



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM
&
STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS

News Release

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HAWAI'I CAPITAL CULTURAL DISTRICT ANNOUNCED

HONOLULU – Governor Linda Lingle and Mayor Jeremy Harris today, in recognition of October as National Arts and Humanities Month, signed a joint proclamation to create and designate the "Hawai'i Capital Cultural District" (HCCD).

The new HCCD is supported by State and City & County offices, and operated by a coalition representing more than 25 civic buildings, museums, historic sites, galleries, entertainment venues, businesses, and restaurants who have come together to designate the area between Kalihi and Pi'ikoi Streets, Beretania Street and the Pacific Ocean, as a culturally significant and vibrant destination for the people of Hawai'i and for the world.

"With this proclamation, we recognize the efforts of a diverse group of people, representing some of Hawai'i's most inspirational artistic and cultural organizations," said Governor Lingle. "We are delighted to provide the public with unique opportunities to celebrate and enjoy downtown Honolulu, home to so much of our cultural heritage," the Governor added.

"Honolulu has long been recognized as the place to go for sun and surf but we are much more than that," said Mayor Harris. "We are one of the most exciting cultural designations in the world. All our efforts to enhance our culture and arts infrastructure and showcase our ethnic special events have brought us to this point."

Once organized, the Hawai'i Capital Cultural District will be enhanced as an inviting, vibrant and cohesive destination for residents and visitors alike. There will be information centers, additional signage, interpretive materials, maps, information, and various walking tours to guide people to the area's many restaurants, galleries, shops and places to relax. In addition, outdoor and indoor activities during the daytime and nights will attract individuals and families. The district will feature adequate parking, as well as alternative modes of transportation to bring people to and from the area, with links to adjacent districts.

The timely development of Kakaako Waterfront, the Downtown and Chinatown revitalization efforts, and Waikiki's restoration to days of old will all become part of the rich overlay and interface for the HCCD's success.

"Over the years, through the vision and efforts of many, the groundwork has been laid to formally create a magnificent historic, civic and cultural district, rich with heritage unique to Hawai'i. We want our people and the world to know this face of Hawai'i," said Mona Abadir, SFCA Chairperson.

Earlier this year, representatives from cultural, civic, artistic and government interests, met to focus their efforts to achieve consensus and create a preliminary game plan for the district. The resulting HCCD coalition is one of many groups beginning to nurture and market their cultural assets. This is the fundamental idea behind the concept of "cultural tourism"; a sector of tourism many believe will become a major growth area for the State's tourism industry in the near future. By creating activities, events, and destinations that attract residents and visitors interested in experiencing and learning about Hawai'i's rich ethnic and cultural resources, both residents and visitors will benefit.

The work of the HCCD coalition will provide a model that can be used throughout the State to designate and market Hawai'i's rich cultural assets for enjoyment, education, community building, and welcoming our visitors.

For details on the HCCD and the organizations involved, contact Mona Abadir, SFCA Chairperson at 386-6578 or Judy Drosd, Chief Officer, Arts, Film & Entertainment, at 586-2364.

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[See Initial List of Stakeholders Attached.](#)

HAWAII CAPITAL CULTURAL DISTRICT

HISTORY

The State Capitol area has been a focal point of government and culture since the time of King Kamehameha I. It has been the staging ground for Hawaiian History.

In 1959 the State Legislature recognized the need to create a Civic Center. In 1964 Governor Burns and Mayor Blaisdell, with both State and City legislative bodies, provided administrative means to plan for it by forming a Policy Committee and then provided the financing needed to create a master plan. The Policy and Citizens Committees set forth guidelines as the first stage in moving toward a planning program for the Hawai'i State Capitol Master Plan.

John Carl Warnecke and Associates was contracted to develop a Master Plan, projected out to 1985, to fulfill the needs of the State Government in Hawai'i, maintain Honolulu Hale as the focal point of City Government, and assure that the immediate surrounding area became established as the seat of government and culture in Hawai'i.

In 1968, when the Master Plan was presented to the Legislature, it addressed the thoughtful design and layout of the Civic Center, complete with pedestrian paths, parks, fountains, and the conceptual footprint of where all of the buildings that have since been built would go, assuring they would be integrated with historic 'Iolani Palace, the Royal Grounds, Washington Place and the early Mission Buildings.

The final plan, over 35 years ago, suggested that the Armed Services YMCA building provide links to downtown and that it become one of the focal points of cultural affairs. In 2002, this vision was fulfilled when it became the home to Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts and the Hawai'i State Art Museum. And in 2003, it became the home to DBEDT's newly created Arts, Film and Entertainment Division. Today, the two State agencies are working closely together to fulfill their compatible missions to improve the quality of life for Hawai'i's people.

Several months ago, through the support of SFCA's Governors' Conference, strategic planning process, the SFCA Executive Director Ronald Yamakawa and staff, SFCA Chairperson Mona Abadir, and SFCA Commissioner and Washington Place Board Member Mary Philpotts were encouraged to initiate the planning process for the Hawai'i Capital Cultural District.

Their conversations with Alice Guild, longtime 'Iolani Palace Board Member, sparked the beginning of this long awaited planning process. They invited Judy Drosd, DBEDT Chief Officer for Arts, Film & Entertainment and Steve Bretschneider, Chief Marketing Officer for the State, other representatives of State and City Government agencies, and all interested stakeholders in the area to join the process. Over a relatively short period of time, this impressive group, representing cultural, civic, artistic and government interests, focused their efforts to achieve consensus and create a preliminary game plan.

The coalition, which will eventually become a private, non-profit organization with a staff, budget and board of directors comprised of the district stakeholders, will be responsible for creating, managing and marketing the HCCD. To get it started, each of the major stakeholders, with a vested interest in seeing the HCCD thrive, will be asked to put up a nominal amount of money as "seed" money to create a preliminary operating fund for the organization.

Mary Philpotts and Alice Guild have offered the initial \$10,000 seed money to start the organization. Additional money will be raised from public and private sources as needed. A study will be done to establish whether or not HCCD can qualify as a Federal Designated Heritage Area, in which case Federal Funding from the Department of the Interior could be attainable.

Arts and culture affect every aspect of life in Hawai'i, including the economy, education, quality of life and sense of community. And there are numerous areas throughout Hawai'i with significant cultural importance, not only to residents, but also to the world community at large.