



CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
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CITY COUNCIL
HONOLULU, HAWAII

November 26, 2008

Memorandum

TO: Councilmember Todd Apo, Chair, Honolulu City Council

CC: Clayton Wong, Council Administration

FROM: Councilmember Romy M. Cachola 

SUBJECT: Rail-Volution 2008
San Francisco, California
October 26 – October 30, 2008

I attended the Rail-Volution 2008 conference in San Francisco, California, from October 26, 2008 to October 30, 2008. The four-day conference focused on San Francisco's comprehensive regional transportation system. The Bay Area is a uniquely diverse and highly sustainable place to live in.

I participated in the conference to better understand the experiences and needs of other jurisdictions for an integrated transit solution. The conference will help to broaden my understanding of transit solutions. It will also help me to educate me on developing livable communities around transit systems.

Day 1 of Rail-Volution 2008

I have previously attended various mobile workshops offered during the first day. However I toured the transit corridor by taking rail from my hotel to the Berkeley/Richmond stop.

Day 2 of Rail-Volution 2008

On October 28, 2008, I attended the opening plenary session and heard from a number of regional and national leaders and experts on transit issues. The speakers presented a number of issues that face local communities today. The speakers attempted to bring together a number of

federal, state, and local initiatives linking climate change and energy policy with transportation, land use and livable communities.

Leaders and experts in the transportation field spoke on the following issues.

- California's Global Warming Solutions Act (2006) and the just-passed SB 375, which tied green house gas emissions with regional transportation and land use.
- Upcoming federal initiatives that included a new transportation bill, national legislation on climate change and energy policy, and recommendations of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Commission.
- The American Public Transportation Association's TransitVision 2050 program that seeks to create an energy efficient, multi-modal and environmentally sustainable transportation system.
- The Great Communities Collaborative, which brings together residents and local organizations to work together on planning issues in the San Francisco Bay Area.

I also heard from Oregon Congressman Earl Blumenauer on the state of rail in America. Our nation faces crumbling infrastructure and global climate change like never before. Coupled with much economic uncertainty the new administration and Congress will help to provide unprecedented opportunity to craft a transportation authorization bill that helps to rebuild and renew America. The bill will help to provide jobs, create transportation options, stimulate local economies, and reduce our carbon footprint.

From 10:30am – 3:00pm I attended two workshops, the Rail~Volution 101 workshop on Transit Oriented Development and "Aauthorization: A Call to Action." The TOD refresher course focused on the basics of transit oriented development. Key elements discussed in the workshop where,

- Basic transit-oriented development and design.
- Principles of "placemaking" to help promote the development of healthy and vibrant communities.
- Benefits of transit to local communities and our society.
- TOD results and lessons learned from the perspective of: private sector developers and the business community, public transit agencies and their staff, and local governments that ultimately are responsible for planning and zoning around stations.

In the second workshop we discussed the various opportunities for agencies, government entities and community stakeholder advocates to get involved in the process of federal funding. We heard from representatives in both public and private organizations about current advocacy initiatives underway. This workshop also incorporated relevant issues influencing the debate, including energy, global competition, climate change, freight, gas prices and energy independence.

In the afternoon I attended a workshop entitled "Addressing the Public's Willingness to Pay". This workshop talked about a study done in Sacramento to analyze the cost of transit that the public would be willing to pay for. The computer-based outreach tool they created is being used by the public to "buy" transit services and investment using finite pots of money.

I also attended SAFETEA-LU: The Program and Its Challenges and Opportunities. This workshop discussed the basics of the program that focuses on planning, new starts and small starts. The workshop identified and highlighted what provisions work and what needs improvement. It also discussed the challenges and opportunities being faced by various entities in meeting SAFETEA-LU provisions and requirements.

This session and workshops were important in helping me to understand the issues that surround current transit problems. The city of Honolulu is located in a beautiful island state. Climate change will have direct implications to our wellbeing. Understanding how energy policy and global warming relates to a sound transit plan will help me to create effective policy to better our city.

Day 3 of Rail-Volution 2008

I attended the plenary session and heard from transportation experts in the academic and public sector. The speech focused around Transit Oriented Development in New York City. New York City Department of Transportation Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan spoke on Mayor Bloomberg's attempts to shift importance away from cars towards pedestrians. New York is in the midst of creating quality public space from its 6,000 miles of streets and 12,000 miles of sidewalks.

Christopher Leinberger, visiting fellow from The Brookings Institution/University of Michigan spoke about his new book, *The Option of Urbanism: Investing in a New American Dream*. Leinberger talked about the value of pedestrian-oriented urbanism and its ability to help pay for constructing and operating transit.

I also learned about guidelines for eminent domain when considering TOD's.

- Do no harm.
- Avoid controversial/high profile acquisitions.
- Avoid being reported in the news.
- Spend time with community.
- Brief members of the media.
- Be prepared to pay more than fair market value.
- Be prepared to walk away from property.

Rising costs of development of TOD's and rail transit was also an issue that was discussed. Looking at Denver, Colorado as an example the cost of the fast track extensions and improvements at existing lines jumped from \$4.7 billion in 2002 to \$7.9 billion in current dollars. The funding for Denver's project comes from a sales tax increase of 1%.

I attended a workshop entitled "Principles of Transit-Oriented Development: Just the Basics." This session explored the key elements of transit-oriented design and adapting transit planning and design to the surrounding development area. TOD projects must have certain key characteristics (such as density, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly design, and a convenient and logical transit connection) to enhance transit ridership and create neighborhoods that meet the needs of today's changing society.

In the afternoon I attended “Building Support for Transit through Community Activism.” This workshop discussed strategies on effective community outreach, effective education, and interactive tools that can help develop the long-range message of land use-transportation linkages. The session discussed three very different yet effective approaches to build support for transit and TOD’s.

These guidelines along with the guest lectures will help me in providing a sound plan for Transit Oriented Development here in Honolulu. It is also important to note the cost of such projects with respect to the economy and the cities ability to collect funding. With rail transit being the hub of activity in livable and walkable communities, it is important to note the strengths and weaknesses of eminent domain and other development concerns.

Conclusion

My understanding of rail transit impacts has been heightened with the various regional and national experts who spoke about TOD’s and new national policy initiatives to revamp public transportation.

Honolulu needs to envision ways to promote smart development in and around transit stations to maximize ridership along with opportunities to generate revenue. The Council and the City must make every effort to keep these principles in mind and see to it that current as well as future taxpayers won’t be unduly overburdened by this multi-billion dollar project.

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City Council
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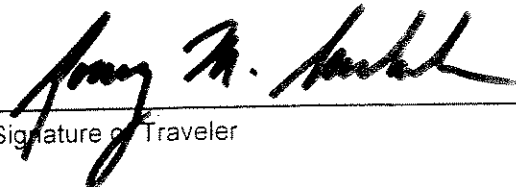
CLAIM FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Date: 11-19-08

Traveler: ROMEO CACHOLA
 Event: Rail-volution 2008
 Location: San Francisco, CA
 Dates: From 10/26/08 To 10/30/08

Description	Amount	Notes
1. Registration Fee	445.00	
2. Airfare	610.00	
3. Hotel	1,072.12	Rate: No. of Billable Days:
4. Meals	153.17	
5. Ground Transportation	102.00	
6. Tips	39.96	
7. Other		
Other		
Other		
8. Adjustment		
TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT	\$2,422.25	
		TOTAL TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT: \$2,397.25

This is to certify that the above data, based upon receipts submitted to Council Administrative Support Services via a CCLTRVL02 form, is accurate. Further, I am claiming reimbursement for expenses associated with a trip in which City business was conducted and personal funds were used to advance payment:



 Signature of Traveler

DEC 03 2008

 Date