

# Priority Actions and Intermediate Steps: Target Date 2020

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## About these priority actions

These nine strategic items were identified by the Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Task Force as essential "next steps" toward creating Hawai'i's preferred future. They are ranked in priority order. These strategic actions are not all of the necessary activities to create a sustainable future for Hawai'i; but are essential to address immediately to ensure our goals are met in 2050. The Task Force identified the year 2020 as a target date to meet our interim goals.

## About the 2020 suggested benchmarks

Below you will find a sampling of suggested benchmarks to measure progress in implementing the priority actions. We anticipate that some of these benchmarks will be a useful starting point while others may be changed or modified as more information becomes available. However, even without complete information, the Task Force believed that it is critical to have numerical targets inserted at the outset, so that the dialogue on sustainability goals can begin now.

We recommend the Sustainability Council modify, correct, and improve upon these benchmarks as one of their first orders of business. Through expert testimony, obtaining and evaluating baseline data, and discussions with government and private institutions with knowledge in these areas, they can finalize and ratify the benchmarks as official 2020 priority actions and targets.

These benchmarks are intended to initiate discussion rather than be approved or ratified immediately. Additional benchmarks for each priority item can and should be added by the Sustainability Council if appropriate. Where available, we use official government benchmarks that are already established.

### **1. Increase affordable housing opportunities for households up to 140% of median income. (Goal 4, Strategic Action 1)**

#### **Why this matters:**

- We define affordable housing as for purchase or rental housing that households earning up to 140% of the area median income can afford. The Hawai'i Housing Finance Development Corporation ("HHFDC") states that another indicator of housing affordability is the shelter-to-income ratio of 30% or below. A ratio exceeding 30% generally indicates cost burden or housing that is not affordable. Without affordable housing, Hawai'i's low- and middle-income cannot afford a place to live, and many of our most promising young people will move to the mainland.

#### **Where we are now:**

- According to the Housing Policy Study (2006), there were 435,818 housing units in 2006. Of that, 260,986 are owner-occupied.

The remaining 174,832 units are rental units, of which 48.2% of renters are cost burdened. 51.8% or 90,563 of rental units are affordable.

- The Housing Policy Study also indicated that about 54.2% of households statewide pay less than 30% of income for housing. Housing for this group is affordable. 34% of households are cost burdened (11.3% of households pay 30-40% of income for housing and 22.7% have housing payments exceeding 40% of income).

#### **2020 Suggested Benchmarks:**

- Hawai'i's shelter-to-income ratio is nearing the national ratio of 22% of income spent for homeowner housing, and 30% for rental housing (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2005).
- The HHFDC estimates that in the next five years (2007-2011) there is an estimated need for approximately 23,000 affordable and workforce housing units. HHFDC seeks to meet that demand.

**2. Strengthen public education.** (Goal 2, Strategic Action 3; Goal 4, Strategic Action 3) Note: This strategic action includes both work-force and community development aspects of public education.

#### **Why this matters:**

- A high quality public education system builds a strong economy and skilled workforce, a more cohesive community, and fewer social problems.

#### **Where we are now:**

- The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) conducts a national representative and continuing assessment of what America's public school students know in various subject areas. In 2007, 33% and 26% of Hawai'i's grade 4 students were "proficient" in math and reading, respectively. In grade 8, 21% and 20% of students were proficient in math and reading, respectively.
- According to DBEDT, in 2005, about 27% of adults age 25 or more had four year college degrees. The 2000 U.S. Census reported that 56.1% of adults age 25 or more had some college or higher.

#### **2020 Suggested Benchmark:**

- The Department of Education projects that by 2019, 61% and 35% of grade 4 students will be proficient in math and reading, respectively. The DOE also projects that 31% and 22% of grade 8 students will be proficient in mathematics and reading by 2019, respectively.

**3. Reduce reliance on fossil fuels.** (Goal 3, Strategic Action 1)

#### **Why this matters:**



- Global warming is real, and the environmental and economic costs of fossil fuels are skyrocketing.

**Where we are now:**

- About 5% of our total energy is from renewable sources. The remainder is fossil fuel-based. 78% of those sources were imported from foreign countries, and 22% from domestic sources, principally Alaska. About 8% of electricity generated is from renewable sources.

**2020 Suggested Benchmark:**

- Pursuant to Act 95 (SLH 2004), Hawai'i's existing renewable portfolio standard (RPS) goal was replaced with an enforceable standard. Under the new standard, 20% of electricity is to be generated from renewable resources by the end of 2020.

**4. Increase recycling, reuse and waste reduction strategies.**

(Goal 3, Strategic Action 3)

**Why this matters:**

- Much of our waste can be reused. As an island state we are running out of landfill space and must find alternatives to reducing the amount of waste disposed in landfills.

**Where we are now:**

- Waste diversion or landfill diversion can cut down on the need for more dumps. Landfill diversion can occur through recycling, reusing or biological treatment of solid waste. The statewide landfill diversion rate is 31.4%. On O'ahu, about 57% of our solid waste is diverted by waste-to-energy and material recycling activities. The diversion rate for the Big Island is 24% (2006); Kaua'i's is 21% (2005); and Maui's is 30%.

**2020 Suggested Benchmark:**

- 50% of Hawai'i's municipal solid waste will be diverted. By 2014, the City & County of Honolulu expects to divert 79% of its municipal solid waste.

**5. Develop a more diverse and resilient economy.**

(Goal 2, Strategic Action 1)

**Why this matters:**

- In order to withstand external economic shocks such as war, rising fuel costs, and recessions, we must have several pillars which anchor our economy. Technology and knowledge-based jobs are potential pillars to diversify our economy.

#### **Where we are now:**

- According to Enterprise Honolulu, the innovation sector, which includes technology, diversified agriculture, alternative energy, earth, ocean and space sciences, dual use, healthcare, biosciences and digital media industries, account for about 5% of all jobs in Hawai'i. Average wage (2004) of entire innovation industries workforce was \$47,262. According to the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, in 2005, just technology jobs alone totaled 13,813. This represents 2.8 percent of all private sector jobs in Hawai'i. The average wage in the high technology sector was \$57,458, which is 66% above the overall private sector average.

#### **2020 Suggested Benchmark:**

- Enterprise Honolulu suggests that the innovation sector comprise 7% of all private sector jobs.

### **6. Develop a sustainability ethic. (Goal 1, Strategic Action 1)**

#### **Why this matters:**

- If Hawai'i's people understand and believe in sustainability, the goals of Hawai'i 2050 will be achieved. The result will be a change in consumer behavior – by individuals as well as institutional users. We will conserve water and electricity, recycle, purchase biodegradable products, and buy local foods and products.

#### **Where we are now:**

- No benchmark data on this polling question is available yet. However, according to a 2007 Hawai'i 2050 public opinion poll, about 80% of the population favors a “triple-bottom line” or balanced approach to Hawai'i's future, a key component of sustainability.

#### **2020 Suggested Benchmark:**

- 85% of Hawai'i residents consider sustainability to be a “critically important” issue to our state.
- The Task Force also suggests setting benchmarks on various aspects of consumer behavior, including per capita water consumption; per capita alternative energy consumed; use of solar water heating sources; and participation rate in recycling programs.

### **7. Increase production and consumption of local foods and products, particularly agricultural products. (Goal 2, Strategic Action 1)**

#### **Why this matters:**

- Food self-sufficiency is one of the foundations of a sustainable community.

Thriving local farms also help preserve green space and a rural way of life, and make us less vulnerable to external catastrophes.

**Where we are now:**

- About 15% of the food we consume is grown locally. About 35% of fruits and vegetables consumed are grown locally.

**2020 Suggested Benchmark:**

- The UH College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) estimates that it is reasonable that 30% of food consumed can be grown locally. CTAHR also estimates that 85% of fruits and vegetables we consume can be grown locally.

**8. Provide access to long-term care and elderly housing.**  
(Goal 4 Strategic Action 1)

**Why this matters:**

- The elderly population is growing more quickly than our current capacity to house and care for them.

**Where we are now:**

- According to the Hawai'i Health Information Corporation, Hawai'i's long-term bed rate of 24 beds per 1,000 residents aged 65 and older is about one-half that of the U.S. rate of 43 beds per 1000.

**2020 Suggested Benchmark:**

- Upward movement towards 40 beds per 1,000 residents aged 65 and older is desired. These amounts were suggested by long-term care specialists in the field.

**9. Preserve and perpetuate our Kanaka Maoli and island cultural values.**  
(Goal 5, Strategic Actions 1 and 2).

**Why this matters:**

- Hawai'i's ethnic diversity and multi-culturalism have contributed significantly to making our state unique. Support for culture and the arts ensures that our traditions continue to live and thrive through dance, festivals, education and music.

**Where we are now:**

- No data is currently compiled. An annual population survey could be conducted to measure this activity.

**2020 Suggested Benchmark:**

- Hawai'i residents attend a cultural event at least once a quarter.



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**RECOMMENDATION ONE:**  
**Focus on and implement policy priorities actions for an intermediate benchmark for 2020.**

**RECOMMENDATION TWO:**  
**Establish an implementing entity – The Sustainability Council.**

**RECOMMENDATION FOUR:**  
**Issue a report card – measuring our progress.**

**RECOMMENDATION THREE:**  
**Establish sustainability indicators, aggregating the best data annually, measuring progress towards specific sustainability goals.**