



2020 Hawai'i Island Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Harry Kim



Candidate Race: Hawai'i County Mayor

Candidate Website: www.harrykimformayor.com

1. In 2018, the Hawaii County Council passed Bill 108 (now Ordinance 2018-114), which regulates un-hosted short-term vacation rentals (STVRs) in Hawaii County. What policies would you implement to further regulate or deregulate short-term vacation rentals on Hawaii Island, whether hosted or un-hosted, and what will be the economic impact(s) of those policies?

Ordinance 2018-114 was introduced to the County Council by this administration (Mayor Harry Kim 2016 – 2020) and with final rules adopted in April, 2019. The objective of this Ordinance was to control the number and location of vacation rentals in compliance with zoning ordinances. It is hoped that with passage, it will contribute to having a positive economic impact for Hawai'i Island as a place to live and a place to do business.

2. In 2019, the Real Property Tax Office implemented policies to assess properties at their “highest and best use”. This changed the real property tax classifications for many residents, mainly those on agricultural-zoned parcels smaller than one-acre in size, increasing their real property tax bill. What are your thoughts on the County real property tax and how revenue may be increased without negative impacts for residents?

It is the goal of all property tax policies to be of fairness and principle. There are nine (9) major classes of property tax. Changes made placed the highest priority on having a tax base other than property tax. This was achieved by the passage of the GET (general excise tax) bill. The other major emphasis was on minimizing any tax increase on homeowners and low-income housing. The last increase passed created two residential tax rate tiers. Tier one for residential property valued under \$2,000,000 and tier two for residential property of \$2,000,000 or more.

3. Hawai'i County residents generate over 200,000 tons of solid waste each year. In 2019, the County closed the Hilo landfill and is now hauling solid waste across the island to a landfill in Pu'uana'hulu. Additionally, due to significant decreases in the global market for recyclables, the County of Hawai'i is no longer accepting some of the types of materials collected at the County recycling & transfer stations. What solutions would you propose to resolve the County's solid waste dilemma?

As stated, the inability to accept a tremendous change in the disposition of some materials at the County transfer stations. This, as you know, are due to mainly changes in demand and costs of recycling. The solutions will need to address all areas of waste, including conservation, land field, combustion, gasification and recycling. At this point of knowledge, gasification should be actively pursued.

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4. Median home prices in Hawaii County continue to rise with shrinking inventory and increasing demand. Since 2011, the median sales price for a residential home in Hawaii County has increased, year to year, by as little as 0.38% (2015-2016) up to 13.46% (2012-2013) per year. What are your top three (3) actionable items to address housing affordability?

1. The County of Hawai'i must pursue and enforce the building of affordable housing. This includes private and government sectors.
2. The support and pursuit of Ohana Zoning combined with factory design and buildings.
3. The major cost and problem of infrastructure costs, especially of water availability to be addressed by government.

5. The Hawai'i state legislature recently proposed legislation that would put the responsibility on the counties to research and provide data on topics such as energy, coastal zone/sea level rise, etc. as they relate to climate change, without addressing funding for any related expenses. What three (3) specific solutions would you propose to address climate change, and how would these proposals be funded?

The major problem of climate change impact is the unknown. Changes will not be limited to only sea level changes but of major impacts due to climate change. This may include weather changes that ultimately will involve so many factors of this earth. It would be of the greatest value to Hawai'i if a comprehensive study would be done on possible major impacts of Hawai'i Island due to climate change. This is the best way to identify what factors may be impacted, how it may be impacted and recommendations on mitigation. Funding should be pursued at the Federal, State and County levels.

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6. In 2015, the state legislature adopted a renewable portfolio standard (RPS) of 100 percent by the year 2045, positioning Hawai'i to become the first U.S. state to produce all its electricity from local renewable energy sources and establishing interim targets of 30 percent by 2020, 40 percent by 2030, and 70 percent by 2040. What is your position on expanding geothermal and/or other forms of renewable energy on Hawai'i Island?

The Island of Hawai'i is perhaps in the best position to meet the renewable portfolio standard (RPS) by the year 2045. On expanding geothermal and other forms of renewable energy, the County government should establish leadership in ways to meet the goals of the RPS. This should include not only the support and pursuit of the renewable energy, but the use of and conservation of energy usage.

7. What are two (2) things you like about the Community Development Plan (CDP) in your district that are working well? What are two (2) things in your district's CDP that are not working and why? How would you suggest those issues be addressed/fixed?

A sincere **thank you** for this question. The answers will be combined into one. The major thing that is liked about the Community Development Plan (CDP) is the basis for which it was developed. To have the community more involved in the direction and future of its community and to have this community be a close part of government. Elements that need to be worked on include County government that needs to be better in the involvement of the whole concept of the CDP. This is especially important in the relationship of the "action committee", the County government and the community's voice.

8. The appearance of COVID-19 has brought the world economy to a halt and has exposed major faults in local government's blatant reliance on tourism for revenue. What are your plans to jump start and/or diversify the island's economy?

The island of Hawai'i must aggressively pursue an economy that is not so dependent on the tourism industry. As stated, COVID-19 has accentuated that importance. The jump start is a difficult one to address at this point. All major effort is to stop this virus. Perhaps maybe the first jump start is by having a place that is safe. The diversification of the economy should be an everlasting mission and capitalize on our natural gifts. This is of astronomy, agriculture and projects like Natural Energy Lab of Hawai'i (NELHA) that awakens new businesses.

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9. Many municipalities across the country are exploring bond sales to raise capital for improvements to infrastructure, like road and wastewater improvements as an example; things that are sorely in need of attention on Hawaii Island. The County Council just this year advanced a \$103 million bond issue for road projects with Bill 145. What is your view on expanding municipal bond issuance to finance infrastructure while interest rates are historically low?

This is being done in coordination with the Hawai'i County Council. Bonds are the major way of establishing the revenues to finance Capital Improvement Projects (CIP). It is wise, financially, to seek bonds when interest rates are low. The County has a general policy of not exceeding a debt service of more than 15% of the total expenditures as a guide. Presently, that is well met and is below 11%.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my thoughts and views.

Harry

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