71 respondents. Rounding out the top six were clean, drugs, open, dirty, and nice.

**General Community Perceptions and Safety:** Unsurprisingly, over 80% of respondents either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with statements that there is crime and drug use happening in the park, and that more services need to be provided to people living in the park. Park users, nearby residents, and less affluent respondents (homes with combined income of less than \$50,000) had a more positive view of the park – for example, agreeing that they would use the park more if there were activities and events held there. Park users also had a greater feeling of safety compared to non-users. Business owners strongly agreed with the statement that the park is a place where crime and drug use take place. Over 80% of respondents agree it is very unsafe or somewhat unsafe to walk in the park after dark, and much more unsafe for kupuna (seniors) to do so.



**Park Usage and Activities:** 175 respondents (42% of the 412 sample) who identified themselves as park users were asked to select from a provided list, the types of activities they take part in while in the park. Exercise was the top activity highlighted, selected by 43% of current park users. This confirms national research that parks are where 50% of vigorous exercise occurs. Ranking a distant second were those people who eat lunch or snack in the park, with 23% enjoying time with others in the park. One in five (22%) make use of the grassy areas, while 15% have used the restrooms and comfort station at some point in time. Fourteen percent (14%) have skateboarded there, while 13% like to bring their pets to the park. Nine percent (9%) use the basketball courts, with six percent (6%) taking advantage of the children's play equipment.



The intercept survey revealed that there is hope and opportunity for improvement. Over 40% of park users and residents would use the park more frequently if more activities and events were held there. In general, park users and residents had more positive perceptions of the park and its potential than non-residents and business owners. Clearly, existing park users and area residents are the key to transforming the park into a safe and more welcoming place for all.

### Community Based Surveys

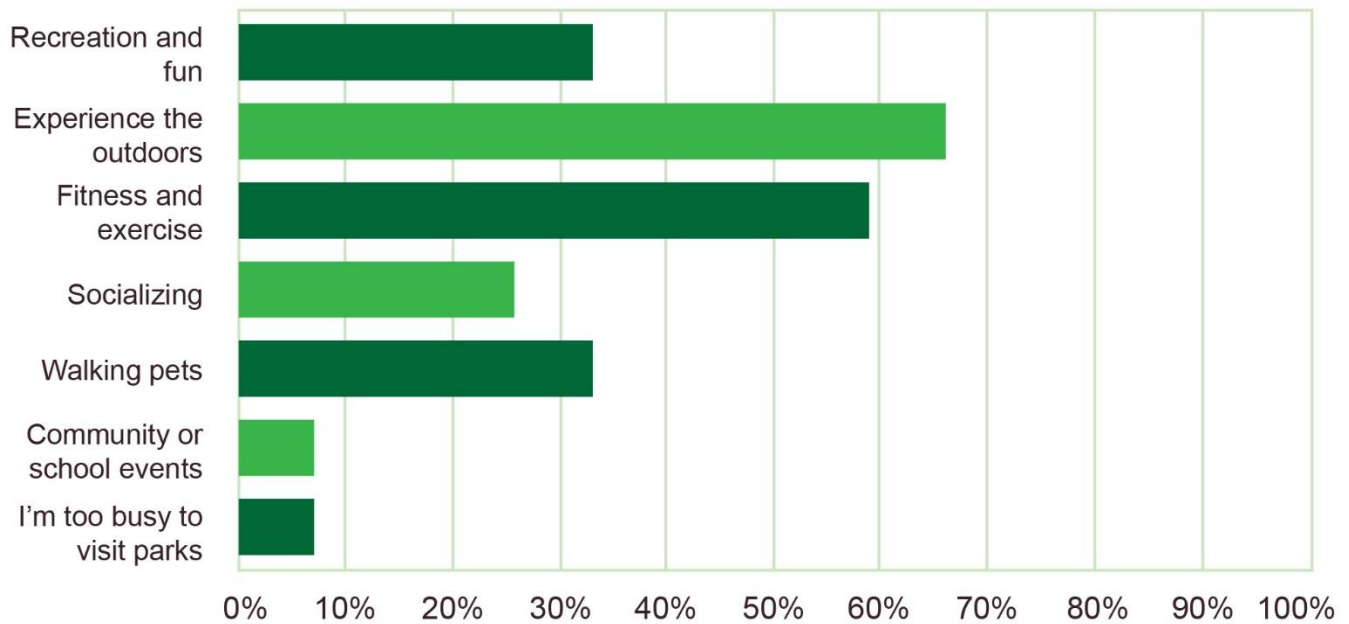
During our different engagement efforts, we asked those who were willing to fill out surveys relating to the park providing either paper surveys or a link or QR code to the online survey. These survey efforts included:

- Ongoing Online Survey
- 'A'ala Park Listener Surveys
- Vaccinations Clinic Surveys
- Better Block Hawaii Survey

**Ongoing Online Surveys** - Iterative on-line surveys were created, and questions were revised taking into account community feedback. For example, some participants in our park listening sessions enjoyed sharing their favorite memories of being outdoors, inspiring us to ask similar questions in our survey. We added an option to upload photos, Hali'a Aloha (Cherished Memories), and provide feedback on how we should celebrate participants' history. The top two uses for parks were fitness/exercise and experiencing the outdoors.

### For what reasons do you use parks? Select all that apply:

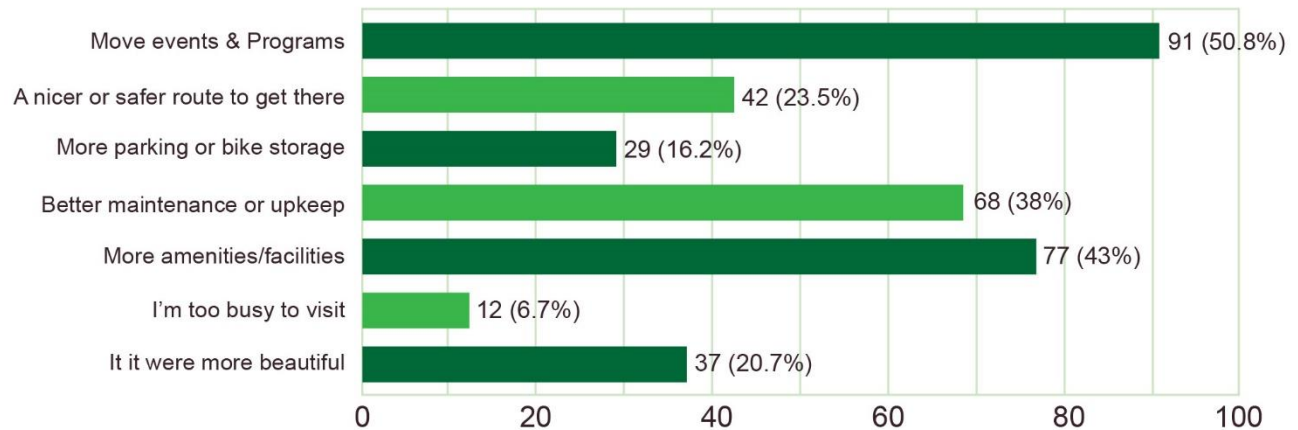
Answered: 27 Skipped: 4



**'A'ala Park Listener Surveys** - Our in-park surveys were developed in partnership with our teams of Lohe 'Āina or "Park Listeners." We were fortunate to provide data collection support for their organizations and initiatives in a way that continues to foster pilina (connection), trust-building, and support community leaders. We asked about park user demographics and suggestions for improvements, and sentiments toward other community-led initiatives.

## Would any of the following encourage or help you to use A'ala Park more often?

179 responses



These surveys revealed concerns about the lack of access to water and restrooms.

- 62% of respondents expressed a desire to see more programs and events at the park to support children and youth;
- 55% wanted more social services; and
- 45% wanted more cultural and arts events.

The following word cloud reflects what respondents wanted to see more of in the park.



Park Listeners who worked with houseless and affordable housing groups also asked questions about alternatives to living on the streets and in 'A'ala Park. Over 75% of houseless respondents said that, if they were legally permitted to stay elsewhere and could take care of their space as a community in lieu of paying market rate housing costs, they would willingly relocate from the area.



**Vaccination Clinic Surveys** - In an ongoing effort to respond to neighborhood needs, our partner American Savings Bank organized a two-day vaccination clinic at 'A'ala Park, bringing in porta-potties to ensure the event could be permitted and participants could feel safe using the restrooms, and partnering with community service providers like Child and Family Services, We Are Oceania, and others. To address oft-repeated concerns regarding difficult to reach limited-English proficient, low-income seniors and immigrant populations in the Chinatown area, the bank ensured that translation services were available. We collected data from 113 respondents who shared many valuable insights about 'A'ala Park.

Safety was a top of mind concern for respondents to this survey.

- 63% did not feel safe in 'A'ala Park.
- 43% of respondents do not use 'A'ala Park even though they indicated a preference for 'A'ala Park when asked about all other parks in Kalihi and Chinatown area (including listing their own suggestions).

**Better Block Hawai'i Survey** - We also partnered with Better Block Hawai'i and Hawai'i FEAST to gauge community interest cultural celebrations, art, and youth activities. High school students from the Kamehameha Schools High School Mural Club designed culturally-relevant murals celebrating the unique history of the neighborhood. Our "Park Listener" partners surveyed people in the park and community members while we shared the survey link widely online.

### Who was surveyed

103 Respondents



### What was the feedback?

Park programming + improved pedestrian safety is needed to encourage more people to use the park



Improved park conditions



Arts and cultural events



Enhanced pedestrian facilities



After school programs

The survey confirmed that park programming and improved pedestrian safety were needed to increase park usage. Of the six designs created by students, the community voted on their favorite mural for the bus shelters and utility boxes around 'A'ala Park, as discussed above, which were completed at the end of December 2021.

### Favorite Designs



Survey respondents identified their favorite of the six proposed mural designs. The two favorite designs will be incorporated into the larger bus shelter murals.

Our main challenge in conducting surveys in this diverse community were the significant language barriers in a largely immigrant community. As we continue to draw out the common themes, shared

values, and various approaches we appreciate the receptive nature of the community overall. Without their suggestions for improvements, willingness to partner, and the desire to connect to place, we would not be able to forward this work toward improved community health outcomes.

### **System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC)**

We partnered with University of Hawai'i Associate Professor in Social and Behavioral Health Sciences Dr. Opal Vanessa Buchthal to measure park usage using the System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC). Dr. Buchthal's full report is attached as Appendix B. The SOPARC observations revealed that the Diamond Head side of the park, including the Skate Park, is the most used area and that the public restrooms were closed or unsafe. In addition, the vast majority of park users are engaging in sedentary activities such as sleeping or laying down. Park users tended to be adult males, with females, seniors, and children comprising a much smaller percentage.

**Methodology:** Dr. Buchthal trained students to conduct the observations in park at four different time-points (7:30 am, 11 am, 2 pm, 4 pm) on Friday, Sunday, Wednesday and Saturday between October 22-30, 2021. The park was divided into nine distinct observation zones, based on the park's activity goal for the zone, using walkway edges, walls, and fencing to define the boundary markers between zones.

**Park Usage:** On average, 163 persons per day used the park, and it was slightly busier on weekdays (170/day) than on weekends (156/day). More than two thirds of park users observed were adult (83%) and male (68%). Only 11% of users appeared to be seniors (defined as individuals with white or grey hair). Youth (children and teens together) made up less than 6% of all park users observed. Children represented only 25% of the park users observed in the playground area. More than half of the individuals observed within the playground fencing were adult men sitting or sleeping on or around the playground equipment. No children were observed using the basketball court, dog park, ballfield, or Ewa walking paths.

The primary activities in the park were sedentary -- three-quarters (75%) of all A'ala Park users were observed engaging in sleeping, lying down, sitting, or standing. The most heavily-used zone of the park was the Nu'uuanu Stream walkway, where 25% of all users were observed. Another 16% of all park users were observed on the ballfield adjacent to the Nu'uuanu Stream walkway, and 16% in the area around the adjacent comfort station. Overall, more than half (57%) of all park users were found in these three adjacent activity areas along the Diamond Head (eastern) border of the park. The overwhelming majority (84%) of users in these three areas combined were engaged in sedentary activities – sleeping or lying down, sitting or standing. The least-used areas of the park were the basketball court (2% of users), dog park (3%), and playground (3%).

**Skate Park:** The skate park was the only portion of the park where a majority (51%) of park users were engaged in vigorous physical activity. The skatepark had the most diverse group of park users overall. While, as with the rest of the park, the majority of skatepark users were adult males, fully a third (33%) of skate park users were youth (children and teens combined), and a third (35%) of skate park users were female.

**Public Restroom:** During several periods, observers noted adult males 'standing guard' in the entry to both the men's and women's sides of the comfort station, appearing to control who could enter the facility. They also observed an unclothed adult male urinating on the sidewalk next to the comfort station, and midway through the observation week, they observed police activity occurring in this area,

with multiple individuals arrested. The comfort station doors were locked during all subsequent observations.

## CONCLUSION

### Ka Hopena

By striving to deeply engage the community, nurturing partnerships to increase community connection between groups, listening to the voices of stakeholders, and learning the history of the park and place, we hope to chart a path to improve the park in a manner responsive to local needs, providing maximum benefit to residents in the next phase of work in 2022 – interactive community based participatory design and interim park activations informed by the voices we have heard thus far. By listening to park users, residents, and businesses around the park, and learning more about their experiences, we heard the community voices and their suggestions to improve the park space and desire to deepen their relationship to land. As we incorporate these voices into a design planning process and support the community in leading, we hope to build a foundation of sustainable stewardship.

Through our Lohe ‘Āina (Park Listener) efforts, we learned how inspirational and great this community is. The community’s diversity is its greatest strength. While differences of opinion, lifestyle, and approach can cause division – this community reflects the diverse history of Hawai‘i and is a living example of how different groups and ethnicities can come together to celebrate their history, cultural identity, and create a shared vision for the future together. We hope the process of healing, improving, and activating the park will not only improve the public space, but will increase social connection between communities and foster future long-term stewardship. Together, we can improve community health and equity, enhance personal well-being and connections to the outdoors, promote environmental and economic sustainability, and transform the park into a safe and welcoming place for all.

**For more information:** <https://www.tpl.org/our-work/%CA%BBa%CA%BBala-park>

APPENDIX A: Anthology Group Intercept Survey

APPENDIX B: SOPARC Baseline Report



'A'ALA PARK /  
CHINATOWN REGIONAL  
OPINION STUDY

Prepared for:  
The Trust for Public Land  
July 2021

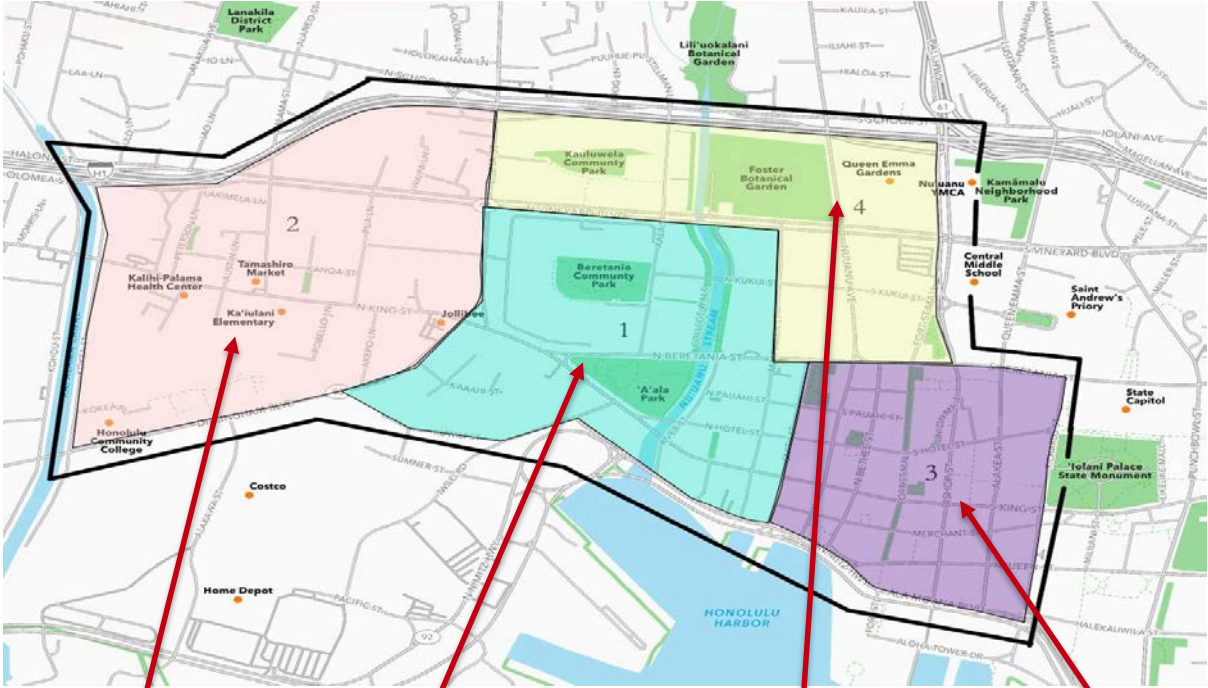
[ANTHOLOGY®]

[AnthologyGroup.com](https://AnthologyGroup.com)

# METHODOLOGY

- Quantitative in-person intercept interviews conducted outside in Chinatown/'A'ala Park area.
- There were more males than females interviewed for the survey. There appear to be many males living in units and rooms by themselves as well as more business owners and workers who are male.
- A total of 412 surveys were collected from June 24 – July 1, 2021. Margin of error is +/- 4.83% at a 95% confidence level.
- Languages: The survey was offered in English, Chinese (simplified), Tagalog, Vietnamese, Chuukese and Marshallese.

# AREAS SURVEYED



Area 2 Kalihi / Palama	Area 1 'A'ala Park / Chinatown	Area 4 Nu'uaniu / Mauka	Area 3 Downtown Business District
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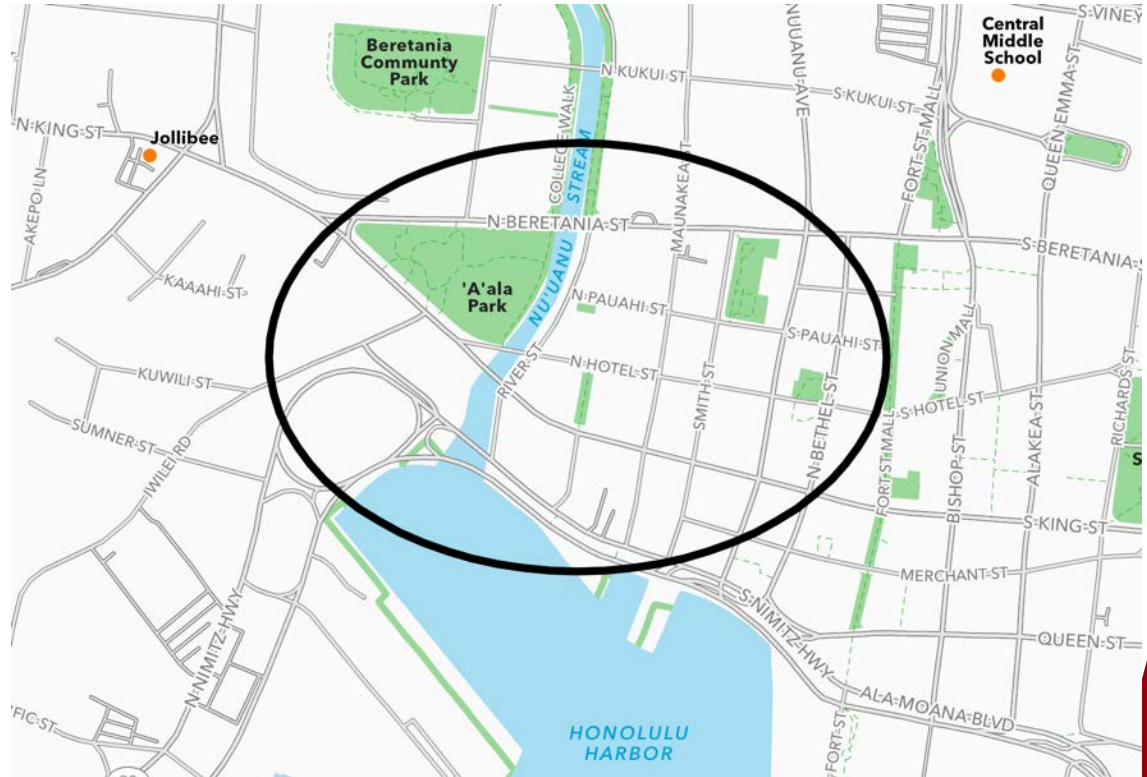


# PERCEPTIONS OF 'A'ALA PARK / CHINATOWN AREA

# 'A'ALA PARK / CHINATOWN

## GENERAL AREA PERCEPTIONS

Research respondents were asked for their perceptions related to what we describe as the "'A'ala Park / Chinatown area." Each respondent was presented with the following graphic, indicating the geographical area they were being asked about.





# QUALITY OF LIFE PERCEPTIONS

	Very Good (4)	Somewhat Good (3)	Somewhat Poor (2)	Very Poor (1)	MEAN
<i>A place to dine or shop</i>	26%	43%	20%	10%	2.86
<i>A place to work</i>	20%	43%	23%	13%	2.70
<i>A place to enjoy open-air community spaces</i>	16%	36%	30%	18%	2.50
<i>A place that offers community events</i>	15%	33%	34%	17%	2.46
<i>A place for families to visit</i>	14%	25%	36%	25%	2.28
<i>A place to live</i>	13%	26%	35%	26%	2.25

Q. Overall, how would you rate the 'A'ala Park/Chinatown neighborhood as....?

# QUALITY OF LIFE PERCEPTIONS

## SEGMENTATION ANALYSIS

	SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SCORES
More positive perception amongst <b>current park users</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A place to live</li> <li>• A place to work</li> <li>• A place to dine or shop</li> <li>• A place to enjoy open-air community spaces</li> <li>• A place for families to visit</li> <li>• A place that offers community events</li> </ul>
Those who <b>live in the surrounding area</b> feel more positively about the region in the following areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A place to live</li> <li>• A place to enjoy open-air community spaces</li> <li>• A place for families to visit</li> </ul>
More positive perception among <b>males</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A place to live</li> </ul>
Less affluent respondents or those <b>living in homes with combined incomes below \$50K</b> feel more positively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A place to live</li> </ul>
<b>Native Hawaiians</b> provided higher mean scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A place to dine or shop</li> </ul>
Higher mean scores from those <b>without a college degree</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A place to live</li> <li>• A place to work</li> <li>• A place to enjoy open-air community spaces</li> <li>• A place for families to visit</li> <li>• A place that offers community events</li> </ul>
<b>Older respondents</b> gave higher mean scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A place that offers community events</li> </ul>
<b>Transient</b> survey takers provided higher mean scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A place to live</li> <li>• A place to enjoy open-air community spaces</li> </ul>



# QUALITY OF LIFE PERCEPTIONS

## TOP BOX (Very Good)

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ China-town	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus Dist	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
<i>A place to dine or shop</i>	26%	32%	25%	16%	30%	28%	29%	23%	30%	22%	37%	19%
<i>A place to work</i>	20%	25%	14%	13%	25%	22%	21%	18%	23%	17%	29%	14%
<i>A place to enjoy open-air community spaces</i>	16%	23%	8%	8%	16%	18%	15%	15%	21%	11%	23%	11%
<i>A place that offers community events</i>	15%	19%	15%	8%	18%	16%	18%	14%	18%	13%	23%	10%
<i>A place for families to visit</i>	14%	20%	7%	8%	13%	15%	18%	11%	19%	9%	24%	6%
<i>A place to live</i>	13%	17%	10%	5%	16%	16%	13%	10%	17%	9%	20%	8%

# 'A'ALA PARK / CHINATOWN

## AREA STRENGTHS

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ Chinatown	Kalihi/ Palama	Downtown Bus Dist	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
Restaurants	39%	35%	49%	42%	37%	39%	32%	40%	36%	42%	39%	39%
Walkability	38%	42%	31%	38%	36%	40%	35%	37%	42%	34%	41%	37%
Many local businesses	38%	31%	49%	46%	33%	37%	37%	40%	31%	44%	34%	40%
Access to transit	36%	36%	31%	40%	39%	34%	34%	42%	36%	37%	37%	36%
Central location	35%	42%	19%	33%	33%	29%	45%	37%	40%	29%	38%	32%
Convenience stores	23%	26%	19%	17%	24%	21%	34%	20%	25%	20%	25%	21%
Access to jobs	13%	11%	12%	17%	12%	17%	10%	11%	12%	14%	12%	14%
Open-air community spaces	9%	10%	5%	6%	13%	7%	6%	12%	8%	9%	10%	8%
Access to housing	6%	8%	5%	4%	6%	8%	5%	5%	7%	5%	9%	4%
Rich in community events	5%	6%	3%	5%	6%	6%	8%	3%	5%	6%	6%	5%
Parking	5%	5%	7%	3%	4%	6%	5%	3%	5%	4%	3%	5%

# GENERAL COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

	Strongly Agree (4)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	MEAN
<i>It is dangerous in this neighborhood after dark because of the level of crime</i>	56%	31%	9%	5%	3.37
<i>There is a high crime rate in this neighborhood</i>	45%	33%	15%	7%	3.17
<i>It is dangerous to leave a bicycle locked in this neighborhood</i>	44%	35%	14%	7%	3.17
<i>The ethnic diversity of this neighborhood is one of its strengths</i>	38%	45%	12%	5%	3.15
<i>There are stores that offer the things I want to buy in this neighborhood</i>	36%	44%	16%	4%	3.12
<i>There are not enough services and activities for youth</i>	35%	42%	17%	7%	3.05
<i>The police officers in this area are friendly and work hard to keep people safe</i>	28%	42%	19%	11%	2.87
<i>There is a strong sense of community in this neighborhood</i>	23%	44%	25%	9%	2.80
<i>There are many people like me in this neighborhood</i>	25%	38%	24%	13%	2.75
<i>It is dangerous in this neighborhood during the day because of the level of crime</i>	26%	34%	28%	11%	2.75
<i>Cycling is dangerous because of the traffic in this neighborhood</i>	24%	35%	26%	16%	2.67
<i>I trust community members in this neighborhood</i>	18%	42%	28%	12%	2.66
<i>I feel like I belong in this neighborhood</i>	23%	30%	29%	18%	2.58
<i>The cost of rental housing is more affordable here</i>	17%	30%	35%	17%	2.47
<i>There are not enough safe places to cross busy streets in this neighborhood</i>	17%	33%	33%	18%	2.47
<i>Walking is dangerous because of the traffic in this neighborhood</i>	17%	26%	37%	20%	2.38

Q. Thinking about the 'A'ala Park/Chinatown neighborhood, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

# GENERAL COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

## SEGMENTATION ANALYSIS

	SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SCORES
Stronger sense of agreement among <b>current park users</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The cost of rental housing is more affordable here</i></li> <li>• <i>There is not enough safe places to cross busy streets in this neighborhood</i></li> <li>• <i>There is a strong sense of community in this neighborhood</i></li> <li>• <i>There are stores that offer the things I want to buy in this neighborhood</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel like I belong in this neighborhood</i></li> </ul>
Higher mean scores amongst <b>those who do not use the park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>There is a high crime rate in this neighborhood</i></li> <li>• <i>It is dangerous in this neighborhood during the day because of the level of crime</i></li> <li>• <i>It is dangerous in this neighborhood after dark because of the level of crime</i></li> </ul>
Those who <b>live in the surrounding area</b> more strongly agree with each statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The cost of rental housing is more affordable here</i></li> <li>• <i>There is not enough safe places to cross busy streets in this neighborhood</i></li> <li>• <i>There is a strong sense of community in this neighborhood</i></li> <li>• <i>There are not enough services and activities for youth</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel like I belong in this neighborhood</i></li> </ul>
Mean scores are higher among those who <b>do not live in one of the targeted zones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It is dangerous in this neighborhood after dark because of the level of crime</i></li> </ul>
Stronger agreement amongst <b>females</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It is dangerous in this neighborhood after dark because of the level of crime</i></li> </ul>

# GENERAL COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

## SEGMENTATION ANALYSIS (Cont.)

	SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SCORES
Less affluent respondents or those <b>living in homes with combined incomes below \$50K</b> more strongly agree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cost of rental housing is more affordable here</li> <li>• There are many people like me in this neighborhood</li> <li>• Walking is dangerous because of traffic in this neighborhood</li> <li>• There are stores that offer the things I want to buy in this neighborhood</li> <li>• I feel like I belong in this neighborhood</li> </ul>
Those who <b>live in homes without children</b> more strongly agrees with the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are stores that offer the things I want to buy in this neighborhood</li> <li>• The police officers in this area are friendly and work hard to keep people safe</li> </ul>
<b>College graduates</b> agree with the following in greater numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a high crime rate in this neighborhood</li> <li>• It is dangerous in this neighborhood after dark because of the level of crime</li> </ul>
<b>Older respondents</b> gave higher mean scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel like I belong in this neighborhood</li> <li>• I trust community members in this neighborhood</li> </ul>
<b>Business representatives</b> more strongly agrees with these statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a high crime rate in this neighborhood</li> <li>• Cycling is dangerous because of the traffic in this neighborhood</li> <li>• It is dangerous in this neighborhood during the day because of the level of crime</li> <li>• It is dangerous in this neighborhood after dark because of the level of crime</li> </ul>
Higher mean scores from those <b>from foreign countries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking is dangerous because of traffic in this neighborhood</li> </ul>

# GENERAL COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

## TOP BOX (Strongly Agree)

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ Chinatown	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus Dist	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
<i>It is dangerous in this neighborhood after dark because of the level of crime</i>	56%	52%	71%	58%	48%	51%	52%	62%	53%	59%	47%	62%
<i>There is a high crime rate in this neighborhood</i>	45%	45%	63%	41%	37%	43%	42%	48%	47%	43%	43%	47%
<i>It is dangerous to leave a bicycle locked in this neighborhood</i>	44%	49%	54%	36%	36%	44%	42%	46%	50%	37%	44%	44%
<i>The ethnic diversity of this neighborhood is one of its strengths</i>	38%	43%	39%	30%	34%	42%	34%	35%	41%	34%	44%	33%
<i>There are stores that offer the things I want to buy in this neighborhood</i>	36%	43%	42%	23%	30%	38%	40%	32%	40%	31%	45%	29%

# GENERAL COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

## TOP BOX (Strongly Agree) (cont.)

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/Chinatown	Kalihi/Palama	Down-town Bus Dist	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
<i>There are not enough services and activities for youth</i>	35%	39%	39%	28%	30%	37%	37%	33%	41%	28%	36%	34%
<i>The police officers in this area are friendly and work hard to keep people safe</i>	28%	33%	25%	23%	24%	28%	23%	33%	32%	24%	34%	24%
<i>There is a strong sense of community in this neighborhood</i>	23%	31%	14%	16%	19%	23%	21%	23%	29%	15%	30%	17%
<i>There are many people like me in this neighborhood</i>	25%	28%	29%	16%	28%	26%	32%	21%	27%	23%	30%	22%
<i>It is dangerous in this neighborhood during the day because of the level of crime</i>	26%	26%	36%	24%	21%	21%	29%	32%	29%	23%	24%	27%

# GENERAL COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

## TOP BOX (Strongly Agree) (cont.)

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ Chinatown	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus Dist	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
<i>Cycling is dangerous because of the traffic in this neighborhood</i>	24%	28%	34%	16%	16%	22%	27%	26%	29%	18%	28%	21%
<i>I trust community members in this neighborhood</i>	18%	21%	15%	13%	21%	17%	18%	20%	21%	15%	25%	14%
<i>I feel like I belong in this neighborhood</i>	23%	31%	25%	9%	19%	25%	21%	21%	29%	16%	30%	17%
<i>The cost of rental housing is more affordable here</i>	17%	23%	12%	10%	16%	17%	21%	17%	21%	12%	26%	11%
<i>There are not enough safe places to cross busy streets in this neighborhood</i>	17%	21%	19%	11%	12%	19%	24%	11%	21%	11%	23%	12%
<i>Walking is dangerous because of the traffic in this neighborhood</i>	17%	19%	22%	12%	12%	14%	16%	19%	20%	13%	21%	14%



# AREA PROBLEMS/ ISSUES

	Major Problem (3)	Minor Problem (2)	Not a Problem (1)	MEAN
<i>Residents living on the street unsheltered</i>	85%	11%	4%	2.81
<i>Lack of public restrooms</i>	78%	17%	5%	2.73
<i>Crime and violence</i>	66%	28%	6%	2.60
<i>Use of drugs in public</i>	66%	26%	8%	2.59
<i>Not enough services or support for residents w/o homes</i>	65%	28%	7%	2.58
<i>People who buy or sell drugs</i>	64%	28%	8%	2.56
<i>Not enough quality, affordable housing</i>	59%	31%	10%	2.49
<i>Not enough public parking</i>	57%	32%	11%	2.46
<i>Not enough services/ activities for youth</i>	52%	37%	12%	2.40
<i>Litter and graffiti</i>	54%	30%	16%	2.39
<i>Not enough services or support for low-income residents</i>	50%	35%	15%	2.34
<i>People who buy/ sell sex</i>	44%	37%	19%	2.26
<i>Not enough police presence</i>	43%	38%	19%	2.24
<i>Abandoned or run-down buildings</i>	41%	35%	24%	2.17
<i>Not enough crosswalks</i>	25%	34%	41%	1.84

# AREA PROBLEMS/ ISSUES

## SEGMENTATION ANALYSIS

	SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SCORES
Those <b>surveyed in the Downtown Business District</b> view this as more a of problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who buy or sell drugs</li> <li>• Use of drugs in public</li> <li>• People who buy and sell sex</li> <li>• Abandoned or run-down buildings</li> <li>• Litter and graffiti</li> <li>• Crime and violence</li> <li>• Not enough services or support for residents w/o homes</li> </ul>
<b>Business owners</b> were more likely to view the following as problems or issues in the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who buy and sell sex</li> <li>• Litter and graffiti</li> <li>• Crime and violence</li> </ul>
<b>Workers in the area</b> gave higher mean scores signifying the following are more of an issue for them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who buy and sell sex</li> <li>• Not enough police presence</li> <li>• Abandoned or run-down buildings</li> <li>• Crime and violence</li> </ul>
Higher mean scores from those who <b>live outside of the area in question</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough police presence</li> <li>• Residents living on the street unsheltered</li> <li>• Crime and violence</li> <li>• Not enough services or support for residents w/o homes</li> </ul>

# AREA PROBLEMS/ ISSUES

## SEGMENTATION ANALYSIS (Cont.)

	SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SCORES
Those who <b>do not use the park</b> feel this is more of a problem compared to park users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough police presence</li> <li>• Residents living on the street unsheltered</li> <li>• Crime and violence</li> </ul>
<b>Locals, born &amp; raised in Hawaii</b> gave higher mean scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough police presence</li> <li>• Not enough quality, affordable housing</li> </ul>
These are viewed as more of an area problem amongst <b>Native Hawaiians</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough quality, affordable housing</li> </ul>
Those <b>born in foreign countries or territories</b> view this as more of an areas problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who buy and sell sex</li> </ul>
Higher mean scores from those who <b>live in homes without children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who buy or sell drugs</li> <li>• Litter and graffiti</li> <li>• Not enough quality, affordable housing</li> <li>• Crime and violence</li> <li>• Not enough services or support for low-income residents</li> <li>• Not enough services/ activities for youth</li> <li>• Not enough public parking</li> <li>• Not enough crosswalks</li> </ul>

# AREA PROBLEMS/ ISSUES

## TOP BOX (Major Problem)

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ China-town	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus Dist	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
<i>Residents living on the street unsheltered</i>	85%	81%	90%	89%	85%	80%	82%	92%	81%	89%	80%	89%
<i>Lack of public restrooms</i>	78%	77%	81%	77%	79%	78%	66%	82%	76%	80%	77%	78%
<i>Crime and violence</i>	66%	60%	86%	76%	52%	62%	60%	74%	62%	71%	60%	71%
<i>Use of drugs in public</i>	66%	64%	80%	68%	57%	62%	63%	73%	67%	66%	62%	69%
<i>Not enough services or support for residents w/o homes</i>	65%	59%	71%	73%	64%	60%	60%	73%	61%	70%	64%	66%
<i>People who buy or sell drugs</i>	64%	62%	80%	66%	54%	57%	63%	73%	65%	63%	60%	67%
<i>Not enough quality, affordable housing</i>	59%	59%	42%	64%	64%	61%	50%	60%	59%	59%	59%	58%
<i>Not enough public parking</i>	57%	55%	68%	55%	58%	54%	56%	62%	57%	58%	57%	58%

# AREA PROBLEMS/ ISSUES

## TOP BOX (Major Problem)(Cont.)

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ Chinatown	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus Dist	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
<i>Not enough services/ activities for youth</i>	52%	52%	47%	53%	52%	52%	48%	54%	53%	51%	51%	52%
<i>Litter and graffiti</i>	54%	50%	75%	53%	49%	51%	45%	64%	54%	55%	51%	57%
<i>Not enough services or support for low-income residents</i>	50%	47%	53%	50%	54%	47%	40%	57%	48%	51%	50%	49%
<i>People who buy/ sell sex</i>	44%	41%	58%	51%	31%	37%	40%	56%	44%	44%	42%	46%
<i>Not enough police presence</i>	43%	37%	54%	49%	43%	41%	34%	51%	40%	47%	34%	51%
<i>Abandoned or run-down buildings</i>	41%	40%	51%	44%	31%	40%	32%	47%	43%	40%	42%	41%
<i>Not enough crosswalks</i>	25%	25%	22%	26%	24%	20%	23%	30%	27%	23%	29%	22%

# AREA PROBLEMS/ ISSUES

## MOST URGENT PROBLEM

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ China-town	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus Dist	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	388	171	55	99	63	179	54	144	200	188	162	226
<i>Residents living on the street unsheltered</i>	27%	22%	38%	34%	22%	22%	35%	31%	24%	31%	19%	33%
<i>Crime and violence</i>	15%	11%	18%	23%	13%	13%	13%	19%	12%	19%	12%	18%
<i>Lack of public restrooms</i>	12%	16%	9%	5%	13%	17%	4%	8%	14%	10%	15%	9%
<i>People who buy or sell drugs</i>	9%	8%	13%	8%	10%	9%	15%	7%	9%	9%	8%	10%
<i>Not enough services or support for residents w/o homes</i>	8%	9%	5%	5%	13%	7%	9%	9%	8%	8%	11%	6%
<i>Use of drugs in public</i>	7%	9%	5%	5%	5%	8%	2%	8%	9%	5%	9%	6%
<i>Not enough public parking</i>	5%	6%	2%	4%	5%	6%	9%	1%	6%	4%	7%	4%
<i>Not enough quality, affordable housing</i>	4%	5%	-	5%	5%	4%	7%	3%	5%	4%	4%	4%

# AREA PROBLEMS/ ISSUES

## MOST URGENT PROBLEM (Cont.)

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ China-town	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus Dist	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	388	171	55	99	63	179	54	144	200	188	162	226
<i>Not enough police presence</i>	3%	3%	5%	1%	5%	5%	-	2%	4%	2%	2%	4%
<i>Litter and graffiti</i>	3%	4%	-	3%	3%	2%	2%	5%	3%	3%	4%	2%
<i>Not enough services or support for low-income residents</i>	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%
<i>Not enough services/ activities for youth</i>	1%	1%	2%	-	2%	2%	-	1%	2%	1%	1%	%
<i>Abandoned or run-down buildings</i>	1%	2%	-	1%	-	1%	-	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
<i>People who buy/ sell sex</i>	1%	1%	-	1%	3%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	0%
<i>Not enough crosswalks</i>	1%	1%	-	1%	-	1%	-	1%	1%	1%	2%	-

# 'A'ALA PARK / CHINATOWN

## INTEREST IN COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ Chinatown	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus District	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
Very interested (4)	21%	27%	15%	14%	19%	28%	15%	15%	27%	14%	27%	16%
Somewhat interested (3)	32%	32%	32%	36%	27%	31%	37%	32%	33%	31%	30%	33%
Somewhat uninterested (2)	25%	24%	20%	25%	34%	22%	32%	26%	24%	27%	26%	25%
Very uninterested (1)	22%	17%	32%	25%	19%	20%	16%	26%	17%	27%	17%	26%
MEAN	2.51	2.68	2.31	2.38	2.46	2.66	2.50	2.37	2.67	2.32	2.67	2.40

- Males express a greater level of interest in participating

- More affluent segments of the sample or those who reside in homes with combined incomes that exceed \$100K were the least likely to express interest in participating in the process



# INTEREST IN COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

## Ideal Timing for Participation

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ China-town	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus District	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	217	107	28	51	31	110	32	71	127	90	100	117
<i>Weekday - daytime</i>	21%	18%	29%	27%	13%	20%	22%	20%	22%	19%	22%	20%
<i>Weekday - evening</i>	33%	28%	32%	45%	32%	32%	38%	31%	31%	37%	29%	37%
<i>Weekends</i>	47%	47%	43%	49%	45%	45%	50%	48%	43%	51%	44%	49%
<i>Anytime</i>	25%	31%	14%	20%	23%	27%	22%	23%	29%	19%	27%	23%

# KAUHALE STYLE COMMUNITY CONCEPT

Each respondent was presented with the following:

*Currently, there are many houseless people living on the streets throughout Chinatown / 'A'ala Park / Nimitz. Some community groups on O'ahu have proposed arrangements where houseless individuals and families live in a designated area and participate in a semi-structured living arrangement maintaining and operating the designated area, sometimes called a Kauhale-Style Community.*

*As part of this, these houseless residents can partner with those living in the neighboring area to support community activities including community cleanups, events, attending neighborhood board meetings, and access to services*

# KAUHALE STYLE COMMUNITY CONCEPT

## Level of Support

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ China-town	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus District	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
<i>Strongly support (4)</i>	46%	55%	29%	43%	40%	45%	48%	47%	54%	36%	56%	38%
<i>Somewhat support (3)</i>	41%	32%	56%	47%	43%	38%	40%	44%	31%	51%	30%	49%
<i>Somewhat oppose (2)</i>	7%	8%	5%	7%	6%	6%	8%	6%	7%	6%	5%	8%
<i>Strongly oppose (1)</i>	7%	6%	10%	4%	10%	11%	3%	3%	7%	7%	9%	5%
MEAN	3.25	3.35	3.03	3.28	3.13	3.17	3.34	3.36	3.33	3.17	3.34	3.19

- *Males react more favorably to this idea*
- *Support for this concept is higher amongst those in the bottom income tier and declines as they become more affluent.*

# PERCEPTIONS OF 'A'ALA PARK

# 'A' ALA PARK WORD CLOUD

Those words mentioned by at least 10 respondents are highlighted in red. The more frequently the descriptor was used the larger it appears in the graphic below.



# GENERAL COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

	Strongly Agree (4)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	MEAN
<i>I believe there is crime and/or drug use happening in the park</i>	55%	31%	10%	5%	3.35
<i>More services need to be provided to the people living in the park</i>	48%	34%	12%	6%	3.23
<i>The presence of people living in the park stops me from going there</i>	42%	27%	17%	13%	2.98
<i>I would use the park more if there were activities and events held there</i>	32%	34%	18%	16%	2.83
<i>I believe the community cares about the park</i>	26%	38%	21%	15%	2.76
<i>I believe there is enough police presence in the park</i>	22%	29%	27%	22%	2.50
<i>The park is clean and well-maintained</i>	15%	32%	27%	26%	2.36
<i>There is enough parking for users of the park</i>	18%	26%	27%	29%	2.32
<i>The park offers something that appeals to me</i>	17%	26%	26%	31%	2.29
<i>I feel comfortable using the restrooms/ comfort station</i>	12%	11%	16%	61%	1.74

Q. Thinking about 'A'ala Park, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

# GENERAL COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

## SEGMENTATION ANALYSIS

	SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SCORES
Stronger sense of agreement among <b>current park users</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I would use the park more if there were activities and events held there</li> <li>• I believe there is enough police presence in the park</li> <li>• The park is clean and well-maintained</li> <li>• The park offers something that appeals to me</li> <li>• I feel comfortable using the restrooms/ comfort station</li> </ul>
Higher mean scores amongst <b>those who do not use the park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presence of people living in the park stops me from going there</li> </ul>
Those who <b>live in one of the targeted zones</b> more strongly agrees with each of the following statements compared to those living outside of the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I would use the park more if there were activities and events held there</li> <li>• The park is clean and well-maintained</li> <li>• The park offers something that appeals to me</li> <li>• There is enough parking for users of the park</li> <li>• I feel comfortable using the restrooms/ comfort station</li> </ul>
Mean scores are higher among those who <b>do not live in the one of the targeted zones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presence of people living in the park stops me from going there</li> </ul>
Stronger agreement among <b>males</b> compared to females	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I would use the park more if there were activities and events held there</li> <li>• The park is clean and well-maintained</li> <li>• The park offers something that appeals to me</li> <li>• I feel comfortable using the restrooms/ comfort station</li> </ul>

Q. Thinking about A\*ala Park, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

# GENERAL COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

## SEGMENTATION ANALYSIS (Cont.)

	SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SCORES
Less affluent respondents or those <b>living in homes with combined incomes below \$50K</b> more strongly agrees with the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I would use the park more if there were activities and events held there</i></li> <li>• <i>The park is clean and well-maintained</i></li> <li>• <i>There is enough parking for users of the park</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel comfortable using the restrooms/ comfort station</i></li> </ul>
<b>Native Hawaiians</b> provided higher mean scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I would use the park more if there were activities and events held there</i></li> </ul>
Those who <b>live in homes without children</b> more strongly agrees with the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I would use the park more if there were activities and events held there</i></li> <li>• <i>I believe the community cares about the park</i></li> <li>• <i>The park is clean and well-maintained</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel comfortable using the restrooms/ comfort station</i></li> </ul>
Higher mean scores from those <b>without a college degree</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I believe there is enough police presence in the park</i></li> <li>• <i>The park is clean and well-maintained</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel comfortable using the restrooms/ comfort station</i></li> </ul>
<b>Older respondents</b> gave higher mean scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I believe the community cares about the park</i></li> <li>• <i>The park is clean and well-maintained</i></li> <li>• <i>There is enough parking for users of the park</i></li> </ul>
<b>Business representatives</b> more strongly agrees with this statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I believe there is crime and/or drug use happening in the park</i></li> </ul>



# GENERAL COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

## TOP BOX (Strongly Agree)

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ China-town	Kalihi/ Palama	Downtown Bus Dist	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
<i>I believe there is crime and/or drug use happening in the park</i>	55%	55%	66%	58%	39%	54%	52%	56%	55%	55%	51%	57%
<i>More services need to be provided to the people living in the park</i>	48%	53%	44%	48%	36%	51%	48%	44%	51%	43%	50%	46%
<i>The presence of people living in the park stops me from going there</i>	42%	37%	54%	51%	30%	40%	35%	46%	39%	45%	33%	49%
<i>I would use the park more if there were activities and events held there</i>	32%	44%	17%	23%	28%	37%	35%	26%	42%	22%	46%	22%
<i>I believe the community cares about the park</i>	26%	33%	15%	22%	25%	26%	23%	30%	32%	20%	31%	23%

# GENERAL COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

## TOP BOX (Strongly Agree) (Cont.)

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ China-town	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus Dist	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
<i>I believe there is enough police presence in the park</i>	22%	28%	14%	17%	16%	26%	19%	17%	26%	17%	35%	12%
<i>The park is clean and well-maintained</i>	15%	25%	3%	7%	12%	17%	18%	13%	22%	8%	25%	8%
<i>There is enough parking for users of the park</i>	18%	26%	12%	8%	16%	21%	19%	13%	23%	12%	27%	11%
<i>The park offers something that appeals to me</i>	17%	25%	3%	9%	18%	16%	19%	17%	22%	10%	30%	6%
<i>I feel comfortable using the restrooms/ comfort station</i>	12%	20%	2%	6%	10%	13%	15%	11%	18%	6%	23%	4%

# PARK SAFETY

	Very Safe (4)	Somewhat Safe (3)	Somewhat Unsafe (2)	Very Unsafe (1)	MEAN
<i>Walking alone in 'A'ala Park during the day</i>	17%	39%	23%	21%	2.52
<i>Walking alone in 'A'ala Park after dark</i>	8%	10%	25%	57%	1.70
<i>Allowing children to play during the day in 'A'ala Park</i>	12%	26%	25%	38%	2.12
<i>Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park during the day</i>	13%	21%	26%	40%	2.07
<i>Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park after dark</i>	7%	9%	17%	67%	1.55

Q. In your opinion, how safe are each of the following activities?

# PARK SAFETY

## SEGMENTATION ANALYSIS

	SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SCORES
<i>Current park users feel it's safer compared to those who never use the park</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking alone in 'A'ala Park during the day</li> <li>• Walking alone in 'A'ala Park after dark</li> <li>• Allowing children to play during the day in 'A'ala Park</li> <li>• Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park during the day</li> <li>• Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park after dark</li> </ul>
<i>Mean scores were more favorable/ safer from <b>area residents</b></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking alone in 'A'ala Park during the day</li> <li>• Walking alone in 'A'ala Park after dark</li> <li>• Allowing children to play during the day in 'A'ala Park</li> <li>• Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park during the day</li> <li>• Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park after dark</li> </ul>
<i><b>Male</b> respondents gave higher mean scores compared to their female counterparts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking alone in 'A'ala Park during the day</li> <li>• Walking alone in 'A'ala Park after dark</li> <li>• Allowing children to play during the day in 'A'ala Park</li> <li>• Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park during the day</li> <li>• Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park after dark</li> </ul>
<i>Higher mean scores from <b>less affluent segments</b></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking alone in 'A'ala Park during the day</li> <li>• Walking alone in 'A'ala Park after dark</li> <li>• Allowing children to play during the day in 'A'ala Park</li> <li>• Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park during the day</li> <li>• Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park after dark</li> </ul>

# PARK SAFETY

## SEGMENTATION ANALYSIS (Cont.)

	SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN MEAN SCORES
<i>Transients</i> feel it is safer for the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Walking alone in 'A'ala Park after dark</li><li>• Allowing children to play during the day in 'A'ala Park</li><li>• Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park after dark</li></ul>
Less educated segments or <b>those without a college degree</b> felt it is safer in the following scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Walking alone in 'A'ala Park after dark</li><li>• Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park during the day</li><li>• Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park after dark</li></ul>
Those <b>born on the Mainland</b> gave higher mean scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allowing children to play during the day in 'A'ala Park</li><li>• Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park during the day</li></ul>
Respondents <b>living in homes without children</b> gave higher mean scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allowing children to play during the day in 'A'ala Park</li><li>• Seniors walking in or around 'A'ala Park during the day</li></ul>

# 'A'ALA PARK – USAGE

## PARK USER

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ China-town	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus District	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
Every day/ Almost (5)	12%	36%	7%	4%	7%	12%	18%	12%	19%	5%	29%	-
Few times a week (4)	8%	24%	-	3%	6%	12%	13%	2%	13%	4%	20%	-
Once a week (3)	6%	8%	-	3%	7%	6%	11%	5%	9%	4%	15%	-
Less than (2)	15%	18%	15%	13%	16%	17%	10%	13%	16%	14%	36%	-
Never (1)	58%	14%	78%	78%	63%	53%	48%	68%	43%	74%	-	100%
MEAN	2.03	3.51	1.42	1.43	1.79	2.12	2.42	1.77	2.50	1.52	3.42	1.00

- Male respondents were more likely to be park users with females being significantly less likely to visit the park

- Less affluent segments of the sample were also more likely to be park users

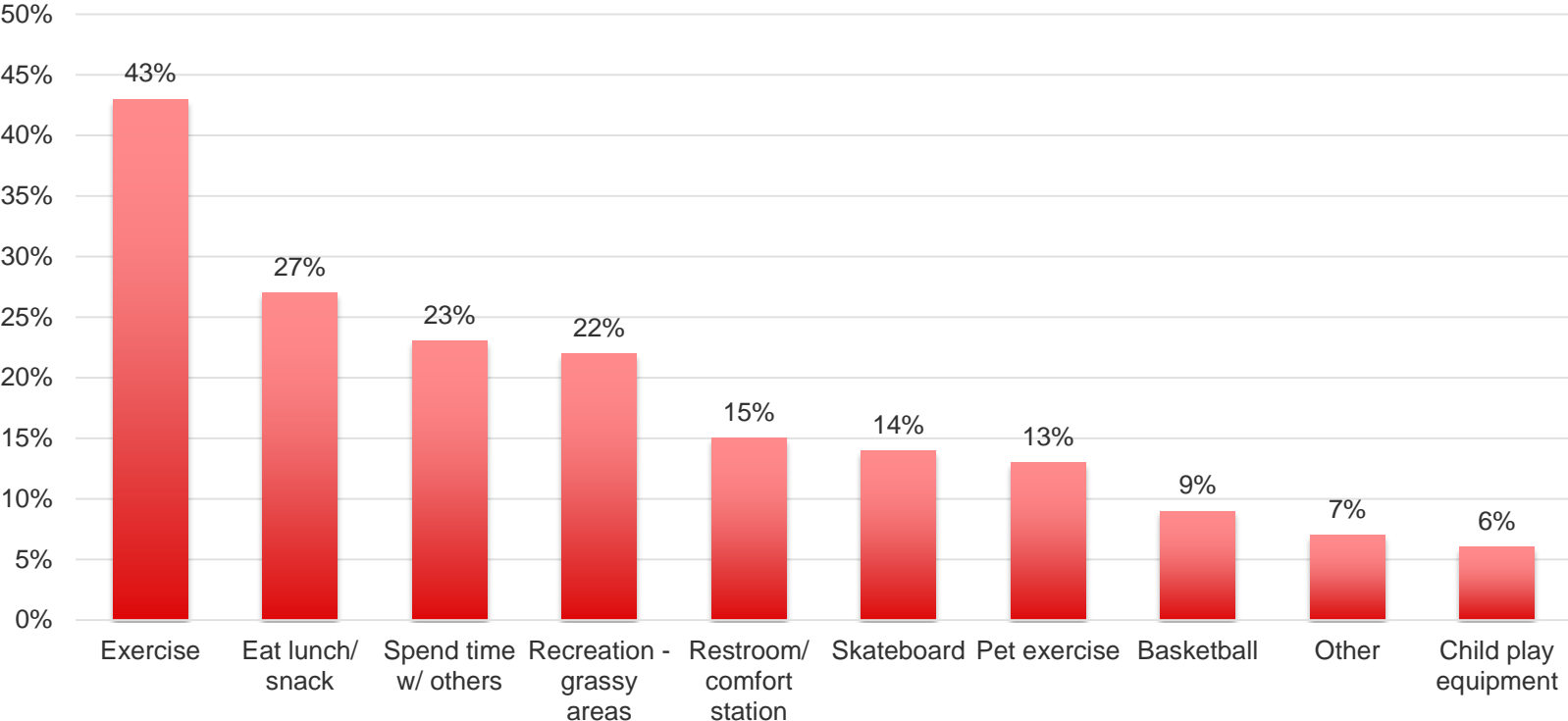
- Among the major ethnic groups, Native Hawaiians were the most likely to be park users

# PARK USER PROFILE

	PARK USER	NON-USER	COMMENT		PARK USER	NON-USER	COMMENT
<b>PRIMARY RESIDENCE</b> Live in area Outside impact zone N.I.	70% 29% 1%	38% 61% 1%	Park users were more likely to be area residents.	<b>ETHNICITY</b> Hawaiian Caucasian Filipino Japanese Chinese Other	23% 21% 9% 10% 5% 31%	18% 19% 18% 11% 8% 24%	The primary difference when segmented by ethnicity is the smaller proportion of Filipinos among park users.
<b>EDUCATION</b> HS/ Less Some College Four-year college grad Post-graduate	55% 21% 23% 2%	44% 29% 25% 2%	Park users tend to have lower levels of formal education.	<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b> < \$50K \$50K-\$100K \$100K+ Rf	62% 18% 4% 15%	44% 26% 9% 21%	Park users are less affluent compared to non-users.
<b>ORIGIN</b> Oahu N.I. U.S. Mainland Other	50% 5% 25% 21%	51% 7% 21% 22%		<b>GENDER</b> Male Female Non-binary	65% 34% 2%	43% 54% 2%	The profile of park users has a higher proportion of male respondents while females make up a majority of non-users.
<b>AGE</b> 18-34 35-49 50-64 65+ MEAN	29% 29% 30% 13% 45.80	27% 28% 29% 15% 47.00					

# PARK USAGE AND ACTIVITIES

n=175





# USER – SURROUNDING AREA

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ China-town	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus District	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
Every day/ Almost (5)	22%	21%	7%	11%	15%	24%	24%	20%	33%	10%	41%	8%
Few times a week (4)	17%	15%	8%	12%	16%	18%	27%	13%	21%	13%	29%	9%
Once a week (3)	8%	10%	14%	6%	7%	5%	8%	13%	9%	8%	10%	8%
Less than (2)	19%	16%	20%	18%	16%	22%	16%	13%	17%	21%	19%	19%
Never (1)	33%	38%	51%	53%	63%	31%	24%	40%	19%	48%	2%	56%
MEAN	2.77	2.65	2.00	2.48	1.79	2.81	3.11	2.60	3.32	2.17	3.87	1.95

- Females were less likely to walk by the park

- Less affluent and less educated segments of the sample walk by the park on a more frequent basis

# RESPONDENT PROFILE

# RESPONDENT CLASSIFICATION

	TOTAL	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient
Area Resident	44%	86%	-	65%	29%	-	-	-
Worker	25%	6%	45%	13%	34%	-	100%	-
Transient	16%	-	34%	14%	18%	-	-	100%
Business owner	14%	-	21%	7%	19%	100%	-	-

# ETHNIC BACKGROUND

	n=412
Hawaiian/ Part Hawaiian	20%
Caucasian	19%
Filipino	14%
Japanese	11%
Chinese	6%
African-American	4%
Vietnamese	3%
Korean	2%
Chuukese	1%
Chamorro	0%
Marshallese	0%
Mixed (not Hawaiian)	9%
Other	3%
Refused	1%

# PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

## AREA RESIDENT

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ China-town	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus Dist	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
<i>Live in area</i>	52%	100%	31%	13%	-	56%	66%	40%	100%	-	70%	38%
<i>Live outside of area</i>	47%	-	69%	87%	96%	44%	32%	60%	-	98%	29%	61%
<i>Neighbor Island</i>	1%	-	-	-	4%	1%	2%	1%	-	2%	1%	1%

# COMPARATIVE PROFILE

## AREA RESIDENTS AND NON-RESIDENTS

	RESIDENT	NON-RES	COMMENT		RESIDENT	NON-RES	COMMENT
<b>EDUCATION</b>				<b>ETHNICITY</b>			
HS / Less	58%	39%	Those living in one of the targeted zones were significantly more likely to have a high school diploma or less.	Hawaiian	23%	17%	Compared to non-residents, fewer number of Filipino and Chinese living in the targeted zones.
Some College	21%	30%		Caucasian	23%	16%	
Four-year college grad	14%	22%		Filipino	7%	21%	
Post-graduate	4%	8%		Japanese	9%	13%	
				Chinese	4%	9%	
				Other	34%	28%	
<b>ORIGIN</b>				<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>			
Oahu	52%	49%		< \$50K	64%	39%	Those who live in one of the targeted zones are significantly less affluent.
N.I.	4%	8%		\$50K-\$100K	17%	30%	
U.S. Mainland	26%	19%		\$100K+	4%	10%	
Other	18%	25%		Rf	15%	23%	
<b>AGE</b>				<b>GENDER</b>			
18-34	21%	35%	Area residents tend to be older compared to non-residents.	Male	62%	42%	There is a higher proportion of males among area residents.
35-49	31%	26%		Female	36%	56%	
50-64	32%	27%		Non-binary	2%	1%	
65+	16%	12%					
MEAN	48.57	44.24					

# TEST ZONES WALKED THROUGH/ USED

	TOTAL	Resident Only	Bus Owner	Area Worker	Transient	'A'ala Park/ Chinatown	Kalihi/ Palama	Down-town Bus Dist	Area Resident	Non-Resident	'A'ala Park User	Non-User
BASE	412	183	59	103	67	189	62	149	214	198	175	237
'A'ala Park/ Chinatown	58%	58%	61%	46%	73%	93%	40%	21%	60%	56%	61%	55%
Downtown Business District	54%	46%	59%	66%	51%	37%	18%	90%	46%	62%	49%	57%
Kalihi/ Palama	24%	34%	10%	17%	19%	19%	85%	4%	31%	16%	29%	20%
Nu'uuanu-Mauka	16%	23%	10%	9%	13%	19%	11%	9%	21%	11%	24%	10%

# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

## BUSINESS SAMPLE (owners and workers)

	OVERALL	COMMENTS
<b>YEARS IN AREA</b>		
1-5 Yrs	28%	Roughly one in four businesses have been operating in the area for less than five years. The mean or average number of years in business is 15.54 with the median being lower at 12 years.
6-10	17%	
11-20	30%	
21+	23%	
MEAN	15.54	
MEDIAN	12	
<b>YEARS W/ BUSINESS</b>		
1-5 Yrs	57%	The typical business respondent has been with the company an average of 8.29 years. The median is half that at four years.
6+	42%	
MEAN	8.29	
MEDIAN	4	

## RESIDENT SAMPLE

	OVERALL	COMMENTS
<b>HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>		
One person	52%	Among area residents the average household contained 2.20 persons. The median, however, was a single occupant.
Two persons	22%	
3+ persons	27%	
MEAN	2.20	
MEDIAN	1	
<b>CHILD UNDER 18 IN HSE</b>	21%	1 in 5 area households contains a child under 18.
<b>ADULT 60+</b>	45%	Nearly half of area households contains an adult 60+



# PERSONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

	OVERALL	COMMENTS		OVERALL	COMMENTS	
<b>AGE</b>			<b>ETHNICITY</b>			
18-34	28%	The typical respondent was 46.49 years of age. The median was 46 years of age.	Native Hawaiian	20%	Racially diverse set of sample respondents.  Total list of respondent ethnicities is provided in the methodology section. For analysis purposes, some smaller ethnic groups are shown in "other" for analysis purposes.	
35-49	28%		Caucasian	19%		
50-64	29%		Filipino	14%		
65+	14%		Japanese	11%		
<b>EDUCATION</b>			Chinese	6%		
HS/ Less	49%	Half of those polled (49%) have a high school diploma or less.	Other	27%		
Some College	25%			<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>		
Four-year college grad	18%			< \$50K	52%	Half the sample reside in the lowest income tier.
Post-graduate	6%			\$50K-\$100K	22%	
<b>YEARS IN HAWAII</b>			\$100K+	7%		
Born on Oahu	50%	Half of those polled were born on Oahu with another six percent born on the N.I.s. Of the remainder, 23% were transplants from the U.S. Mainland while one in five (21%) were from foreign countries or territories.	Rf	19%		
Born on a N.I.	6%			<b>GENDER</b>		
From U.S. Mainland	23%			Male	52%	Random sample
Other	21%			Female	45%	
			Nonbinary	2%		

MAHALO!  
Any questions?



Photograph by francis haar, from the exhibition Disappearing Honolulu

**A'ALA PARK**

**SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION**

**OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND**

**RECREATION (SOPARC)**

**BASELINE STUDY**

STUDY CONDUCTED FOR THE  
TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

BY:

OPAL VANESSA BUCHTHAL, DRPH  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH STUDIES

JANUARY, 2022

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Purpose of the study**

In 2020, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) began a community-engaged project to revitalize and re-invigorate A'ala Park, an underused public space located at the juncture of Honolulu's Chinatown, Kalihi-Palama, and Iwilei neighborhoods.

As part of this work, TPL contracted with a researcher at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to conduct a baseline assessment of park utilization, using the System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) protocol. SOPARC involves conducting rigorous, structured observations of park conditions, park user demographics, and park user behaviors during defined times of day, on both weekdays and weekends.

### **Study Setting**

While this general area began as a Native Hawaiian fishing village, by the beginning of the 20th century it had evolved into a dense low-income urban community, populated by Honolulu's low-income Chinese, Japanese, and Native Hawaiian families. As male Filipino plantation workers were recruited to supplement earlier waves of plantation workers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, businesses and rooming houses in the area shifted to serve this migrant community as well<sup>1</sup>.

A'ala Park, located between the Nu'uaniu Stream and the Liliha Junction, was originally developed in 1904 as a community park and playground serving Chinatown and the A'ala, Palama, and Liliha neighborhoods<sup>2</sup>. Initially, the park contained a bandstand, a playground, and baseball fields, as well as benches and picnic tables. It was a popular space for local baseball leagues to compete, and for both local residents and plantation workers coming into town on the railway to relax out-of-doors.

Originally, A'ala park consisted of a 3-acre quadrangle of land running between King Street and Beretania Street, bordered by the Nu'uaniu Stream on the Chinatown side, the Honolulu rail depot on the Iwilei side, and by a dense cluster of rooming houses, restaurants, pool halls, dance halls, and other businesses located along A'ala Street on the Palama and Beretania sides, with the St. Louis college campus located just north of the park. The triangle of land between A'ala Street and the Palama Junction (where King and Beretania street merge, and other major roadways intersect) was fully developed, with hotels and other businesses around the perimeter, and tenements in the center<sup>3</sup>.

City-mandated urban renewal in the 1950s/60s resulted in the bulldozing of much of the original A'ala neighborhood, including the area currently occupied by the park. A'ala Park was redeveloped as a 7-acre park occupying the triangle of land between the Nu'uaniu Stream, King Street, and Beretania Street, ending at the Palama Junction, where King and Beretania Streets merge. This expansion resulted in a passive park, with walking paths and landscaping.

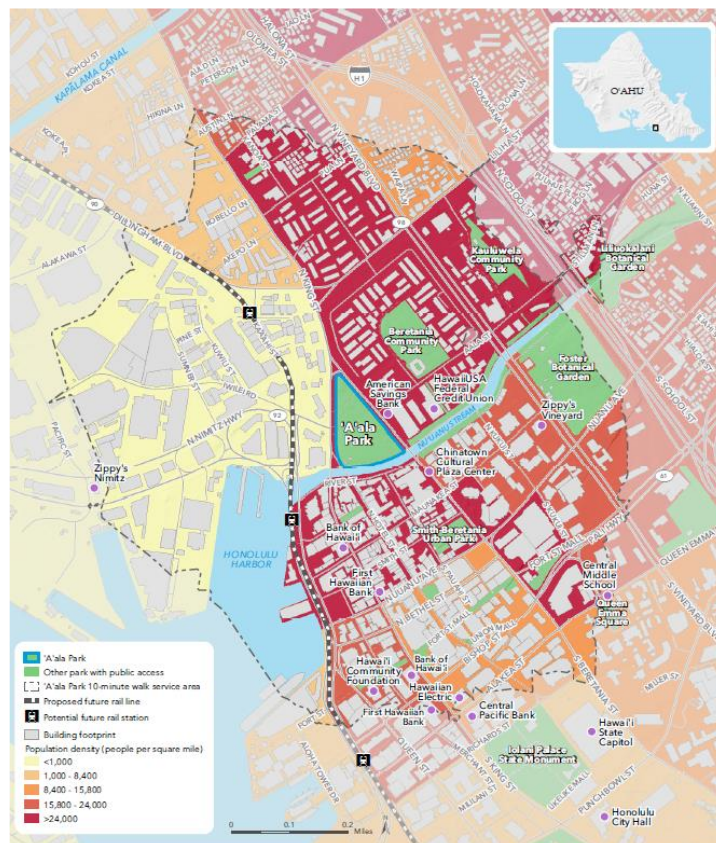
In the 1990s, in an effort to deal with growing levels of homelessness in Honolulu, the Fasi administration amended park rules to permit the use of A'ala Park as a living space for homeless individuals.<sup>4</sup> This experiment was short-lived, but had long-lasting impacts on the park and the surrounding areas, and is today viewed as a cautionary example of what not to do in addressing Honolulu's homeless crisis.<sup>5</sup>

In 2001, A'ala Park was again renovated, with the addition of a basketball court, softball field, parking lot, elevated grassy stage area, playground equipment and walkways<sup>6</sup>. In 2019, the City and County of Honolulu added the Bark Park, along with renovations to the comfort station and ballfield, as part of Mayor Caldwell's Kakou for Parks Initiative.<sup>7</sup>

Today, the A'ala, Kalihi-Palama and Chinatown neighborhoods around A'ala Park continue to be a landing spot for new, low-income Asian and Pacific Islander migrant groups. The neighborhood around the park contains a high concentration of Honolulu's city-owned low-income housing projects and affordable housing developments. Historic Chinatown borders the park to the east, and Kalihi-Palama to

the west, with Liliha, a lower-income neighborhood where many older Chinese families and seniors reside, located to the North, but separated from the A'ala area by Vineyard Street, and the H-1 freeway. The Iwilei neighborhood, on the makai (ocean) side of the park, is an industrial neighborhood with a large and growing concentration of social-service organizations serving houseless, drug using, and mentally ill Hawai'i residents.

Within the 10-minute walking distance to A'ala Park itself are several pedestrian malls and four substantial park properties, in addition to several minor greenspaces (Figure 1). Immediately adjacent to the park's Nu'uuanu Stream walkway is College Walk, a pedestrian mall along the river that connects the A'ala area to Vineyard Street. Beretania Community Park, which contains the Honolulu Parks Department's office for the area, is located a half-block north of the park on A'ala Street. This park contains Parks Department offices and a building for community activities, as well as a playground, circular walking track, and court, and serves as a location for the Honolulu Parks' Department's youth and senior programming. To the north of the area, across Vineyard Street towards the perimeter of the 10-minute walking zone, are Foster botanical gardens and Lili'uokalani Botanical Gardens, adjoining public spaces that host community events and provide access to outdoor space and education. Park access is much more limited to the east, in Chinatown, where the only substantial greenspace is Smith-Beretania Park, located about a 5-minute walk from A'ala Park. This smaller greenspace adjacent to low-income housing contains a small playground, and has similar challenges to A'ala Park.



**Figure 1**

**Location of parks and open spaces within a 10-minute walk of A'ala Park**

*(map of A'ala park's 10-minute walking distance created by the Trust for Public Land, October 2019)*

## STUDY METHODS

### Study Protocol

Data collection was performed using the Systematic Observation of Physical Activity and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) protocol, tailored to park conditions<sup>8</sup>.

A'ala Park is triangular in shape, with its widest end along the Nu'uuanu Stream on the East (Chinatown/Diamond Head) side of the park, and its narrowest end at the King St./Beretania St. merge on the Western (Kalihi-Palama/Ewa) side of the park. It is bordered by Nu'uuanu Stream on the East side, five-lane Beretania Street on the North (Mauka) side, and six-lane King Street on the South (Makai) side. City sidewalks run along both the Beretania and King Street edges of the park, and connect at the King St/Beretania street merge. A single turn lane borders this sidewalk connection, allowing westbound traffic on King Street to circle the end of the park and continue eastbound on Beretania. Just past this turn lane is a small triangular traffic island in the center of a crosswalk that allow pedestrians to cross the ten traffic lanes of King Street just before the King/Beretania merge.

After SOPARC protocols were reviewed, the lead investigator then visited the park and walked it to determine the park's natural activity zones, sight-lines and other methodological concerns, and identify potential boundary markers between zones. A map of the park was then downloaded from Trust for Public Land, and used to define the boundaries of nine activity zones for observation (Figure 2).



Figure 2

### SOPARC Activity Zone Boundaries

(Original map of A'ala Park created by the Trust for Public Land, October 2019, with SOPARC study activity zone boundaries overlaid onto the TPL map)

The King and Beretania Street sidewalks were shown in the park map as outside the park's official boundaries; these sidewalks and the traffic island were not included in the SOPARC observation. The inner border of the King and Beretania Street sidewalks were used as the perimeter marker for the park activity zones. The water side of the wall bordering the Nu'uaniu Stream pathway was used as the park's eastern boundary.

The nine activity zones were defined as:

1. Basketball court
2. Tot lot or playground
3. Skatepark
4. Parking area
5. Nu'uaniu stream pathway
6. Comfort station
7. Ball field
8. Ewa walking paths (a group of interconnected walking paths that wind around planters/seating spaces and small grassy areas at the Ewa end of the park)
9. The fenced bark park located in the center of the walking paths.

In addition to counting individuals within the nine activity zones, we also conducted timed (5-minute) pedestrian counts of individuals transiting the city sidewalk at the two points where the park's internal walking pathways connected to crosswalks : (A) the crosswalk at the King Street/Iwilei Street intersection on the makai side of the park, and (B) the crosswalk at the Beretania Street/A'ala Street intersection on the mauka side of the park.

Data collection sheets were developed using the basic SOPARC protocol, adapted for local conditions (Appendix A).

Within each zone, observers recorded the date and time of the observation. They then recorded data on the zone's general conditions, such as accessibility, usability, supervision, access to equipment.

Next, observers recorded the individuals observed in the zone, by age, gender, and type of activity.

In zones 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 the observational protocol followed the standard SOPARC protocol of choosing a central observation spot where the entire zone could be viewed at once, and recording the number of females by age and primary, secondary, and other activity, and then recording the number of males, by age and primary, secondary, and other activity

In zones 5 (Nu'uaniu Pathway) and 8 (Ewa walking paths) this methodology was adapted due to the geography of the park in these areas, and safety concerns for the observers. Although these are both walking paths, they are not the kind of circular walking tracks that SOPARC specifies, where you can count users by standing in one location and counting people walking or jogging past you for a specified period of time. During early scouting sessions, we determined that with rare exceptions, there were four activities that occurred along these walking paths: lying down/sleeping, sitting, standing, or walking. For these two zones, observers were instructed to place a sticky note on the observation sheet with the following categories:

	Female	Male
Lying down or sleeping		
Sitting		
Standing		
Walking		
Other:		

Observers were instructed to start the observation at one end of the pathway, and then walk the pathway from end-to-end at a normal walking pace, recording a C (child), T (teen), A (adult) or S in the appropriate box for each individual as they passed them. At the end of the section, they paused to review their tally, determine which were the primary and secondary activities, and then transfer their counts to their SOPARC observation sheet. This modification allowed observers to accurately count all individuals within the zone, including those lying down/sleeping in areas of the pathway where visibility from a central point on the walkway would have been obscured by planters, walls, shrubbery, or dips in the landscaping. It also allowed observers to focus on their count while remaining alert to their immediate surroundings and moving quickly past any questionable activities occurring in these areas.

In Zone 4 (the parking lot) SOPARC observers were instructed not to attempt to observe or count individuals seated inside their cars. Only individuals who were standing outside of their cars, walking through the parking area, seated on the wall next to the parking area, or sleeping on the grass in front of the parking area were observed and counted. This, again, was done for safety reasons, to avoid discomfiting individuals who may be sleeping in their cars, or using their car for drug-dealing and other illegal activities. Similarly, in Zone 7 (Ewa walking paths) observers were instructed to conduct their observation from the walking path, and not to look for sleeping people or activities that might be occurring in the shrubbery at the end of the park.

### Data collection

Data was collected during the last two weeks of October, 2021, on two weekdays (Wednesday and Friday), and two weekend days (Saturday and Sunday). Observations were conducted at four time-points during each day: 7:30 am, 11 am, 2 pm and 4 pm.

The data collection team consisted of the PI, a UH student research assistant, and a group of community volunteers recruited from American Savings Bank (ASB). Team underwent classroom training from the on the research protocol, followed by an initial data collection session conducted under the PI's supervision. All data collection was done by a team of two data collectors – one UH research team member and one community volunteer.

Data collectors synchronized the start time and location of their observations. Observers were encouraged to talk with each other and ask questions during the observation, but each observer recorded their count independently on separate data sheets. Some variation is to be expected between observers in the number, age, and activity of individuals at the moment that each observer records them. This is accounted for in the SOPARC protocol by averaging these counts between the two observations at the conclusion of data collection.

Park users were coded as “seniors” (over age 65) if they had visible grey or white hair. They were coded as “children” (age 11 or younger) if they showed no signs of reaching puberty, and as “teens” (age 12-20) if they appeared to have reached puberty but did not yet appear to be full adult. These assessments required judgement calls, and observers were allowed to discuss their assessment of a user's age with each other during the observation.

Users were not instructed to attempt to assess users' ethnicity. While this is a standard part of the SOPARC protocol in the continental United States, in Hawai'i accurately identifying ethnicity through visual observation in Hawaii is considered infeasible<sup>9</sup>.



All observations were conducted during hours when the ASB security team were present either at the ASB campus across the street from the park, or within the park itself. No observations were conducted during dawn, dusk, or night-time hours.

Data collectors were regularly approached and questioned by park users during the observations, generally while data collectors were completing their counts of the Nu'uau Stream Pathway or the ballfield. When this occurred, data collection was paused while the data collectors answered questions, explained the purpose of the study, and listened to perspectives that park users wished to provide about the park, and then the count was resumed.

### Data Entry, Cleaning and Analysis

At the conclusion of each session, each data collector reviewed their sheet for completeness and computational errors. A student assistant then averaged the accounts between the two observers in each session, and this data was then entered into SPSS v.28 (CITE). Data entry was reviewed for accuracy by sorting each column to identify outliers, then checking that participant totals were consistent across zone, age, gender, and intensity categories. The original data sheets were used to resolve any discrepancies.

After the data was cleaned, summary totals were run to identify the total number of users, the average number and type of users, most common activities, and level of physical activity engaged in within the park overall, by time of day, weekday vs weekend, and activity zone. The average and total number of individuals transiting the city sidewalk at park entry points A and B were also calculated.

## RESULTS

Overall, 652 park users were observed across the two weeks of the park observation, with an average of 163 park users per observation day (Table 1). The park was slightly more used on weekdays (170/day) than on weekends (156/day). Pedestrians walking into or alongside the park was fairly low at both sidewalk access points, but was more common at the King/Iwilei crosswalk (88 pedestrians total, with an average of 5 pedestrians per observation) than at the Beretania/A'ala Street crosswalk (47 pedestrians total, with an average of 3 pedestrians per 5-minute observation).

Date	Day	By Gender		By Age				Total
		Male	Female	Children	Teens	Adults	Seniors	
10/22/2021	Friday	124	54	5	5	128	40	178
10/24/2021	Saturday	111	45	8	6	139	3	156
10/27/2021	Wednesday	111	54	3	0	150	12	165
10/30/2021	Sunday	103	50	7	5	125	16	153
<i>Total across all 4 observation days</i>		<i>449 (69%)</i>	<i>203 (31%)</i>	<i>23 (4%)</i>	<i>16 (2%)</i>	<i>542 (83%)</i>	<i>71 (11%)</i>	<i>652 (100%)</i>

(percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding)

Basic conditions within the different activity zones did not differ by day, time of day, or zone. Zones were always accessible for use and in usable condition for their intended activity, but generally unsupervised, with no sports or play equipment available. No formal, organized events occupied any activity zone, although one informal volleyball game and a small group of faith-based outreach workers were observed

interacting with park users in the ballfield area. One park cleanup with a check-in tent was observed in the ballfield during a Saturday morning observation.

More than 2/3 of park users observed were adult (83%) and male (69%) (Table 2). Only 11% of users appeared to be seniors. Youth (2%) and children (4%) combined made up less than 6% of all individuals observed using A'ala Park.

The most heavily-used activity zone in the park was the Nu'uaniu Stream walkway, where a quarter (25%) of all users were found (Table 2). Another 16% of all park users were observed on the ballfield adjacent to the Nu'uaniu Stream walkway, and 16% in the area around the adjacent comfort station. Combined, these three adjacent activity zones along the Nu'uaniu Stream/Chinatown side of the park contained more than half (57%) of all park users.

The basketball court (2%), bark park (3%) and tot lot (3%) were the least-used activity zones in the park. It should be noted that the majority of park users observed in the tot lot were adult or senior men not accompanied by a child. Less than a quarter (24%) of park users in tot lot were children of an appropriate age to use the play equipment.

Twelve percent of park users were observed in the skatepark area. While a majority of skatepark users were adult (67%) and male (65%), this was the area with the highest percentage of children (16%) and teens (17%), as well as a higher proportion of female users (35%) than in the park overall.

Activity zone	Gender				Age Group								Total Users	
	Male		Female		Children		Teens		Adults		Seniors		N	%
Basketball	7	54%	6	46%	0	0%	1	8%	11	85%	1	8%	13	2%
Tot lot	13	62%	8	38%	5	24%	0	0%	14	67%	2	10%	21	3%
Skatepark	49	65%	26	35%	12	16%	13	17%	50	67%	0	0%	75	12%
Parking	37	70%	16	30%	0	0%	0	0%	47	89%	6	11%	53	8%
Nu'uaniu Stream Walkway	128	80%	33	20%	3	2%	1	1%	134	83%	23	14%	161	25%
Comfort Stations	65	62%	40	38%	3	3%	1	1%	91	87%	10	10%	105	16%
Ballfield	65	62%	40	38%	0	0%	0	0%	93	89%	12	11%	105	16%
Ewa Walking Paths	73	72%	29	28%	0	0%	0	0%	88	86%	14	14%	102	16%
Bark park	12	71%	5	29%	0	0%	0	0%	14	82%	3	18%	17	3%
<i>Total N</i>	449	69%	203	31%	23	4%	16	2%	542	83%	71	11%	652	100%

Overall, three-quarters (74%) of park users were observed engaging in sedentary activities, such as sleeping, lying down, sitting, or standing (Table 3). Only 7% of all activities observed were vigorous, exercise-intensity-level activities. Physical activity levels were somewhat lower on Wednesday, but otherwise did not appear to vary substantively by time-of-day or weekday vs weekend.

**Table 3**  
**Level of physical activity observed among A'ala Park users, by observation day**

	Sedentary Activity		Leisurely walking		Vigorous activity		Row Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
<b>Observation Date</b>							
10/22/2021 (Friday)	132	74%	39	22%	7	4%	178
10/24/2021 (Sunday)	111	71%	25	16%	20	13%	156
10/27/2021 (Wednesday)	139	84%	19	12%	7	4%	165
10/30/2021 (Saturday)	110	72%	31	20%	12	8%	153
<b>Observation Time</b>							
7:30-8:30	96	77%	24	19%	4	3%	124
11am-Noon	94	70%	27	20%	13	10%	134
2-3 pm	129	79%	21	13%	13	8%	163
4-5 pm	173	75%	42	18%	16	7%	231
<b>Total Observations</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>652</b>

Sedentary activity =sleeping, lying down, sitting, standing

Leisurely walking = walking at a leisurely pace

Vigorous activity = skateboarding, bicycling, jogging

The skatepark was the only activity zone in the park where a majority (51%) were observed engaging in vigorous activity (Table 4). Half of all park users observed in the basketball court were engaged in walking past or through the court, a third (31%) were sitting on the court or the walkway, and three (23%) were observed in engaged in vigorous activity –playing basketball on the court.

As noted above, the Chinatown/Nu'uuanu stream end of the park is where two-thirds (65%) of all park users were observed. In the four activity zones along this border of the park (parking lot, Nu'uuanu stream pathway, comfort station and ballfield) more than 80% of park users were engaged in sedentary activities such as sleeping, lying down, sitting, standing.

**Table 4**  
**Level of physical activity observed in A'ala Park users, by park activity zone**  
**(cumulative across all 4 observation days)**

Activity Zone	Sedentary activity		Leisurely walking		Vigorous activity		Row total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Basketball	4	31%	6	46%	3	23%	13
Tot lot	16	76%	3	14%	2	10%	21
Skatepark	30	40%	7	9%	38	51%	75
Parking Area	46	87%	7	13%	0	0%	53
Nu'uaniu Stream Walkway	132	82%	28	17%	1	1%	161
Comfort Station	93	89%	12	11%	0	0%	105
Ballfield	86	82%	19	18%	0	0%	105
Ewa Walking Paths	68	67%	32	31%	2	2%	102
Bark park	17	100%	0	0%	0	0%	17
<i>Total N</i>	<i>492</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>652</i>

Almost half (46%) of all park users were observed sitting down (Table 5). Park users were more likely to be lying down or sleeping on weekdays, as compared to weekends, and in the morning as opposed to the afternoon. Sitting was more common in the afternoons, and the number of people skateboarding was higher on weekends than week-days.

**Table 5**  
**Types of physical activity A'ala Park users observed engaging in,**  
**by date and time of day**

Observations by Day		Lying down or sleeping		Sitting		Standing		Walking		Skateboarding		Other		Total N
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Date	Day													
10/22/2021	Friday	36	20%	81	46%	20	19%	34	19%	7	4%	0	0%	178
10/24/2021	Sunday	17	11%	71	46%	19	19%	29	19%	17	11%	3	2%	156
10/27/2021	Wednesday	30	18%	78	47%	32	11%	18	11%	6	4%	1	1%	165
10/30/2021	Saturday	14	9%	73	48%	22	21%	32	21%	10	7%	2	1%	153
Observations by Time														
7:30-8:30		26	21%	52	42%	17	14%	25	20%	3	2%	1	1%	124
11am-Noon		24	18%	55	41%	15	11%	27	20%	12	9%	1	1%	134
2-3 pm		21	13%	71	44%	38	23%	20	12%	13	8%	0	0%	163
4-5 pm		26	11%	125	54%	23	10%	41	18%	12	5%	4	2%	231
<i>Grand Total</i>		<i>97</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>303</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>652</i>
<i>Total across all 4 days</i>		<i>97</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>303</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>652</i>

(percentages do not add to 100% due to rounding)

Areas of the park where substantial portions of park users were observed lying down or sleeping included the comfort station (32%), the ballfield (16%), and the grass and shrubbery around the Ewa walking paths (15%) (Table 6). Adults were also observed sleeping inside the fenced areas of the tot lot, and the bark park. Leisurely walking was commonly observed on the Nu'uaniu stream walkway, the Ewa walking paths, and the central walking path near the basketball court. Nearly half (49%) of the individuals observed in/around the skatepark were skateboarding; with a substantial proportion of users were standing around or sitting in this area, and a few individuals were observed sleeping around the edges of the skatepark during early morning hours.

**Table 6**  
**Types of physical activity A'ala Park users observed engaging in, by activity zone**  
**(cumulative across all 4 observation days)**

Activity Zone	Lying Down or Sleeping		Sitting		Standing		Walking		Skateboarding		Other		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Basketball	0	0%	3	23%	1	8%	6	46%	0	0%	3	23%	13	100%
Tot lot	2	10%	12	57%	3	14%	2	10%	1	5%	1	5%	21	100%
Skatepark	6	8%	23	31%	7	9%	1	1%	37	49%	1	1%	75	100%
Parking	5	9%	27	51%	15	28%	6	11%	0	0%	0	0%	53	100%
Nu'uaniu Stream Walkway	16	10%	92	57%	20	12%	32	20%	1	1%		0%	161	100%
Comfort Station	34	32%	41	39%	16	15%	14	13%	0	0%	0	0%	105	100%
Ballfield	17	16%	53	50%	16	15%	19	18%	0	0%	0	0%	105	100%
Ewa Walking Paths	15	15%	42	41%	10	10%	33	32%	1	1%	1	1%	102	100%
Bark park	2	12%	10	59%	5	29%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	17	100%
<i>Total</i>	97	15%	303	46%	93	14%	113	17%	40	6%	6	1%	652	100%

Nearly one out of every five adults or seniors observed in the park were either lying down or sleeping (Table 7). Children and teens, while a small portion of park users overall, were far more active than other age groups. Two-thirds (63%) of all teens, and nearly half of all children (43%) observed in the park were skateboarding at the time of the observation. There did not appear to be substantive differences in activities engaged in between genders, for either adults or children.

**Table 7**  
**Types of physical activity A'ala Park users observed engaging in, by age and gender**

Gender/Age	Lying down or sleeping		Sitting		Standing		Walking		Skate-boarding		Other		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Female children	0	0%	5	36%	0	0%	1	7%	7	50%	1	7%	14
Male children	0	0%	2	22%	0	0%	4	44%	3	33%	0	0%	9
<i>Child total</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>43%</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>23</i>
Female teens	0	0%	3	33%	1	11%	0	0%	5	56%	0	0%	9
Male teens	0	0%	1	14%	0	0%	1	14%	5	71%	0	0%	7
<i>Teen total</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>63%</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>16</i>
Female adults	17	11%	80	50%	33	21%	23	14%	3	2%	3	2%	159
Male adults	67	17%	180	47%	48	13%	70	18%	17	4%	1	0%	383
<i>Adult total</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>260</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>442</i>
Female seniors	4	19%	9	43%	1	5%	6	29%	0	0%	1	5%	21
Male seniors	9	18%	23	46%	10	20%	8	16%	0	0%	0	0%	50
<i>Senior total</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>71</i>
Total N	97	15%	303	46%	93	14%	113	17%	40	6%	6	1%	652

Additional patterns or events noted during the park walk-throughs

During the early morning (7:30 am) observations, a large proportion of park users observed appeared to be houseless.

In the early afternoons, small groups of adult and senior park users were observed picnicking and socializing in the ballfield, particularly along the tree-shaded area along the rock wall between the ballfield and the Nu'uauu stream pathway. One resident told us that he comes out to sit in the park in the early afternoon because his un-airconditioned apartment is uncomfortably warm in the mid-afternoon. He reported that sitting in a shady area of the park near the stream provided relief from the heat, as well as an opportunity to socialize.

Park users were commonly observed seated (or sleeping) on the rock wall along the Nu'uauu Stream pathway, on mats on the walkways and grassy areas in front of the comfort station, and on the circular planter walls located in the Ewa walking paths greenspaces; many of these individuals appeared to be unhoused. Several individuals were observed sleeping or sitting in roughly the same location during all four observations in a day, and/or on multiple observation days, suggesting that some of these individuals may be using the park as their primary residence.

During several observation periods we noted young adult males standing in the entry to both the men's and women's sides of the comfort station, appearing to control who could enter or use the facility. The majority of individuals located in the comfort station area appeared to be houseless individuals lying or sleeping on cardboard mats on the grass. We also observed a temporary lean-to built on the city sidewalk adjacent to the comfort station on all of our park observations; during one afternoon walk-through an adult male was observed lying partially clothed next to this structure, holding his penis and urinating across the sidewalk. Midway through the observation period we observed a police activity in the comfort station area, with multiple arrests. During all subsequent observations the comfort station gates

were locked, and the facility recorded as unusable.

Houseless men were regularly observed sleeping in the tot lot, along the skate park, and inside the fenced bark park during the 7:30 am observations. The comfort station area was the only area where we regularly observed houseless women resting or sleeping, always in small social groups. While we regularly observed men sleeping or sitting by themselves in the park, the overwhelming majority of the women that we saw in the park were in social groups that included at least one male companion

The planter in the Ewa walking path area closest to the Palama Junction appeared to be a common gathering place in the afternoons for groups of young adult men, and for houseless or mentally ill individuals. This planter is shielded from view by a service-building on the east (diamond-head) side, and by shrubbery on the west (Ewa) side, and was the one area of the park where observers felt discomfort during the observation.

## **DISCUSSION**

The data suggests that A'ala Park is under-used; on a typical day barely more than 150 individuals were seen using the park during all four observations combined. Sedentary activities – sleeping, lying down, sitting or standing, are currently the dominant uses of the park. Sleeping or lying down are particularly common in the mornings, when a large percentage of the park's users appear to be houseless.

Park usage observed in this study is substantially out of line with the demographics of the population living within a 10-minute walk of the park. Children and teens (below age 20) are almost 17% of the population in the park's catchment area, but made up only 6% of all park users. Seniors represent almost a quarter (23%) of individuals who live within the park's catchment area, but were only 11% of the within the park's catchment area, and represented Male users outnumbered female users by more than two-to-one.

### **Park challenges identified**

The grassy area in front of the comfort station area was routinely strewn with trash and debris, and occupied by multiple individuals sleeping or lying down on cardboard mats. During several observations the doors to the comfort station were blocked by adult males who appeared to be controlling entry to both the men's and the women's sides of the facility, during later observations the comfort station gates were locked at all times, rendering the facility inaccessible.

While the SOPARC methodology does not measure intangible safety concerns, the Ewa walking paths at the Kalihi end of the park felt less safe to observers than the other zones of the park, particularly in the late afternoon. Younger adult men were often observed sitting alone or in small clusters around the planters in this area, sometimes appearing to be 'scoping out' individuals walking past them.

The Tot Lot does not appear to be effectively serving families with young children. During the course of the week, more adult males were observed sitting or sleeping in the tot lot than children using the play equipment as intended. It should be noted that there is a larger, supervised children's playground located at Beretania Community Park, less than a two-minute walk from A'ala Park. In addition to being better-equipped and supervised by park department staff, Beretania Community Park is located in the center of several housing projects; families with young children do not have to cross a 5-lane commuter artery to access the park. These factors, in addition to the general park conditions, may contribute to the underutilization of the tot lot at A'ala Park.

Given the close proximity of Beretania Community Park, the A'ala Park tot lot could be more reasonably thought of as a secondary amenity for families who come to the park for other reasons (a sporting event, a picnic), rather than as a feature that draws families to the park.

## **Park opportunities identified**

Mid-afternoon appears to be prime time in A'ala Park. This was when the highest number, and the most diverse group of people in the park was observed. The large proportion of individuals recorded as 'sitting' or 'standing' during this time period reflected multiple small groups of adults and seniors from the surrounding neighborhood who were observed socializing in shady areas around the ballfield.

A number of these individuals brought chairs and picnic gear with them to the park, and were using the shady tree-lined areas of the ballfield, particularly where it adjoins the Nu'uaniu stream pathway as a place to relax and socialize with friends or neighbors.

This section of the park, adjoining Chinatown and the Nu'uaniu Stream walking path, is the original, historic A'ala park. It is easily accessible from Chinatown housing projects and a low-income senior housing project on Beretania street across from the park. This section of the park can be reached from Chinatown by crossing a two-lane, comparatively low-traffic street (River Street). It is also the area furthest away from Beretania and King Streets, the 5- and 6-lane commuter arteries that border the other two sides of this triangular park. It appears that community members view this quieter section of the park as a natural gathering place for sitting outdoors and socializing during the hottest part of the day.

The skate park, with 12% of the park's users overall, was the only area of the park that had a high level of physical activity. It was also the only area in the park where children and teenagers were a substantial proportion of users; while no attempt was made to ascertain the age of adults, most of the adults seen in this area appeared to be relatively young (in their twenties or early 30s), when compared to users in other areas of the park. While male users predominated among both adults and youth, female users were well-represented at the skate park. While the skate park seems to be is currently underused, growing this facility could potentially help to bring more children, youth, and young adults to the park, as well as increase the role of the park in promoting healthy physical activity.

Only 3% of all park users were observed in the bark park – while this area is clearly under-used, there were often one or two individuals with dogs using this section of the park in the afternoons, and this appears to be the only public dog park in the area. This is an area of the park that could use promotion.



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