

## 1. Please list your name and contact information for your campaign

### 1. Please list your name and City Council District you are running for and contact info for campaign

Greg Thielen City Council District 3

## 2. Economic Sustainability/Livability & Quality of Life on our Island:

### 2. What is your vision for improving "Honolulu's livability?" How does city government facilitate, direct, stimulate and/or achieve this vision?

While Covid-19 has wrought devastation on the physical and economic health of our community, I believe there have also been some silver linings. One of which is the slower paced lifestyle many of us have enjoyed. less traffic, more time with family and more time enjoying the simple things like a hike or a walk on the beach. Clearly we need to embrace these things going forward. The City can lead by example by making "work from home" permanent where feasible and allow people to rotate turns in the office where needed. We can also move more City services online reducing the need for both City workers and the public to drive to central locations.

### 3. The pandemic shutdown gives us an opportunity to look at carrying capacity of our natural resources, infrastructure and quality of life. In your vision of Honolulu's future diverse economy, what changes would you pursue in the percentage of the economy for hospitality; defense; agriculture; education; intellectual property development in technology, media and research; commercial and industrial entrepreneurship; etc. What do you anticipate the "new economy" to be? How will you prepare Honolulu to embrace, advance and lead the new economy?

I am cautious by nature in advocating for Government to control our economy. That being said we clearly can't allow a return to the tourism model we were embracing before the pandemic. A vacation to Hawaii should be a luxury and the City should take steps to make it that way. This can be increased fees for visitors accessing City property, increased registration fees for rental cars or increased property tax for hotels. We can not take these steps until we begin to see a tourism recovery though.

### 4. What are your thoughts on the rail? Should it stop (or pause) at Middle Street? Aala Park? Ala Moana? UH Manoa? Go to "at grade" and be rerouted on King Street? How can we ensure that stations and the tracks are better blended with the environment, have better landscaping and increasing trees along the route than is proposed or currently exists?

I have three unwavering commitments in regards to rail. First off, I will work to restore the forensic audit the current Council rescinded on. The idea that the Federal investigations will provide us the same information is a smoke screen. The people of the City and County of Honolulu deserve an accounting from this project. Secondly, I will not vote to approve use of City funds for rail construction. The rail was to be built with funds from the GE surcharge and Federal dollars, not City money. Thirdly, the final phase of rail construction is expecting bids that include a 30 year contract for operations. The review of these bids and decision making on them must be left to the new Council and Administration. Beyond these points I believe any and all options are on the table for discussion. Dealing with this project in light of Covid-19 and the ensuing downfall in tax revenues requires us to consider everything.

### 5. Noise pollution from weed whackers and vehicles modified to emit extra noise is dangerous and degrades quality of life. Specific noise ordinances are left to individual police to enforce, which results in no uniform policy or action. What concrete steps would you take to implement and enforce a uniform noise code like other cities have via muffler regulation and noise monitoring, etc.?

### 6. Homelessness routinely ranks as a top concern of residents. Understanding this is a complex issue, what are your plans to move people from the streets into housing and receive appropriate assistance, and reclaiming public areas, beaches, parks, streets and sidewalks for their intended uses by the public at large?

Homelessness is a single category, but within that community there is a wide range of problems causing homelessness and a wide range of solutions to the problems. The one thing all of them have in common is a lack of access to affordable housing. The primary solution to that problem is building more housing. As a home builder and housing advocate I have a hands on working knowledge of the impediments to building more housing. The secondary solution to that problem is cracking down on illegal vacation rentals. While these units will not be affordable, it will ease the current housing crisis. In addition we need to be prepared for the cuts to social programs we all know are coming. My small business was an inaugural sponsor for the Family Promise fun run when it started in 2012 and I have continued every year since. I believe our Non-Profit sector is going to need to build alliances with for profit entities to continue to function in the years ahead. These agencies provide the boots on the ground in dealing with the homeless population.

### 3. Green Space & Trees:

---

**7. What is your commitment to enhancing the urban landscape? Specifically, how would you prioritize the proper planting, care and pruning of trees and stop the unnecessary cutting down of mature trees during public or private development projects? How would you include the public's on-going input in this process?**

**8. The city's current urban canopy coverage is about 20%, well below other "livable" cities and even with stated goals to increase tree canopy to 35%, no real progress is being made. This makes walking outdoors for work, shopping, etc. difficult and decreases livability. Given that climate models predict a much hotter Honolulu, what efforts would you propose to increase our tree canopy at a time when it is still decreasing by 1% annually?**

I am a strong supporter of tree planting and I believe we need to have a specific set aside within the CIP budget exclusively for this purpose. Part of our reaction to Covid-19 needs to be a Greening our Recovery. This would include tree planting as well as park and trail maintenance and construction.

**9. Do you support traffic speed reductions, "bulb outs," on-demand crosswalk signals, and other traffic calming to increase pedestrian and bike safety and create walkable and aging-friendly cities?**

I am a strong supporter of all traffic calming measures, especially those that are quick-build candidates. Sometimes we get too wrapped up in building grand plans that never get implemented while ignoring simple more common sense solutions.

**10. Would you support the creation of a "Tree Czar" to ensure that the city departments work together to protect trees, oversee the increase of canopy shade tree planting and generally answer to the public on matters advocating for protecting trees and increased tree canopy coverage?**

### 4. Tax Concerns:

---

**11. Would you support a "green tax" to improve our green infrastructure, purchase open space, and better our parks as other cities have done?**

I would support figuring ways to support these things, but I don't think the County can institute a tax like this. We can begin to charge visitors significantly higher entrance fees to access our unique and special places. I have a more detailed blog post about this on my website.

**12. Only Hawaii has a GET, which greatly burdens businesses but leaves end users with the impression that they pay less than 5%, while actually paying about 19%? Would you support elimination of the GET for essential goods like food and medicine? Would you support shifting to a sales tax to make the tax more transparent?**

### 5. City Infrastructure Maintenance & Other Government Services:

---

**13. Where do you stand on the Neighborhood Board system (some people want to dismantle it)?**

I think people are frustrated by the neighborhood board system, because the board lacks the power and authority to do things. It's really more of an advisory body and when it's advice is ignored people ask "what's the point?" I'm not sure what the solution is for this issue, but I will work with the community on this point if elected.

---

**14. How will you improve maintenance of city parks, sidewalks, bike paths and beaches?**

I think we need to have a small projects process built into our procurement system. One that can utilize City funds as well as volunteer labor. The goal would be to leverage City money and community involvement to foster pride and a sense of ownership in our public spaces.

---

**15. How would you foster timely, open, transparent, and on-going communication with the public regarding issues relevant to their community? Too often the public learns about an issue too late to act. Would you support that each department to have a public liaison/ ombudsman to ensure that citizen concerns are being met and addressed at each department?**

---

**16. How would you work to ensure that Honolulu works to implement the best and brightest ideas for governance and livability from other cities around the world?**

It's a mistake to assume one person can track this on their own. That is where organizations like Outdoor Circle can be so valuable to the community. You can locate programs from other locations and advocate for their implementation on Oahu. I am always open to seeing and hearing about innovative solutions to our problems.

---

**6. Sign Laws/Visual Pollution:**

---

**17. The Outdoor Circle has worked for over a century to keep Hawaii visual-pollution free with no off-site ads and strict controls on signage, something that is unique that keeps our state beautiful and protected from visual clutter. Will you oppose all commercial advertising & sign clutter on all public property, parks, and equipment (including TheBus) to respect the century-old tradition of banning off-site advertising throughout our beautiful state?**

I am in complete support of what the Outdoor Circle has accomplished in this regard. Every time I visit the mainland I am reminded of this.

---

**18. Will you support regulation of unrelated commercial advertising (for example a tour bus advertising for an unrelated attraction) on vehicles, whether permanently parked or mobile?**

For an unrelated attraction on the outside of the vehicle yes. I do support businesses right to self promote or identify via vehicle signage.

---

**19. Will you place controls on the sign clutter and visual blight caused by unregulated food trucks operating on commercial property in many parts of the island?**

I am open to this, but would like to learn more.

---

**20. What steps will you take to reduce light pollution, as well as the visual blight from overhead utility lines?**

I would need to learn more about existing ordinances, but would favor moving towards approaches advocated by International Dark-Sky Association if we haven't already done so.

---

**7. Tourism:**

---

**21. How can we be smart about tourism, when it returns, to prevent overtaxing of our infrastructure (traffic, parking at scenic spots, beaches, etc.), and destruction to our natural resources with fewer visitors, but higher daily per capita spend?**

I believe we need to focus on making Hawaii a luxury destination. It does us no good to focus on number of visitors instead of

dollars spent. The Government should make it more expensive to visit Hawaii and recoup more from visitors while they are here. As price goes up demand will go down. If done correctly we should see a corresponding drop in visitors without losing money.

**22. There is serious opposition to short term vacation rentals in many neighborhoods for a number of reasons. Should these types of rentals be permanently banned outside of tourist zoning areas?**

I am a strong supporter of Bill 89 dealing with vacation rentals. The problem is the law is useless without enforcement. A Hawaii Public Radio report in December of 2019 indicated the law had caused a 5% drop in available rooms. Clearly the other 95% were not intimidated and it's hard to take DPP enforcement seriously. If they do fine anyone they usually settle for pennies on the dollar and this practice has to change.

## 8. Climate Change

**23. Climate change is a global issue but with local impacts. While Honolulu has an office dealing with climate change, what is your view on the urgent needed to change direction, if any, to minimize or accommodate predicted climate change impacts on Honolulu? What would be your highest priorities to be achieved in your first term on climate change?**

The most important thing would be an ambitious tree planting plan with mandated goals as opposed to targets. The second would be hardening City buildings, especially recreation centers, to be potential hurricane shelters. Third would be looking at where we are investing in infrastructure for future growth to make sure it isn't threatened by sea level rise.

**24. What position do you have on the proposed Ala Wai Watershed Army Corp Plan which has faced serious community opposition? Would you support signing the PPP agreement as it is?**

## 9. Development:

**25. How would you make enforcement effective against "monster homes" in our neighborhoods?**

DPP needs to be split apart into two separate departments with the lions share of the resources going into permitting which includes enforcement. Currently all of the focus is on planning. Secondly the permitting department needs to stop being overly concerned about enforcing code on paper and get out in the field to enforce it in real life.

**26. Development has been proposed that would violate existing zoning and/or land use laws. Will you agree to protect view corridors and scenic view planes as they currently exist, especially on city-controlled land?**

**27. Where do you stand on land-use rezoning, in particular the rezoning and repurposing of preservation land and the repurposing of residential lands for non-single-family home use. How do you feel about individual communities across Oahu being allowed to decide what should be built in their own communities? Will you agree to protect green space in all lands designated as "Preservation," "Conservation" or "Prime Agricultural."**

**28. What other comments or thoughts would you like to leave for our community?**

The greatest responsibility of serving on the Council is being engaged with the community. I was born and raised in this community and am now raising a family of my own here. I have consistently come out and been involved in community events and volunteered my time. I want to take my service to my community to the next level and that is why I am humbly asking for your vote for City Council.

## 10. Thank You!

**New Send Email for Mayoral Survey**

Jul 16, 2020 22:53:49 Success: Email Sent to: winston@outdoorcircle.org

---

**New Send Email**

Jul 16, 2020 22:53:50 Success: Email Sent to: winston@outdoorcircle.org

---