

COVER STORY


AN 'UPBEAT' BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Brian Maeshiro, vice president of Action Realty Corp. and Anthony Pfaltzgraff, a retired executive with the YMCA of Honolulu's Kalihi branch, are looking to reignite the Kalihi Business Association as interim presidents. They know the top position well, as they both served as co-presidents of the KBA from 2014 to 2016. KBA currently has 35 paid members.

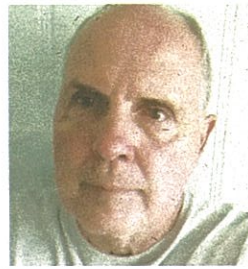
Pacific Business News sat down with Maeshiro and Pfaltzgraff at the Kamehameha Shopping Center Starbucks in Kalihi to get their take on the business climate of the area.

Q&A BY DUANE SHIMOGAWA

Why is Kalihi a good location for businesses? **Brian Maeshiro:** Location, location, location. Everything passes through Kalihi to town and Waikiki. This is the hub. That's why it sometimes tends to get neglected because everyone's just passing through, but there's a synergy amongst businesses and even nonprofits. In Kalihi, you can purchase your property, build your business, and hopefully live happily ever after because you don't have to



Brian Maeshiro



Anthony Pfaltzgraff

worry about ground rent renegotiations or bankers only lending you so much because they're concerned about the ground-lease terms.

Anthony Pfaltzgraff: There are also a lot of great restaurants in Kalihi.

What are some of the characteristics that make Kalihi a good place for businesses?

Maeshiro: Access and proximity to Downtown Honolulu, harbors, freeways, airports. There are also a lot of business-to-business going on with lots of suppliers, wholesalers and retailers in the area.

What could make Kalihi even better for businesses? **Maeshiro:** Gentrification with rail transit. Hopefully rail will bring low-cost housing. The possible relocation or redevelopment of Oahu Community Correctional Center could have a huge impact on the community. Kamehameha

Schools' planned redevelopment across from Honolulu Community College and the Mayor Wright Homes redevelopment projects could also bring Kalihi to new heights.

What is the Kalihi Business Association doing to attract more businesses to the area? **Pfaltzgraff:** In the last 10 years, getting membership has been more challenging. The need for KBA is going to grow in the years ahead because of all the things we talked about. We want to make sure it's ready for the next group of people.

What challenges keep businesses from coming to Kalihi? **Pfaltzgraff:** Government budget cuts will have an impact on Kalihi because it has a lot of social service organizations.

Maeshiro: People want to be here but there is no space for them right now. Also, from an industrial space perspective, we're basically at full capacity.

How is the current business climate in Kalihi? **Maeshiro:** The area is upbeat and businesses are busy, although parking is hard to find on the street.

Pfaltzgraff: It's such a dynamic community. It has lots of businesses, social service agencies, and it's where the state put the majority of its public housing stock. Kalihi is friendlier than many of the other communities on Oahu. ❧



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