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# INSIGHTS

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT



INSIDE:

FROM RENDERING TO REALITY





# HOW DEVELOPMENTS BECOME COMMUNITIES

At PRP, we are focused on the opportunity TOD creates to leverage our collective investment in public transit, including rail, to develop more livable and sustainable transit-oriented communities where people choose to live active and healthy lifestyles in walkable, vibrant neighborhoods served by public transit.

*In urban planning, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) describes compact mixed-use communities, where people can live, work and play in close proximity to public transit and mobility options.*

A more descriptive term is “transit-oriented communities,” as the focus is rightly on improving the quality of life with a mix of housing, including affordable housing, and expanding economic and leisure opportunities by connecting people to jobs, recreation, outdoor and public spaces, retail, non-profits and service providers.

Building them, however, is an incredibly complex task. It requires vision and collaboration on an unprecedented level. The two major players in government, the state and the counties, have been driving much of the process to date. But they cannot do it alone, as our expert explains on page 4. They need input from the public, stakeholders and others who have successfully created vibrant communities around transit.

## HALAWA



## ALOHA STADIUM REDEVELOPMENT

- In July, Gov. David Ige signed Act 268 into law, appropriating \$350 million to redevelop the 98-acre Aloha Stadium site into a sports and entertainment district.
- While a new, 35,000-seat stadium will be the centerpiece of the project, the district will include retail, residential buildings and other entertainment venues.
- The New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District will be developed through a Public-Private-Partnership.

## KAPALAMA CANAL REDEVELOPMENT

- Plans call for creating a linear park along the canal near the future Kapalama rail transit station.
- Waterfront promenades, gathering places, Complete Streets improvements to Kokea and Kohou streets, and a possible pedestrian bridge over the canal will significantly transform the area.

## KALIHI



## CITY DELIVERING COMMUNITY BENEFITS

For Harrison Rue, Community Building and TOD Administrator for the City & County of Honolulu, a chief aim of the city’s approach is providing what communities have been clamoring for, sometimes for decades.

“More affordable housing, more connectivity, safer streetscapes and intersections, and more usable public space where people can gather,” says Rue, listing the community benefits his office seeks from developers. “With our regulations, starting with the Interim Plan Development-Transit permit and through to zoning, we have a mechanism that has allowed developers in the TOD zone to get more height and density in return for those community benefits. We ask that a portion of

the housing remain affordable for 30 years. We’ve seen that kind of permit process working really well in the Ala Moana area.”

## A BIG SOLUTION TO MANY STATE PROBLEMS

Fresh off the passage of a bill to completely redevelop Aloha Stadium, state Senate Ways and Means Committee Chair Donovan Dela Cruz sees TOD as a way to solve multiple long-standing problems in Hawaii.

“There are a lot of things that the state can do along the rail line, where we are the largest landowner,” says Dela Cruz. “We can invest in infrastructure. We can upzone the land and increase its value. Once it’s upzoned, we can exchange it with developers for ag land, to

become state-owned conservation lands, and incentivize the developers to solve a lot of our other state problems. Not just to support rail or housing to make sure that people can still afford to live in Hawaii, but also reducing carbon footprint, preventing sprawl, building economic capacity and creating jobs. We might as well take advantage of this huge investment in rail and make it one big solution to many problems.”

Done successfully, Dela Cruz’s vision is a persuasive argument for linking rail to other underutilized state lands outside the Minimum Operable Segment. “Why not continue? If we’re the largest landowner, that’s where we’re going to be able to develop TOD, and we should probably keep going.”





Expert Q&A

DAN BARTHOLOMAY

CEO  
RAIL~VOLUTION



*In 2011, after 25 years in the non-profit and philanthropic sectors, Dan Bartholomay became CEO of Rail-Volution, a non-profit organization committed to the vision of cities and regions transformed into livable places where people have transportation choices. His organization holds North America's foremost transit and livability conference and recently launched its ACT2 Place-Based Program that sets up a long-term learning exchange with regions and communities seeking to advance TOD projects. He shared his viewpoints on TOD in Hawaii in his keynote address at the Move Oahu Forward annual meeting and in a chat with us afterwards.*

**Q: Whose responsibility is it to make TOD a success?**

**DB:** I think every organization and every stakeholder has a role to play. The biggest barrier to success is a lack of collaboration and coordination among the primary stakeholders, especially those who have resources to invest in the project. If you agree that the goal of major transit projects is to add value to the community, then you can get a look at the synergies that are possible through collaboration. Three things to focus on in a rail corridor are:

Access to affordable housing, because we know that that's one of the biggest issues facing the people who live here.

Building a strong local economy, from the standpoint of the neighborhoods affected along the line. Don't pass them by. Don't think about them as being a challenge to overcome. Instead, embrace them. Ask about the assets they have - culturally, community-wise, and geographically - and take advantage of what they have to build on. Because in this region there's a lot to that.

And then the last thing is really to think about vibrant, transit-oriented places; where housing, jobs, education and cultural destinations are connected, to serve the community. This brings the quality of life and livability that are critical to a sense of well-being and really the health of individuals and families.

The bottom line for us, as an organization that's trying to promote best practices, is that the transit investment should be a catalytic investment, creating opportunities for folks who otherwise wouldn't be served.

**Q: Do you see any challenges that are unique to Hawaii?**

**DB:** One of the things I see is all the progress in the region since I was here four years ago. It's just really incredible. On the other hand, I feel that there's a challenge for your region in creating some intermediary structures to allow the different sectors to work together in a way that is catalytic and beyond what each sector could do alone. The state, the county, the developers, the communities, the foundations, the banks, you name it. Every entity has a role to play if you're going to maximize the value of the transit investment.

That means building on your unique assets and preserving what is the best about Hawaii. And I know when I was here last time there was a lot of discussion about 'keeping the country the country.' The only way that's going to happen is to bring more people to live where infrastructure already exists, so you don't have to build new infrastructure.

**Q: Having seen TOD success around the country, what would be your #1 piece of advice?**

**DB:** Get ahead of the curve. Don't wait. Get all the community to think creatively about community development strategies that create wealth and create a greater stake in the outcomes by the people who already live or work in the neighborhoods. That's probably the number one thing I think about. It's about readiness and creating the civic capacity to deliver on those outcomes.

Earlier, I mentioned intermediary structures. By that I mean a collaborative model with partners that have a shared vision. And then, based on that shared vision, hold each other accountable. This should be a partnership structure that stands outside of government. It's multisector. And it essentially holds the various parties accountable for playing well in the sandbox. Because it's not a political thing. It's not a bank thing. It's not a private development thing. It's a community thing by definition. The key is to describe that piece in a way that people understand that it's something they should be a part of and that benefits everybody. This way, the costs are shared and, ultimately, are not so great because there's a shared vision and responsibility that leads to more efficient use of existing funds.

###



Transit-Oriented Communities

## A SECOND ACT IN KALIHI



If the goal of TOD is to maximize the livability of our communities, then perhaps its greatest promise is to revitalize neighborhoods that have been passed over for improvements for far too many years. One of Honolulu's oldest neighborhoods, Kalihi, has long been home to working class families whose values epitomize the best of Hawaii. But the quality of life they have derived from their neighborhood has not lived up to any notion of fairness or equality. Now, TOD presents an opportunity to address long-standing needs in the community.

"For the better part of the last century there hasn't been any focus on modernizing the infrastructure in the primary urban core while other parts of the island enjoy basic amenities like sidewalks and complete streets. This is a social justice and equity issue for the residents of Kalihi," says Honolulu City Councilmember Joey Manahan, who represents the area.

"It means providing infrastructure investments like Complete Streets with sidewalks and drainage for improved access to our rail stations as well as the addition of more workforce housing to prevent working families, and renters especially, from being displaced," he says. "Hopefully the relocation of OCCC will serve as a catalyst for revitalizing the area's infrastructure in order to create 21st century schools, more affordable housing opportunities for working families and seniors, as well as create new business opportunities and jobs for local area residents."

To realize that vision and ensure equity in the process, Manahan is enthused about engaging the community with help from ACT2, Rail-Volution's place-based TOD optimization organization that works with local coalitions to develop and deliver a training and action program to identify and achieve a transit-oriented community's goals and priorities.

"I think that's a tremendous opportunity, because now we're going to be layering community engagement onto the first set of transit oriented development plans, which mostly focused on zoning," says Manahan. "With ACT2 we're going to be able to get into the nuts and bolts as to what the community really wants. So we'll start with an assessment of everything we have in the area, and then ask what do we need? For example, what kind of businesses do we need and how can we create business improvement districts to attract them?"

For community leaders invested in equitable development like Manahan is, it's crucial to emphasize that rail is a means to an end. The opportunity for communities like Kalihi isn't just adding a few mass transit stations between here and there. It's a complete reimagining of what Kalihi can be.

"We used to be the edge of town," says Manahan. "But with transit oriented development, we're now front and center." ●





*Jon Rapisura started his career in 1998 with Coastal Construction, first as a field carpenter before working his way up to general foreman and project coordinator, a position he's held since 2015. His primary role is to coordinate and manage all aspects of a project from bidding to scheduling and material purchasing. He's worked on Oahu, Hawaii Island and Lanai, while gaining experience on multiple projects for developers such as DR Horton, Castle and Cooke, A&B, and Haseko.*

**COMPANY:**  
Coastal Construction Co., Inc.

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR:**  
Residential Construction: Rough and Finish Carpentry, Drywall Hanging and Taping, Layout, and General Conditions

**WEBSITE:**  
[www.coasthi.com](http://www.coasthi.com)

**CONTACT:**  
Jon Rapisura

**PHONE:**  
(808) 847-3277

**EMAIL:**  
[rapisuraj@coasthi.com](mailto:rapisuraj@coasthi.com)



## Contractor Profile

# JON RAPISURA

COASTAL CONSTRUCTION

It was his high school Vocational Carpentry Trade class that sparked Jon's interest in a construction career – although at first he wanted to go back to high school.

"I had a great teacher," he says. "In fact, my intent was to be a high school shop teacher, and I went to college with that plan in mind. But ultimately I decided to go into carpentry."

That was a stroke of luck for Coastal Construction Co., which hired the young carpenter in 1998 and steadily promoted him into more senior roles. Now he's in charge of Coastal's rough carpentry, drywall and insulation work for DR Horton's Kohina development, consisting of 276 units in 17 three- and four-story multifamily and multifamily mixed commercial buildings that are now going up in East Kapolei.

For Coastal, that's a relatively large amount of work in a short period of time, requiring more manpower. "We did have to ramp up somewhat, which included some new hiring with the support from the Hawaii Carpenters Union," says Jon. "Kohina falls right into our wheelhouse for what we do, although the scale of building is large. But the overall scope is not much different from multifamily projects around the islands, so we feel confident that we're able to keep a positive outcome through the build-out of Kohina."

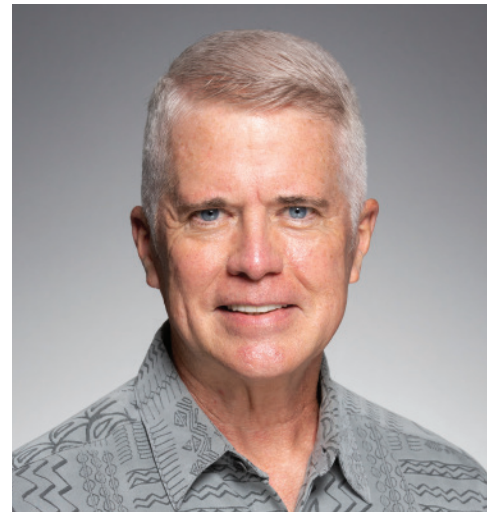
The build-out is slated to take just 18 months from the start of vertical construction in March 2019. "That is a somewhat aggressive schedule," Jon admits. "But we fully understand that DR Horton has home buyers and they want to put these homeowners in their new homes as soon as possible. We are working diligently with DR Horton and all other subcontractors at Kohina to be able to provide that."

That means his team had to overcome location and weather challenges that come with the territory. "Starting in the middle of an agriculture field, access was an issue. Just trying to get manpower, equipment, and materials to the site can be difficult but as with any starting project we're able to work with the developer. The biggest threat is rain because with dirt and water comes mud!"

For Jon, it's all worth it because the community his team is helping to build will increase the quality of life for local residents. "We are fortunate to play a role in building TOD with DR Horton and it's clear that this will be a success," he says. "Population growth is inevitable, but TOD makes sense because it creates an opportunity for homeowners to be able to get from East Kapolei and other similar locations into town for work and play, while avoiding most road traffic. Homeowners will be able to walk to and from the rail stations located so close to their residences, similar to other major cities that incorporate rail and development. These are very exciting times and we hope to play a major role with TOD and future developments." ●

## Our View

MICHAEL D. FORMBY | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



### TAP INTO DEMOCRACY

*With Hawaii's first-ever civic engagement app, KĀKOU.*

KĀKOU is a unified, digital platform that makes it easy for everyone to engage with Hawaii's elected officials and participate in the democratic process. Put the power of change in the palm of your hand – scan the QR code below to download KĀKOU.

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An initiative of Pacific Resource Partnership

It's an exciting time to be with PRP and work with the teams planning, designing and building transit-oriented communities across the state of Hawaii. If there ever was a time to break down silos and work together, now is the time.

Breaking down silos is a topic that kept coming up as we put together this edition of Insights, my first since joining PRP. Whether raised by a non-profit service provider, a developer or a state or county department, the call was the same...for everyone to be inclusive and open to ideas from others as we collectively vision, plan and build these equitable and vibrant mixed-use communities. No one suggested they be allowed to get into others' business and tell them how to do their jobs, but rather, that we all be open to ideas that just might prove instructive and worthwhile since we share the common goal of building the best transit-oriented communities for the people of Hawaii.

With the rail line approaching Middle Street on Oahu, utility work underway in the Dillingham corridor and the interim opening of rail from East Kapolei to Aloha Stadium forecast for 2020, it's great to see multiple communities on Oahu actively at work on TOD. The state, with its vision and commitment to a transformative TOD redevelopment of Aloha Stadium, is moving quickly on conceptual plans and its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), all supported by the state's Strategic Plan for Transit-Oriented Development published in December 2017.

See: <https://bit.ly/2t0OqAC>

At the same time, the City & County of Honolulu is actively at work on multiple fronts, in Kakaako and Ala Moana as well as in the Kapalama/Iwilei district with the Honolulu City Council having adopted the Kalihi and Downtown Neighborhood Transit-Oriented Development Plans in 2017. See: [www.honolulu.gov/tod](http://www.honolulu.gov/tod). Working with the community, private landowners, non-profits, the University of Hawaii and developers, the City and County of Honolulu is focused on public spaces, including a linear park along the Kapalama Canal, affordable housing and improved infrastructure, including better roadway connections facilitating safe pedestrian, transit, bicycle and vehicular access.

Lastly, building communities for the future works best when the people desiring to live, work and play in those communities speak up and participate in the public engagement process. Now is a great time for everyone with an interest in successful transit-oriented communities in the state of Hawaii to check out the state and county websites and get informed. Civic engagement is not only a right, but a responsibility for those who want to make a difference. ●



1100 ALAKEA STREET, 4TH FLOOR  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
808.528.5557  
WWW.PRP-HAWAII.COM

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