



Report to Neighborhood Board #13

4 June 2020  
(Submitted 2 June)



Photo by Hawaii News Now

### Community-Wide Protest Keeps Homeless Facility Off Beretania Street

**Chinatown citizens learned from a Star Advertiser article on May 14 that the City had granted IHS \$2.6 million in CARES funding to buy the 3-story building at 65 No. Beretania and turn it into a homeless service center.**

The response from lawmakers, merchants, residents, property owners, and cultural societies was immediate and 100% opposed. On June 2, the City and IHS announced that they were shelving the project. We thank both entities for truly hearing the community this time.

We feel that, while IHS's homeless outreach services are badly needed, **Chinatown is the wrong site for yet another homeless facility**, especially another one that stresses engagement over enforcement. These past years, the influx of homeless people, attracted and enabled by River of Life, Safe Haven, Housing First, liquor stores and the drug trade, has caused immeasurable harm to Chinatown. We cannot keep waiting patiently for service-resistant mentally ill addicts to decide to change their lives. Bringing them to our densely populated, culturally significant live/work neighborhood was, is, and always will be a bad idea.

**The City has invested tens of millions of dollars to create a homeless services hub in Iwilei.**

At Punawai, the 3 upper floors are planned for coordinated homeless services but are still not operational. We urge the City to finish Punawai and other Iwilei projects so Chinatown homeless can be cared for at the Iwilei complex, a far more appropriate setting.

## Bulbout Barricades Installed During Shutdown, Then Removed

**Shop owners at Maunakea & Pauahi returned to work on May 6 to find that the City had installed new bulbout barricades on all 4 corners of the intersection. This eliminated the grab-n-go parking that vendors needed to comply with City orders for takeout-only business.**

By contrast, restaurants on Bethel St. and Nuuanu Ave had been allowed to RESERVE street parking for their grab-n-go customers, while our restaurants & shops saw their parked REMOVED.

**Councilmember Carol Fukunaga** filed a complaint with the City Department of Transportation Services on Thurs May 7. DTS removed the barricades on Sat May 9 and sent this message:

*"Please share our apologies with the business community as many of the new delineators ... were installed in error. These delineators were removed....and loading for the area businesses resumed immediately."*

We appreciate CM Fukunaga's and DTS's fast action to correct the error.



**The week before Mother's Day, barricades blocked off the just-reopened lei stands' parking**

## Council Appropriation Expands City Guards Funding for FY21

Many thanks to CM Fukunaga for amending the City's FY21 budget to include at least \$250,000 for City Guard service in this expanded service area: "City-owned properties and sidewalks that abut River St., Pauahi St., Maunakea St., Smith St., Hotel St., Nuuanu Ave. and Nimitz Highway."

**We urge the full Council to approve this funding and the Administration to release it immediately** on July 1. As they've done on No. Pauahi and No. Hotel, City Guards can support HPD with more eyes, ears and uniforms at trouble spots like Sun Yat Sen Park. HPD officers do not stay on site once they've cleared an incident; however, the City Guards are posted for hours-long shifts. This kind of continuity is needed to break the cycle of illegal activity and to prevent new problems.

The City Guards program is a win for our community. We look forward to working with Director Sandy Pfund's team, CID, CBCA and HPD to further improve the program in the new fiscal year.



**Sidewalks at ewa end of No. Pauahi cleared of illegal activity**

## City Switches from Yellow Trash Bags to Locking Bins During COVID Emergency

In April, Businesses who pay for City trash service got letters from the Dept. of Environmental Services with this subject: *"Temporary Refuse Collection Services with Locking-Lid Wheeled Carts Due to COVID-19 Emergency."*

"Starting May 4, due to the ongoing COVID -19 pandemic emergency, the City is implementing, on a temporary basis, refuse collection service with locking-lid wheeled carts to decrease the exposure to pathogenic waste". Businesses need to store the carts inside their shops or common areas. Businesses unable to store the carts inside will need to contract with a private company for trash service.

Like the switch from any-kine bags to City-issued yellow bags, there is some confusion and lack of compliance. DES mailed the letter while businesses were closed per the Mayor's orders. The new system started before most businesses were allowed to reopen. This caused more confusion than normal.

City refuse collectors will not pick up trash that is not in the required format. So bags of trash lie on the sidewalk uncollected for many days. This defeats the DES's stated goal of decreasing exposure to COVID vectors. **If reducing COVID exposure is truly the goal, we urge DES to:**

- 1) Pick up ALL rubbish regardless of format during this trial period,**
- 2) Work with businesses and residents to increase compliance, and**
- 3) Require River of Life to collect all meal trash left on our streets & sidewalks daily by their guests.**



**Better than bags: a wheeled cart with locking lid**



**Uncollected bagged & loose trash on Maunakea**



**Vagrant breaks into River of Life's carts**



**Trash discarded by River of Life guest at shop entrance**

## Ongoing Issues with Blight & Crime, March/April/May 2020

The COVID shutdown has been hard for Chinatown. In the absence of normal daily activity, homeless / mentally ill / addicts converged here to take advantage of services and reduced enforcement. Re-opening businesses are contending with even more vagrancy, vandalism, drinking, etc. than before the shutdown.



**Camper with dog and broken window at Mark's Garage, Nuuanu Ave**



**Naked camper at Merchant Street storefront**



**Urine, feces, sick men coughing in Nuuanu doorway**



**Man with 4 beers drinking, yelling in bulbout**



**Defecating on Nuuanu curb**



**Sit/lie at Maunakea St. liquor store**



**Trash in front of City hygiene center**



**Windows at 2 Hotel St businesses broken by chronic homeless individual, ID'd by witness & arrested**



**Camping on the roof of the City Parking Garage, Beretania**



**Drinking & drugs by Sun Yat Sen Park, across from Satellite City Hall**



**Vagrant pulls fire alarm, forces building evacuation**



**Chronic disrupter, camping, flinging trash**



**Naked, bathing at water feature in front of Satellite City Hall**



## **Actions that City Administrators Can Take Now:**

### **For PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY:**

- **Do not continue to let homeless / mentally ill / substance abusers live like animals on Chinatown streets. Fund stabilization beds, psychiatric facilities, treatment centers and supportive housing AWAY FROM CHINATOWN.**
- **Complete the Iwilei homeless service centers that have been purchased, designed and built with public funds specifically for this population.**
- **Move River of Life, Safe Haven and IHS to the Iwilei complex.**
- **Mobilize sanitation crews to thoroughly clean Chinatown's public spaces daily.**
- **Provide all additional funding needed to support HPD in protecting Chinatown's citizens.**
- **Revoke the licenses of liquor stores that sell alcohol to homeless & mentally ill substance abusers.**

### **For COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT:**

- **Clean graffiti off of City properties as soon as it's discovered.**
- **Be an active, present landlord at your Chinatown properties.**
  - Find and vet responsible tenants for your vacant spaces. Lease to tenants who support a healthy neighborhood, not diminish it.
  - Actively manage the properties. Be on site at least weekly. Fix the broken things. Keep it clean. Make it safe. Listen to tenants and community concerns and act on them.
- **Work WITH the Chinatown community to truly understand and collaboratively solve our district's problems.**

## **Actions that Concerned Citizens Can Take Now:**

- 1) Call 911 to report violations.**
- 2) Talk to your neighbors about the problems.** Encourage them to call 911, too.
- 3) Post incidents anonymously to ChinatownWatch.com.** Please note that posting to ChinatownWatch.com is NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR CALLING 911.
- 4) Urge the City Council and Mayor Caldwell to fund private security patrols for ALL of Downtown-Chinatown's public spaces.** Contact Councilmember Fukunaga's office to report incidents in your area. Email [cafukunaga@honolulu.gov](mailto:cafukunaga@honolulu.gov) or call 768-5006
- 5) Support HPD deploying police foot & bike patrols 24/7 throughout Downtown-Chinatown**
- 6) Get some neighbors together to meet with the HPD's Community Policing team.** Call the CPT office at 732-3927. A strong community partnership with HPD is good for everyone.
- 7) Merchants & property owners, please join the Chinatown Improvement District's neighborhood security patrol.** Call Lee Stack at 589-9927 or email [chinatownimprovementdistrict@gmail.com](mailto:chinatownimprovementdistrict@gmail.com), or via the website: [cidchinatownhawaii.org](http://cidchinatownhawaii.org).
- 8) To order Chinatown Watch window signs for your business, email [ChinatownWatch.com@gmail.com](mailto:ChinatownWatch.com@gmail.com)**