



October 7, 2020

**CITY COUNCIL'S HISTORIC DECISION WILL FINALLY REVITALIZE AND
RETURN VARONA VILLAGE TO TENANTS**

After nearly 30 years, the Honolulu City Council today unanimously approved Resolution 20-231, CD1, to revitalize Varona Village, one of eight separate villages known as Ewa Villages. This significant milestone will finally fulfill a commitment, made by the City decades ago, to address the housing needs of O'ahu Sugar plantation workers, also known as the Tenants, who resided in Ewa Villages for years.

Council Chair Emeritus Ron Menor, who introduced Resolution 20-231, CD1, has been working on this important issue since 2013 when he became the councilmember for District 9. As his top priority, he organized several community meetings over the years to bring government and the Tenants together. Also in 2013, he co-introduced Resolution 13-114, which established a community working group.

Now 28 years later, Resolution 20-231, CD1, authorizes the Mayor to enter into a development agreement with Savio/Hawaii Habilitat Varona Village LLC (Savio HH). Under this development agreement, Savio HH will try to incorporate concepts proposed by the 2013 working group when it begins developing 133 residential units and a community center. Savio HH will pay the City \$1,840,000 for the real property under an Agreement of Sale with payments to be made in installments upon the sale of each unit to purchasers.

Savio HH will renovate existing structures in its Phase I for health and safety considerations and make available 46 housing units, priced from \$100,000 to \$200,000 for basic homes to priority tenants. In Phase II, Savio HH will construct up to 87 new homes and the community center, with sale prices starting at \$200,000. Sale to the general public will be restricted to buyers who have not owned any real estate in the last three years.

"This is a historic and significant milestone that will finally fulfill a 28 year old promise made by the City. It's also the culmination of vigilance and commitment by many families and community groups, who I have worked with since 2013," said Chair Emeritus Menor. "It is unfortunate that it has taken almost three decades and many of the original Tenants are not with us to see this day, but I'm hopeful their children and families will thrive in the affordable housing opportunities that will be available in Varona Village."

Back in 1992, the City formalized its Ewa Villages Master Plan and accepted the obligation to provide housing for the Tenants. The City was going to renovate and sell existing Ewa Villages homes to Tenants or allow Tenants to remain in their homes with very low monthly rent payments.

Twenty-five years later, in 2017, the City's responsibility of Varona Village was transferred from its Department of Community Services to its Department of Land Management.

For more information on Resolution 20-231 or Resolution 13-114 or about the Honolulu City Council, please go to: <http://www.honolulucitycouncil.com> or <http://www.honolulu.gov/council>

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