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November 22, 2011

Memorandum

TO: Council Chair Ernie Martin, Honolulu City Council
Clayton Wong, Fiscal Officer, Honolulu City Council

FROM: Councilmember Romy M. Cachola

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Romy M. Cachola", is written over the "FROM:" line.

SUBJECT: Rail-Volution 2011
Washington, DC
October 16 – 19, 2011

I attended the Rail-Volution 2011 conference in Washington, DC October 16-19, 2011. Officials in our nation's capital have launched initiatives that have linked neighborhoods, spurred economic development, connected people to jobs, and provided residents, workers and visitors with more transportation choices for their daily activities.

Rail~Volution is the nation's premier conference on livable communities. Rail~Volution started in 1989 as a series of outreach and advocacy events geared towards developing real advocates for the Portland metropolitan region's MAX Light Rail System. It has grown into a nationwide movement with a goal to develop livable communities with transit. Livable communities are those that are healthy, economically vibrant, socially equitable and environmentally-sustainable.

Over 1,500 elected officials, planners, developers and advocates attended this year's conference held at the Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, DC. The conference featured three plenary sessions that addressed issues affecting the future of livable communities; 75 workshops that addressed nearly every aspect of building livable communities with transit; 21 mobile workshops that provided hands-on, real-world learning about livability issues; 3 charrettes that used a planning tool to solve problems for a particular issue or geographic area; special events that provided opportunities for networking, and a trade show with booths and displays from over 20 companies. In all, the Rail-Volution 2011 conference discussed

nearly every aspect of building livable communities, as well as specific hands-on strategies that can be used and applied to most every community.

As a member of the City Council's Transportation Committee, a member of the National Association of Counties (NACO)'s Transportation Steering Committee and a member of the Oahu Metropolitan Transportation Organization's (OMPO) Policy Committee, it was important for me to participate in the conference and tap into the expertise of the many planners, business leaders, elected officials, planning commissioners, community leaders, funders and transportation advocates who were in attendance.

Day 1 of Rail~Volution 2011

On Sunday, October 16, 2011, I attended the New Starts Symposium from 12 noon to 3 pm. Speakers included **Cheryl King** from the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, Atlanta, Georgia; **Lucy Garliavskas** from the Transportation Planning and Environment, Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Washington, DC; **Richard P. Steinmann** from the FTA, Washington, DC; **Michael A. Allegra**, from the Utah Transit Authority, Salt Lake City, Utah; and **Ray Amoruso** from Hampton Roads Transit, Norfolk, Virginia.

Attendees learned how to convert their vision for a New Starts or Small Starts project, or even extending an existing line, into reality despite the challenges and opportunities. The guest speakers, which included professionals from the FTA, shared their wisdom on how they overcame challenges in bringing rail transit and bus rapid transit to their respective communities. They provided straight talk on avoiding common pitfalls and how to successfully follow in their tracks. Experts also discussed the importance of articulating one's vision, getting ample local and private financing, and understanding federal priorities throughout the project development approval process.

Day 2 of Rail~Volution 2011

On Monday, October 17, I attended the Opening Plenary session from 8 am to 9:30 am entitled "What is the Next American Dream?" Speakers included **Christopher Leinberger**, Visiting Fellow, Brookings Institution, Washington, DC; and **Manuel Pastor**, professor of American Studies and Ethnicity from the University of Southern California. Both Leinberger and Pastor spoke about shifting trends in the U.S. and how these shifts will influence communities' strategies for building homes, business areas and transportation networks. According to Pastor, the U.S. is diversifying both ethnically and racially, and the suburbs in particular are growing more diverse than ever before. These aren't the only changes at work, however. Leinberger said that the U.S.'s population is growing older and millions of Americans reach retirement age. The number of homes in America without children is also on the rise and young people are increasingly moving to cities and urban areas. These changes, taken together, mean many Americans are looking for new places to live and new ways to get around—a new American Dream, perhaps—which can be seen in new preferences reflected in many regions' housing markets. According to Pastor, property values of office space, retail space, apartments and for-sale homes rise significantly in

neighborhoods that are walkable and served by transit. These higher prices point to pent-up demand as a result of undersupply. Creating more of this kind of neighborhood will help meet this demand and help areas with low-cost transportation choices have more affordable homes. Leinberger advocated for not only walkable neighborhoods that more Americans want but also the transportation infrastructure that support them.

Next, I attended a workshop entitled “Advancing Complete Streets: New Tools and Guides for Implementation” from 10 am to 11:30 am. Speakers included **Rachel Beyerle** from Easter Seals Project ACTION & National Center on Senior Transportation, Washington, DC; **Mandi Roberts** from OTAK, Kirkland, Washington; **Christine G. Green** from the National Complete Streets Coalition, Washington, DC; **Charles Denney** from Alta Planning + Design, Arlington, Virginia; and **Gabe Klein** from the Chicago Department of Transportation, Chicago, Illinois. Attendees learned that Complete Streets policies are on the rise nationwide as state, regional and local governments are considering these policies for all users including: pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, people with disabilities and motorists. The speakers shared new policy assessment and implementation tools, as well as technical assistance resources to help attendees create more effective complete streets policies. They also discussed practical information about incorporating sustainability elements into complete streets, reviewed new urban bikeway design guides and heard recommendations on designing safe and secure pathways.

From 2 pm to 3:30 pm, I attended a second workshop entitled “Value Capture: Legal Tools and Challenges.” Speakers included **Minming Wu** from the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District, Office of General Counsel, Oakland, California; **Mark Pollak** from Ballard Spahr, LLP, Baltimore, Maryland; and **Allison Fultz** from Kaplan, Kirsch & Rockwell, LLP, Washington, DC. Attendees learned about the specific value capture tools for TOD implemented by agencies, the legal challenges that may arise when implementing these tools, and the solutions crafted by each agency to overcome such challenges. The speakers also discussed tax increment financing (TIF) districts, ground leases and transit-benefit fees. Attendees heard a panel discussion about specific federal TOD regulatory guidance supporting the use of such value capture tools and the challenges or limitations to such support.

My final workshop of the day was entitled “Finance: An Overview” from 4 pm to 5:30 pm. Speakers included **Ron Golem** from BAE Urban Economics, Emeryville, California; **Sasha Page** from Infrastructure Management Group, Inc., Bethesda, Maryland; and **Shanti Breznau** from Strategic Economics, Seattle, Washington. In general, financing mixed-use development and transit improvements has always been a challenge. Real estate products never seem to follow the same investment cycle as public funding. And when you start mixing the uses within a project you end up with lenders walking away from the deal. Attendees at this workshop learned about the key ingredients to financing mixed-use development and how they fit into the metropolitan planning organization agenda. We heard what works and what doesn’t when it comes to financing transit investments—especially for streetcar systems.

Day 3 of Rail-Volution 2011

On Tuesday, October 18, I attended a workshop from 10 am to 11:30 am entitled “Finance: Practical Applications.” Speakers included **Brian Prater** from Low Income Investment Fund, San Francisco, California; and **Gerry Widdicombe** from the Downtown DC Business Improvement District, Washington, DC. Financing mixed-use development has always been a challenge. Practical applications can be extremely informative as jurisdictions try to finance and build mixed-use development focused on public transit investments. Prater and Widdicombe shared invaluable insight as to what works and what doesn’t. They also shared examples of successful mixed-use development that included affordable housing and focused on the overall equity in the built environment.

Next up was another workshop from 2 pm to 3:30 pm entitled “Reauthorization for the Future: SAFETEA-LU and the Gasoline Tax.” Speakers were **Art Guzzetti** from the American Public Transportation Association, Washington, DC; **David Bauer** from the American Road and Transportation Builders, Washington, DC; **James Corless** from Transportation for America, Washington, DC; **Janet F. Kavinoky** from Americans for Transportation Mobility; U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Washington, DC; and **Jeffrey F. Boothe** from Holland & Knight; Washington, DC. Speakers explored the perspectives of different stakeholders and discuss the critical issues facing the federal role and investment in the future. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) expired on September 30, 2011 as did all but 4.3 cents of the gasoline tax. Congress is working to extend both SAFETEA-LU and the gasoline tax as well as to address long-term funding for highway and transit investments. The next extension is anticipated by November 18 and would be the fifth reauthorization. What is currently being worked out is a 2 to 6 year extension subject to the approval of a “super committee” (2 years at \$12 billion or 6 years at \$75 billion). The amount will depend on funding sources, programs and reduction in entitlements such as Social Security. It is crucial to have revenue-generating programs to finance transportation projects. Because the federal government is no longer the biggest source of funds as it once was, what is needed now more than ever are more matching funds, innovative financing, public-private partnerships.

Day 4 of Rail-Volution 2011

On Wednesday, October 19, I attended a morning workshop entitled “Principles of Financing Livable Communities” from 8 am to 9:30 am. Speakers included **William K. Fleissig** from TransACT, San Francisco, California; **Noni Ramos** from Enterprise Community Loan Fund, San Francisco, California; and **James L. Prost** from Basile, Bauman, Prost & Associates, LLC, Annapolis, Maryland. Livable communities, robust transit services and transit-oriented development all require supportive policies and vigorous implementation strategies in order to become successful realities. A common thread that runs through each is the need for funding; whether from the public sector, the private sector, or in many cases from a combination of the two. In tough economic times, the need for creative funding solutions is at a premium. The workshop’s speakers also explored financial strategies, techniques and their experiences in adding the critical affordable housing component to TODs. Attendees learned how to conduct economic and market evaluations for public and private sector

involvement in transit-supportive developments. Attendees also analyzed how landowners, developers, jurisdiction staff, elected officials and transit officials successfully achieve TODs, from both a public and financial real estate perspective.

My final workshop was held from 10 am to 11:30 am and entitled “Community Outreach Strategies for Engaging Diverse Stakeholders.” Speakers were **Marla Wilson** from Greenbelt Alliance, San Francisco, California; **Veronica Hahn** from Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative, Los Angeles, California; and **Veronica O. Davis** from Hillcrest Community Civic Association, Washington, DC. With public investment in infrastructure growing ever scarcer, public and private agencies are having to dig deeper into their communities to ensure that all voices are being heard. Investments in transit, bikeways and affordable housing will not be saved by public meetings alone. The workshop also featured case studies for engaging diverse stakeholders beyond the usual public meeting attendee from three large American cities—San Francisco, Los Angeles and Washington, DC. The speakers shared successful bilingual urban outings as well as dialogues with members of various ethnic and senior communities.

Denver TOD Trip

Late that afternoon, I boarded a flight for Denver, Colorado to meet with officials and tour several Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) sites, as well as inspect their FasTracks transit system. FasTracks is the Denver Regional Transportation District’s (RTD)’s \$6.5 billion public transportation expansion plan which calls for six light rail, diesel commuter rail and electric commuter rail lines that would provide commuters with an alternative to the region’s congested roads and highways.

RTD is Denver region’s public transit agency, similar to HART (Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART). RTD is playing a crucial role in the implementation of TOD at and around the FasTracks transit system. The goal is a pedestrian-oriented environment that allows people to live, work, shop and play in places accessible by transit. RTD’s TOD mission is to help facilitate TOD opportunities that increase ridership or enhance transit investments through station design and close coordination with local jurisdictions and developers.

The Denver trip was invaluable as it afforded me the opportunity to hear of the experience of other jurisdictions when it comes to transit-oriented development (TOD). I had the opportunity to speak with several Denver officials and asked them questions about cost-overruns. Funding for Denver’s FasTracks transit system is unfortunately about \$1 billion short of what was originally estimated. To avoid a similar experience, they offered me a bit of advice which I hope that our City’s officials will take to heart. According to Denver officials, the most important thing Honolulu can do to avoid cost-overruns is to tighten our contract with the contractor. The contract must be very detailed and “air tight.” Any cost-overruns, other than those requested by the city, should be borne by the contractor and not the city. I have requested a copy of Denver’s contract but to date have not yet received it.

Conclusion

For myself, the 2011 Rail~Volution conference was very helpful, particularly when it comes to TOD, livable communities and financing. It was an incredibly energizing conference for anyone interested in improving the transportation network and communities. The majority of the sessions and workshops that I attended dealt with the financial side of rail. After attending the 2011 Rail~Volution Conference, I have more insight into ways of increasing public and private funding and support for transit and livable communities. Likewise, the Denver tour provided valuable information on the municipal governments efforts to promote transit oriented development.

City Council
City and County of Honolulu

CLAIM FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Date: 10/31/11

Traveler: Romy M. Cachola
 Event: Rail-Volution and TOD visit
 Location: Washington, DC and Denver Colorado
 Dates: From October 14, 2011 To October 21, 2011

Description	Amount	Notes:
1. Registration Fee	425.00	Rail-Volution conference fee
2. Airfare	1319.25	Honolulu to Washington, DC to Denver to Honolulu
3. Hotel	1620.24	Marriott Wardman Park and Denver Sheraton <i>1232.04 / 388.20</i>
4. Meals	40.50	<i>Receipts attached</i>
5. Ground Transportation	0	
6. Tips	30.00	
7. Other		
Other		
Other		
8. Adjustment	<i>3364.49</i> — <i>70.50</i> —	<i>Registration, airfare and hotel to be paid by PRP. Meals and tips to be paid out of District 7 contingency fund.</i>
TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT	3434.99	

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:

Romy M. Cachola

 Signature of Traveler

NOV 01 2011

 Date