



CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-3065 / TELEPHONE 547-7000


ROMY M. CACHOLA
COUNCILMEMBER
(808) 547-7007
(808) 523-4220 (fax)
e-mail: rcachola@honolulu.gov

November 19, 2007

Memorandum

TO: Councilmember Barbara Marshall, Chair, Honolulu City Council

CC: Clayton Wong, Council Administration

FROM: Councilmember Romy M. Cachola 

SUBJECT: Rail-Volution 2007
Miami, Florida
October 31 – November 3, 2007

Visit to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
November 3 – 6, 2007

I attended the Rail-Volution 2007 conference in Miami, Florida, from October 31, 2007 to November 3, 2007. The four-day conference focused on South Florida's comprehensive regional transportation system, which daily moves hundreds of thousands of residents and visitors each day, via heavy rail, commuter rail, light rail, buses and trolleys. South Florida, which is the fifth most heavily populated urban area in the U.S., has done this seamlessly from county to county and removed barriers that affect where people live, work and play.

I participated in the conference in hopes of learning from Miami's successes in integrating transportation with land use issues. My overall goal was to see if their successes could be applied locally for Honolulu's mass transit project.

At the conclusion of the conference, I flew to Pittsburgh and visited Bombardier's factory at the company's invitation. We were informed that Bombardier is the manufacturer of the vehicles for Miami's Metromover facility. I also spent several days in Pittsburgh examining and riding the city's light rail transit and busway system.

Day 1 of Rail-Volution 2007

On November 1, 2007, I attended the opening plenary and heard from a host of regional and national speakers who provided a unique perspective about challenges facing livable

years has seen an increase in the number of light rail systems, TODs, and growing interest in livable communities. The challenge for the future is to find ways to meet the expected increase in demand for quality public transportation and environmental and sustainability issues.

Peter Lehner, executive director of the Natural Resources Defense Council, then spoke on *“Transportation and Global Warming: Two Halves of a Whole.”* He discussed the relationship between transportation and global warming and provided specific ways for communities to make a difference at the local and federal levels.

Conference attendees were given an opportunity to tour the city via mobile workshops. We were given a choice of taking the Miami Skyline Tour via the Metromover, a tour along the Miami River or a tour of the Metrorail. I chose the Metromover and the Metrorail.

Later that afternoon, I attended several workshops, the first of which was entitled “the Role of Public Private Partnerships for Transit and TOD.” The workshop featured a panel of experts who discussed the role of public private partnerships (PPPs) for transit, how to properly structure these partnerships to benefit transit, and the role that TOD is having in the entire process. Overall, I learned about the latest trends in PPPs and how this type of financing structure can be applied successfully in Honolulu.

The second workshop I attended late Thursday afternoon was entitled “TODs and Responsible Development in Lower Income Communities.” I was particularly interested in this workshop because of its implications for urban Honolulu. The panelists discussed that despite a strong real estate market and demand, building TOD projects sensitively and responsibly is not easy, especially in established lower-income neighborhoods. The examples of such neighborhoods were in Austin, Baltimore and Miami. Each of these cities successfully reinvested in their low-income neighborhoods without losing their history, character and existing affordable housing. I believe the lessons learned could very well apply to Honolulu.

Day 2 of Rail-Volution 2007

I attended several more workshops on Day 2 of the conference. The first was a morning workshop entitled “Case Studies of Green TOD.” Panelists explored ways that communities have learned and implemented environmentally-responsible practices for TODs. In this era of concerns about climate change and global warming, TOD has a role to play in helping communities become more self-sustainable. I learned about a range of successful green TOD projects done at the site-specific, neighborhood and regional level.

Next, I attended a mid-morning workshop entitled “Transit Oriented Development Design Guidelines.” This was a core session that provided an in-depth discussion on how transit investments and high-performance development are prerequisites for creating livable communities. The various speakers reviewed the latest trends in developing TOD-related design guidelines that integrate both form and function for all transit modes and all development intensities.

Later that afternoon, I attended a Plenary Session entitled “the FTA’s perspective on Transit’s Value to the Development Community.” The speaker was James Simpson of the Federal Transit Administration. In the mid-afternoon, the last workshop I attended was entitled “Making Sure

Transit Fits Comfortably Into Existing Communities.” Attendees such as myself were given an overview of how different communities have successfully implemented new transit modes and stations in their neighborhoods. The speakers provided an overview of commuter rail, streetcar and bus rapid transit planning in established communities and how those systems respond to local needs and desires. The workshop also explored how transit improvements often follow local development decisions.

Pittsburgh Tour

I left Miami on Saturday, the final day of the Rail-Volution Conference for Pittsburgh. The following day, we were taken on a tour of the city of Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh transportation system includes the subway, which is a 25.2 mile long subway and light rail system. There is also bus transportation, which is free within Downtown Pittsburgh between 4 am and 7 pm. There is also ample train service. Pittsburgh Amtrak station is located across from the Greyhound bus terminal. Three Amtrak passenger trains service Pittsburgh daily. I learned that Pittsburgh has access to the full Amtrak system, but some destinations may require a bus/train combination.

On Monday morning, we were taken on a tour of Pittsburgh Port Authority Transit. We were also given a historical lesson about Pittsburgh, particularly of the development of the city’s light rail transit and busway system. Later that day, at the invitation of Bombardier, I was able to visit their facilities and met with their employees. I learned that Bombardier is the maker of components and the technology for Miami’s transit system.

Conclusion

For myself, the Rail-Volution conference and Pittsburgh tour were helpful, particularly when it comes time for the Council to make key policy decisions on Honolulu’s mass transit system. In closely examining lessons learned from Miami and Pittsburgh, I am convinced that there are three factors to keep in mind when it comes time to choose the technology of our mass transit system: performance, efficiency and safety. We must also carefully consider the cost of construction as well as operation and maintenance costs. The bottom line is that the Council needs to select the best technology and best overall deal for Oahu’s taxpayers.

* * *

City Council
City and County of Honolulu

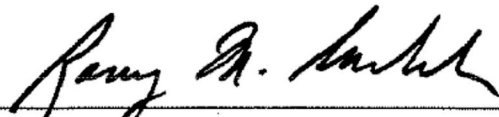
CLAIM FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Date: 1/25/08

Traveler: Romeo Cachola
Event: Rail-volution 2007
Location: Miami, FL - (Partial Pittsburgh)
Dates: From 10/31/07 To 11/03/07

Description	Amount	Notes:
1. Registration Fee	475.00	Late registration
2. Airfare	1,061.90	Hnl - Mia; Pit - Hnl
3. Hotel	970.67	
4. Meals	206.52	receipts attached
5. Ground Transportation	0.00	
6. Tips	52.47	meal/hotel/porter
7. Other		
Other		
Other		
8. Adjustment		
TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT	\$ 2,766.56	

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

1/25 2008

Date