

CHAPTER 15

Legislative Branch

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The Legislative Branch is established by city charter as coordinate with the executive branch of city government.¹ It is comprised of the Honolulu City Council, Office of the City Clerk, Office of Council Services and the Office of the City Auditor.

The Honolulu City Council consists of nine elected officials, and staff, who are empowered with legislative and investigative powers. This body's major duties include establishing citywide policies via the passage of ordinances and resolutions, adopting the city's annual operating and capital improvement budgets, setting the annual real property tax rate and authorizing the issuance of general obligation bonds. The city charter requires the council to adopt a balanced budget.

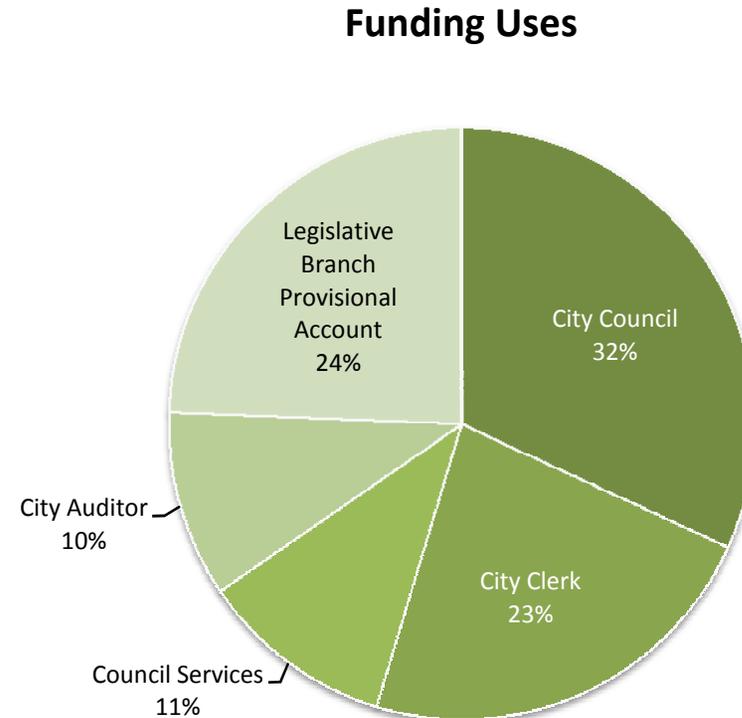
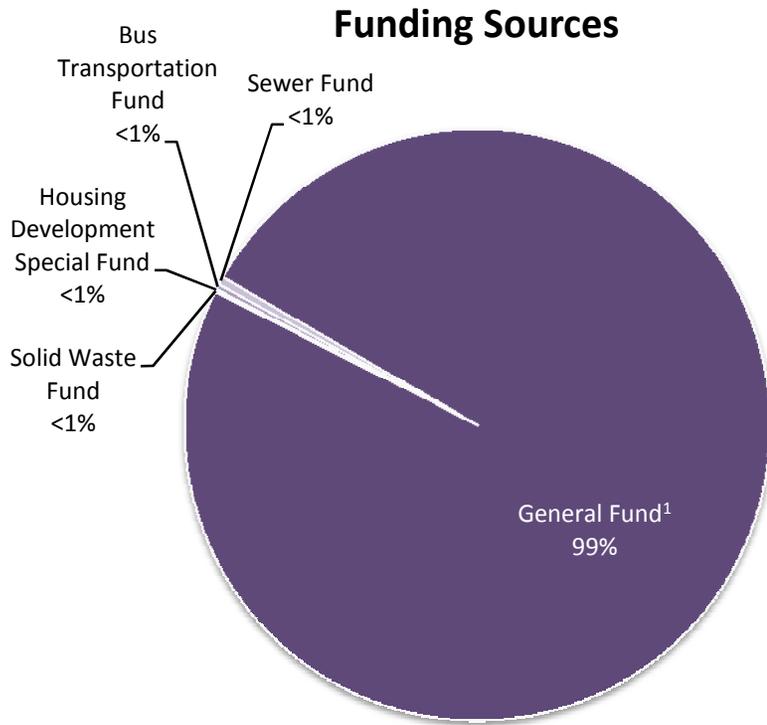
The Office of the City Clerk is custodian of ordinances, resolutions, rules and regulations of all city agencies, the city seal, books, papers and records. The clerk provides staff support to the council for all regular sessions, committee meetings and public hearings. It is responsible for voter registration and conducts all elections for the City and County of Honolulu. The clerk also authenticates all official papers and instruments requiring certification.

The Office of Council Services (OCS) provides comprehensive research and reference services for the council. It conducts research and drafts legislation, revises city ordinances, and serves in an advisory capacity to the council and its committees.

The Office of the City Auditor (OCA) is an independent audit agency created to strengthen the auditing function and ensure that city agencies and programs are held to the highest standards of public accountability. The city auditor is responsible for conducting: 1) the annual financial audit; 2) performance audits of any agency or operation of the city; and 3) follow-up audits and monitoring of audit recommendations.

¹Section 1-103, Revised Charter of Honolulu.

The Honolulu City Council serves and advances the general welfare, health, happiness, and safety of the people through exercising its legislative power.



¹Funds for compliance audits of the city's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grants were ultimately funded with General Funds.

	Total Revenues	Total Operating Expenditures (\$ million)	Staffing		Cost Per Legislative FTE ²	Overtime Expenditures ³	
			Total Authorized FTE	Total Vacant FTE		Total	Non-Holiday
FY 2009	\$52,277	\$13.0	122	5.5	\$106,680	\$67,267	\$60,689
FY 2010	\$8,458	\$12.4	128	5.0	\$96,714	\$20,033	\$20,033
FY 2011	\$31,576	\$11.5	127	2.0	\$90,551	\$60,099	\$55,881
FY 2012	\$15,408	\$11.3	126	3.0	\$89,550	\$14,119	\$14,119
FY 2013	\$10,628	\$13.0	126	7.0	\$103,477	\$49,675	\$42,675
Change over last year	-31.0%	15.5%	0.0%	133.3%	15.5%	251.8%	202.3%
Change over last 5 years	-79.7%	<1%	3.3%	27.3%	-3.0%	-26.2%	-29.7%

Source: Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, Honolulu City Council, Office of the City Clerk, Office of Council Services, and Office of the City Auditor. ²Cost Per FTE = Total Operating Expenditures/Total Authorized FTE.

³Overtime pay is established by bargaining unit agreement, as applicable.

Legislative Branch

Over the past five years, the Legislative Branch's expenditures remained stable, while expenditures over the past year increased 15.5%, from \$11,283,323 in FY 2012 to \$13,034,374 in FY 2013. The Legislative Branch noted this was due to increased operational costs. There were 126 total FTE and seven vacant FTE in FY 2013. Overtime expenditures totaled \$49,675 of which the majority (86%) was non-holiday overtime. Over the past year, the Legislative Branch's overtime increased nearly 252% from \$14,119 in FY 2012 to \$49,675 in FY 2013. This increase was due to the 2012 elections.

Honolulu City Council

In FY 2013 the Honolulu City Council focused on protecting public parks and public access to sidewalks, exercised its budget authority to improve and reconstruct city roads, approved the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation's budget, and added funding for affordable housing and homeless initiatives. The city council also created the Grants-in-Aid fund to assist non-profit organizations that provide support programs with a broad benefit to the community and making a positive impact on the overall quality of life for the residents of the City and County of Honolulu.

Over the past five years, the city council's expenditures remained about the same, while expenditures over the past year increased just over 15% from \$3.6 million in FY 2012 to \$4.2 million in FY 2013. The council reports that expenditures increased due to higher operational costs and various council projects. The council's authorized staffing was 61 FTE with 1 vacant FTE.

In FY 2013, the city council's concerns included 1) protecting public parks, sidewalks and other facilities from competing and incompatible uses; 2) seeking affordable housing solutions; 3) disbursing Grants-in-Aid to address public needs; 4) rehabilitating streets; 5) funding the Honolulu Area Rapid Transit Authority (HART) for operations; and 6) constructing the city's rail transit system.

Office of the City Clerk

The city clerk's expenditures decreased 15% from \$3.5 million in FY 2009 to \$3.0 million in FY 2013. Staffing in FY 2013 was 36 FTE with 3 vacant FTE. Over the past five years, the clerk's staffing increased 16% up from 31 FTE in FY 2009. According to the city clerk, staffing increased due to the need for additional election personnel. In FY 2013, there were 28 council meetings and hearings, and 94 standing committee meetings. The city clerk received 3,567 communications, which included council and departmental communications, mayor's messages, and petitions. There were 454,491 registered voters in Honolulu as of July 11, 2013. In FY 2013, the Elections Division conducted the 2012 elections. The division administered three early voting locations and mailed over 127,000 absentee ballots in the General Election. The city clerk administered the Oath of Office to 59 public officials, appointed agency heads and deputies, and board and commission members in accordance with the city charter.

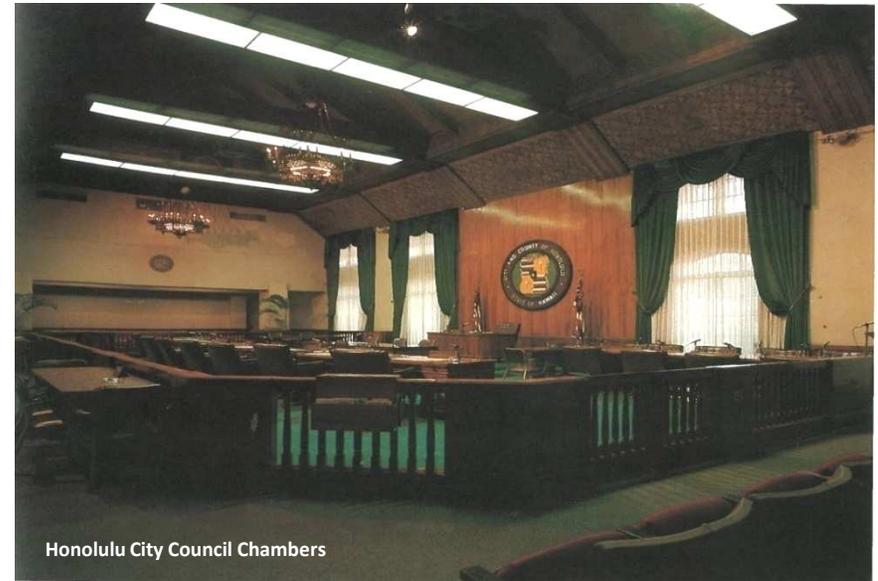
Office of Council Services

Over the past five years, council services' expenditures remained relatively flat, while expenditures over the past year increased about 9% from \$1.3 million in FY 2012 to \$1.4 million in FY 2013 due to increased operational costs and salary restoration. Council services' authorized staffing was 20 FTE with 2 vacant FTE in FY 2013.

In FY 2013, council services prepared 847 written responses to requests for services. Of these, 274 were rush assignments requiring immediate action. These responses included 181 bills; 360 resolutions; and 306 letters, legal memoranda, and statistical and research reports. Council services amended 409 pages of the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu, and provided two updates for policy resolutions. It provided consultative assistance to 94 committee meetings, 17 council meetings, and 12 public hearings. OCS reviewed 34 bills and 195 resolutions, which were introduced for council consideration on behalf of city administration. In March 2013, OCS released its 13th annual *Issue Profile, Status of the City's Finances* report, which provided the city council with a historical and comparative context to review budget and fiscal trends.

Office of the City Auditor

The city auditor's expenditures increased 11% from \$1.2 million in FY 2009, to \$1.3 million in FY 2013. According to the city auditor, this increase is due to additional staff and increased operational costs. The office's authorized staffing was 9 FTE in FY 2013. In FY 2013, the city auditor completed 23 audits and reports.



Honolulu City Council Chambers

Source: City Photobank

In December 2012, OCA underwent its third external peer review as required under generally accepted government auditing standards. The review team from the Association of Local Government Auditors gave the city auditor's office a clean opinion.

	Operating Expenditures (\$ million)					City Clerk		Council Services		City Auditor
	City Council	City Clerk	Council Services	City Auditor	Provisional Account	Total Communications Received	Total Registered Voters	Total Number of Written Responses	Total Number of ROH Pages Amended	Total Number of Audits and Reports
FY 2009	\$4.1	\$3.5	\$1.4	\$1.2	\$2.8	3,541	447,965	766	237	20
FY 2010	\$3.9	\$3.3	\$1.4	\$1.2	\$2.6	3,624	456,662	753	297	18
FY 2011	\$3.7	\$2.5	\$1.3	\$1.3	\$2.7	3,546	448,508	820	303	23
FY 2012	\$3.6	\$2.5	\$1.3	\$1.3	\$2.7	4,323	458,742	883	420	24
FY 2013	\$4.2	\$3.0	\$1.4	\$1.3	\$3.2	3,567	454,491	847	409	23
Change over last year ¹	15.1%	20.6%	9.1%	6.1%	18.8%	-17.5%	-0.9%	-4.1%	-2.6%	-4.2%
Change over last 5 years ¹	0.4%	-15.1%	-1.2%	11.0%	15.2%	0.7%	1.5%	10.6%	72.6%	15.0%

Sources: Honolulu City Council, Office of the City Clerk, Office of Council Services, and Office of the City Auditor. ¹ Percent change is based on whole dollar figures.

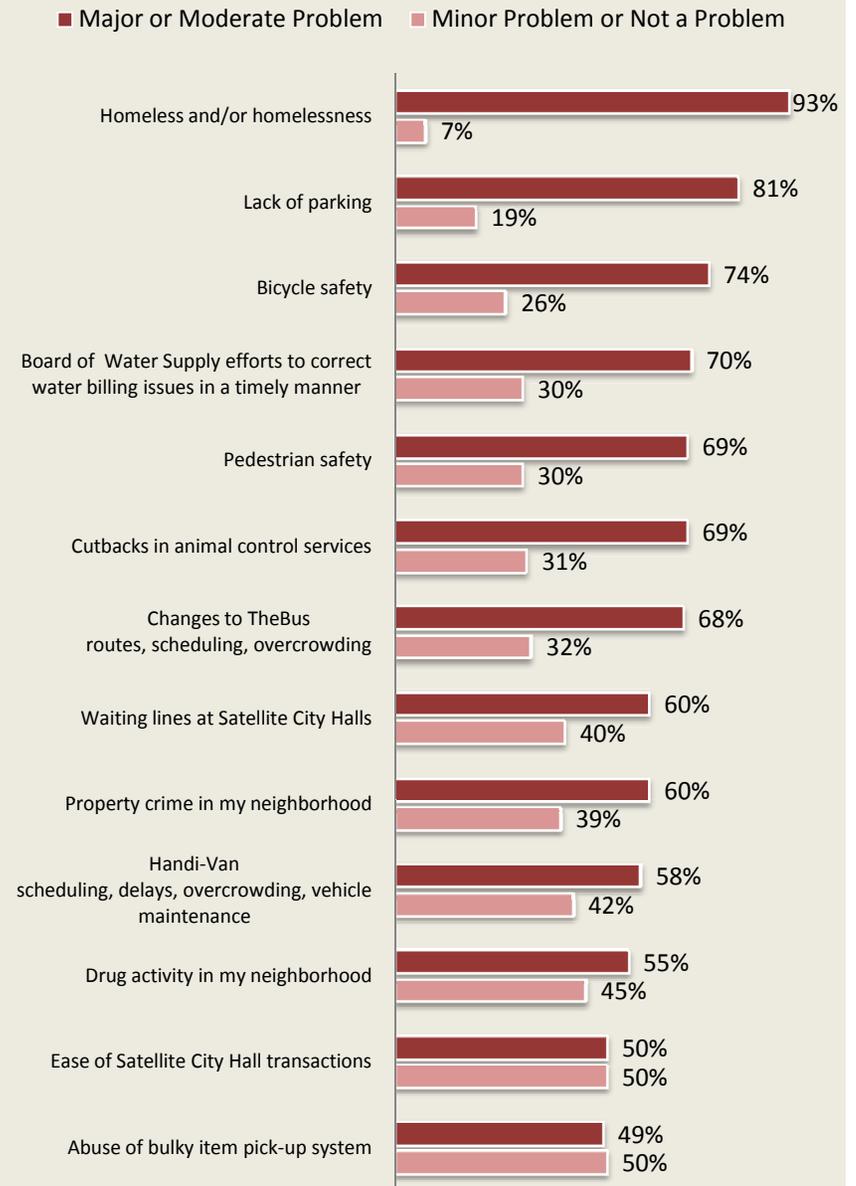
Results of 2013 Public Policy Questions

The United States entered into a recession in late 2007 with a steep drop off in 2008 and 2009. The State of Hawai'i and the City and County of Honolulu were hit hard by the recession. Since then, a gradual recovery while slow, has been fairly steady.¹ Due to uncertainties in the global economy, rising energy, debt service and employee costs, the city's philosophy is to find ways to trim costs, find cost saving efficiencies and offset new cost increases by revenue increases. The city strives to contain costs while delivering the expected level of public services.

In this year's National Citizen Survey, most residents rated their overall quality of life as *excellent* or *good* and a majority of residents would be *very likely* or *somewhat likely* to recommend Honolulu as a place to live to someone who asks. Natural Environment was identified as one of the facets most important to residents' quality of life. Overall, Honolulu received favorable ratings for air and drinking water quality, and overall quality of the natural environment. Honolulu also has high rates of participation in environmentally friendly activities including water conservation, recycling, and making homes more energy efficient.

The 2013 National Citizen Survey (Honolulu) asked residents a series of questions related to problems in the city, support for issues by raising taxes, and important issues to be addressed in the next two years. Residents reported the following as major problems: the homeless and homelessness (93%), lack of parking, (81%), bicycle safety (74%), and Board of Water Supply efforts to correct water billing issues in a timely manner (70%).

To what degree, if at all, are the following problems in the City and County of Honolulu?²



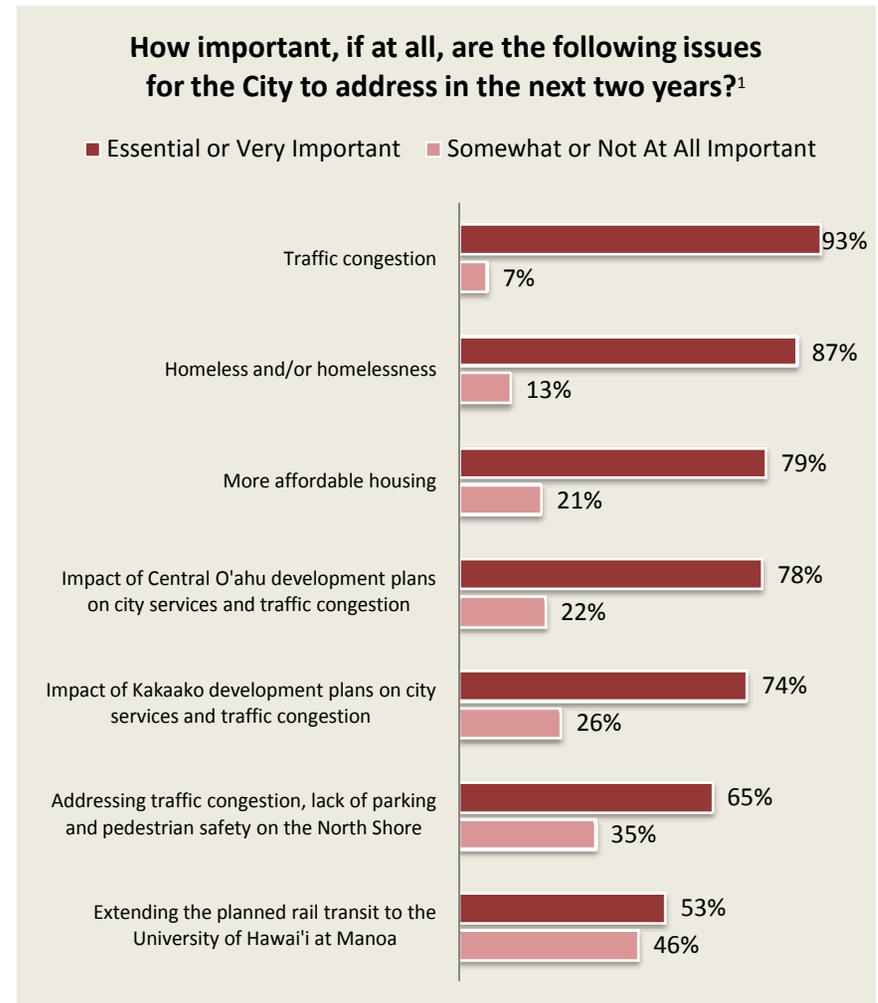
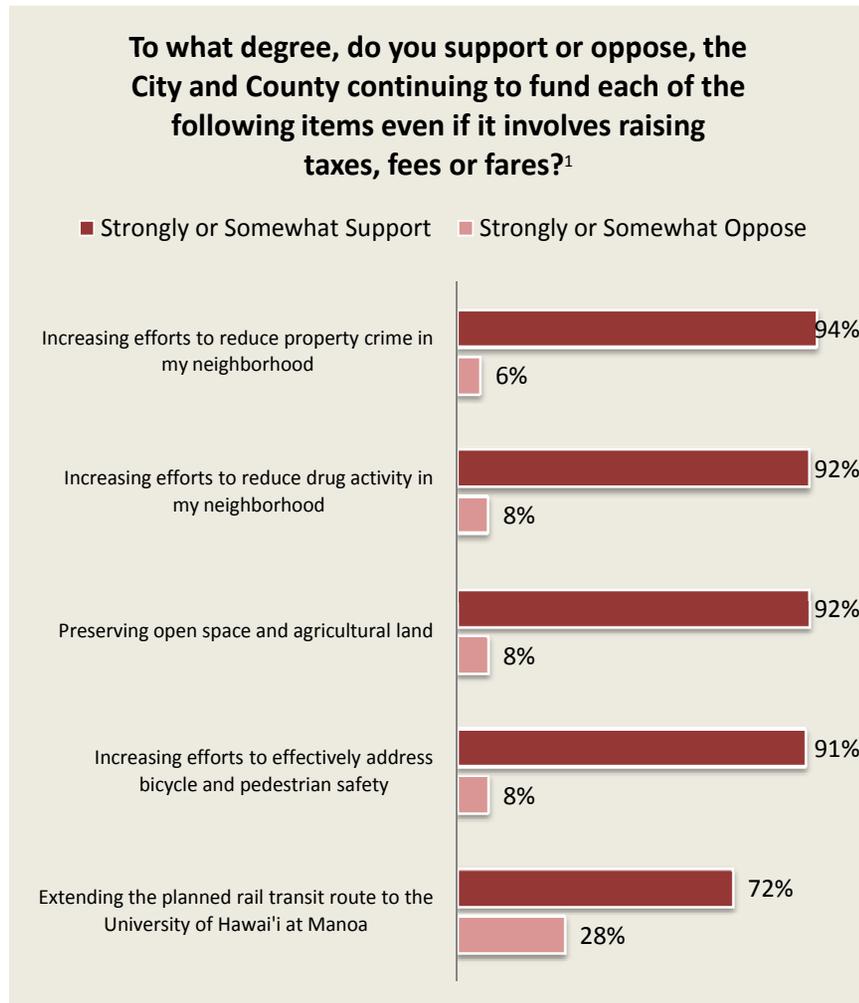
Source: 2013 National Citizen Survey (Honolulu)

¹Dr. Leroy O. Laney, First Hawaiian Bank Economic Forecast.

²Ratings may not total 100% due to rounding.

Residents supported the possibility of raising taxes for increased efforts to reduce property crime in their neighborhoods (94%), increasing efforts to reduce drug activity in their neighborhoods (92%), and preserving open space and agricultural land (92%). Residents also supported increasing efforts to effectively address bicycle and pedestrian safety (91%), and extending the planned rail transit route to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (72%).

Residents also rated important issues for the city to address in the next two years. The highest ratings were traffic congestion (93%), the homeless and/or homelessness (87%), more affordable housing (79%), the impact of Central O'ahu development plans on city services and traffic congestion (78%), and the impact of Kaka'ako development plans on city services and traffic congestion (74%).



Source: 2013 National Citizen Survey (Honolulu)

¹Ratings may not total 100% due to rounding.

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