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Travel Report

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Rail-Volution 2007

"Building Livable Communities With Transit"
October 31 – November 3, 2007



CITY COUNCIL
HONOLULU, HAWAII

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania – November 4-6, 2007

Submitted By Councilmember Todd K. Apo, Vice - Chair

The City of Miami, Florida hosted the Rail-Volution 2007 Conference. This annual conference brings together various officials and entities involved in transit management and development. The conference offers a unique opportunity to learn about innovative approaches and case studies in relation to transit communities and land use. This event offered numerous sessions and workshops. Highlights of these activities are summarized below.

Session Highlights¹

"For The Health Of It: Making The Connection To Land Use And Transportation."

This session connected the dots between the health of people and land use patterns. Particular focus was given to the ill effects of sprawl, and the benefits of compact cities and pedestrian friendly street design. Speakers included Paul Zykofsky, Director, Center for Livable Communities, Local Government Commission, Sacramento, California; and Art Pearce, Project Manager, Office of Transportation, City of Portland, Oregon.

This presentation began by explaining that public concerns over on going sprawl in Sacramento prompted the adoption of the "Ahwahnee Principles" in 1991. These principles set in motion several things: 1) promoted mixed use and walking communities; 2) initiated a re-development movement in California; and 3) led to the creation of the Center for Livable Communities in 1993. Since that time, much more research about how community design and sprawl has been conducted. It is now more clearly understood how the physical environment can affect a person's health negatively. For example air pollution, car crashes and decreased physical activity along with increased obesity can be closely related to sprawl as facets such as density, site design, land use mix, connectivity and street design can either impede physical activity or encourage it. Street design is essential to healthy communities. Roadways should be designed to accommodate all transportation activities, but encourage alternative modes of transportation. Good sidewalks, shaded areas and adequate crossings are essential. In existing communities, "road diets" or re-designing roads can be used to incorporate these characteristics. Community gardens and farmers market have helped to complete the healthy community picture in Sacramento.

"TODs and Responsible Development in Lower Income Communities." This segment of the conference utilized case studies in Baltimore and Miami to illustrate implementation

¹ Rail-Volution 2007 Conference

strategies for transit and TODs in low income communities. Presenters included John Spillman, Chief of System Planning, Miami-Dade Transit, Miami, Florida; and James Hencke, Senior Urban Designer, PB PlaceMaking, Portland, Oregon.

The Baltimore presentation focused on the initial planning stages for transit and TOD initiatives. Many communities in Baltimore are characteristically comprised of African American and White residents that are plagued with rates of high unemployment. Additionally, Baltimore's population has declined regularly since 1950. By 2006 the population had dwindled from almost 1 million to only 640,000 residents. Housing stock, crime and delinquency were also constant realities in Baltimore communities. When transit was proposed for Baltimore those pre-existing issues along with the lack of leadership to carry the project forward, were identified as challenges the project faced. The proposed transit project also faced a group of dissenters that used several approaches to battle the idea. This caused fear and anxiety about the project. Utilizing a community charrette, the transit project began to move forward. This was particularly true when "responsible development" was defined to encompass common goals such as decent housing and public safety. The Baltimore experience highlighted key lessons that can be applied to most transit related projects: 1) in community development "their speed is better than our speed"; 2) early community outreach is important; 3) working with community leaders helps to narrow down community issues; and 4) gender and ethnicity matter.

The Opa-locka case study discussed Florida's experience of implementing TOD in a low income community adjacent to an existing rail station. In this area rail was established, however, high violent crime, poverty and low home-ownership were prevalent near the station. TOD was pursued as a possible solution. A 6-day community charrette produced a 20 year plan and vision for the Ali Baba Station re-development project. This plan embraced the existing Moorish architecture; graphically depicted the TOD as having a Station Village, civic complex, school play area and a Main Street; and dictated a new area circulation plan. Implementation of the TOD plan was achieved via public finance, citizen participation and agreements with for-profit and non-profit developers to fulfill the plans goals over the long-term.

"The Mega-Infrastructure Needs of MegaRegions". Presenters in this conference segment identified common transportation challenges of cities located in megaregions such as Southern California, the Northeast and the Texas Triangle. Speakers included Carolyn Dekle, Executive Director, South Florida Regional Planning Council, Hollywood, Florida; Catherine Ross, Director, Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia; and Petra Todovich, Director, America 2050, Regional Plan Association, New York, New York

Infrastructure is essential to growth and urban health. Infrastructure in the US is limited and antiquated in many regions. Routes are congested with inadequate carrying capacity; and both rails and roads have promoted unhealthy and unattractive places for people to live and work. Globalization and the state of the environment has increased awareness about infrastructure planning. Today, infrastructure can be efficient, use varying

technologies at different cost structures and serve many travelers all at once. Megaregions are being challenged to upgrade infrastructure to this 21st century standard. Infrastructure improvement is always a difficult task however challenges for megaregion's "occur at a greater scale" not only because of size, but also due to the fact that activities of megaregions also have nationwide consequences as they house global economies; and the most used roadways, airports and harbors in nation.

To assist these vital regions in making necessary infrastructure fixes, the following national and regional initiatives and policies are underway: 1) investing in transportation systems of global gateways; 2) industrial city re-building; 3) natural resource protection; 4) local transit expansion; 5) enacting national transportation investment program; 6) Maintaining the existing roadway systems; 7) regional decision making authority and 8) instituting performance measures. Regionally, megaregions have also begun to look for solutions via innovative spatial planning, Green Infrastructure and integrated multimodal transportation. Additionally, these regions are also using inventive measures and indicators to assess effectiveness and success of infrastructure improvements such as the quality of life, economics and sustainability rather than simply carrying capacity.

"The Latest on Joint Development Policy Guidance" - Federal policy that promotes joint development was explored during this session. Speakers included Jonathan Davis, Deputy General Manager and Chief Financial Officer; and Jayme Blakesley, Attorney-Advisor, Office of Chief Counsel, Federal Transit Administration, Washington, DC.

The federal government has recently increased its efforts to support Joint Development that is transportation related. Joint Development provides an opportunity for governments to work with private partners to develop infrastructure or facilities. Unique characteristics of joint develop is the opportunity for governments to generate revenues streams via activities such as land leases, air rights development and concession leases. Limiting public investment can be achieved through cost-sharing of construction expenses or even joint use. Join Development can also be implemented to compliment and promote economic development.

The Federal Transportation Administration guidelines for funding of Joint Development projects includes: 1) coordination between public and private transportation providers; 2) includes an aspect of economic development; and 3) incorporates private investment. Qualified projects can include construction and renovation of both rail and bus systems. Additionally, to encourage transportation joint development initiatives, the FTA has allowed "maximum flexibility" in scope, design and application.

"The Dilemma of TOD vs. Park-n-Ride" – This segment shared examples on how different communities facilitated transit TOD, parking or park and ride facilities. Speakers included: Craig Lamothe, Manager-Facilities Planning, Metro Transit, Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Bill Van Meter, Director of System Planning, Regional Transportation District, Colorado.

The State of Colorado presented a comprehensive report on their system. The state is home to approximately 8 counties, 40 municipalities and around 2 million people. Their transportation system is multi-modal and includes 1) 1,071 total buses; 2) 851 peak period buses; 3) 90 light rail vehicles; 4) 166 routes; 5) 35 miles of light rail; 6) 36 light rail stations. Rider ship is on average weekday for the Bus 208,000 and Light rail: 56,000. Transportation is facilitated by a system also includes 55 bus park-n-Rides, 15,000 parking spaces, 20 light rail park-n-Rides and 11,500 parking spaces. According to Mr. Van Meter, in the beginning there was a huge demand for parking. This is expected to continue in future expansions of the system. Fortunately, there are federal funds available to assist. To optimize parking they have adopted certain policies or "access hierarchy" that limits parking within the city limits and adds park-n-ride facilities in areas linked to pedestrian based centers. However, the state expects that as it expands its system and develops TOD's, the parking demand will continue. As such, it will need to continuously and deliberately seek a balance between demand for parking access and supporting alternate modes of transportation and TOD.

"Designing Transit with Development in Mind". Transit facilities and development over the long term was the focus of this session. The presentation was handled by GB Arrington, Vice President, PB PlaceMaking, Portland, Oregon.

Mr. Arrington's session covered how transit can be used to create "places". The use of TOD is an essential part of this type of developments. Initial stages of transit development in the scope of "place" are to determine basic facts: 1) where does the station fit in? and 2) What is the stations relationship to other stations. Flexibility in the design process or to be able to "move things around" also helps to create the sense of "place", maintain community vision and "break the conventional transit mold". Transit improvements which are based on real "development", long term visions, corridors, stations, pedestrian access and community partnerships, are the most successful.

"Transit Oriented Development Design Guidelines" – Common TOD challenges and opportunities at the local level were shared at this discussion. Presenters included Ronald Stewart, Principal, Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership, Portland, Oregon; Peter Albert, Manager, Long Range Planning, San Francisco MTA, San Francisco, California and Marcy McNelly, Architect, UrbsWorks, Portland, Oregon.

"Rethink TOD" was theme of this segment of the conference. TOD has been difficult to promote in an auto based society where parking and congestion are the largest complaints received. Existing developments have not made it easier. Cities have begun to use various techniques and approaches to combat negative TOD perceptions. This has included the basic "re-selling" of the need for transit based developments and emphasizing that sidewalks, streets, driveways, buildings are all part of TOD. At the community level, TOD has been used as a tool for historic preservation and community based development. Finally, making TOD and transit fun by using creative ideas and solutions has shown to increase the overall success of transit projects.

“TOD and Transit Use -- State of the Art”. Applying data processes and information to transit policy was discussed at this session. Speakers included Robert Cervero, Chair, Dept. of City & Regional Planning; Professor of City & Regional Planning, University of California- Berkeley, Berkeley, California; and James Daisa, Senior Project Manager, Kimley Horn & Associates, San Ramon,

Data is a vital part of transportation planning. Transportation data is applied to determine infill patterns, density limits and ranges as well as sites for transit-oriented development and transit stations. Data can be collected for a variety transportation modes types, i.e., walking, bicycling, auto and mass transit. Existing data may need to be updated in many areas as they do not accurately reflect information for isolated suburban land uses or low mix of uses settlements. In California updates are currently underway to help layout a plan for future “Urban Infill”. Consultants working with the DOT are using various methodologies such as random sampling, surveys and hard counts on trip generations and parking patterns to obtain data about growth and settlement patterns. The Department of Transportation (California) expects Phase I to be completed by Spring of 2008. Phase II starts in Summer of 2008 and will be expanded to include other land use and sites. Upon completion approximately seven cities in California will have updated data that can be effectively used to plan out TOD, transit extensions and urban growth over the long term.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania – Monday, November 5

The second half of this trip included a site visit to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The purpose of this trip was to experience Pittsburgh’s multi-modal mass transit system, which includes a rail system and a dedicated bus guideway. In reviewing their system, we met with transit authority representatives, who operate the system. We also visited the Bombardier factory, where they conduct research and production of rail systems. Bombardier designs, builds, maintains and operates 20 active transit systems located throughout the world and employs over 2,000 people. During this segment of the trip, I took a tour of the Bombardier facility as well as the Pittsburgh Transportation System and visited with facility managers. Currently, the city has a 25 mile light rail subway system. Feeder bus service compliments the subway and some of this service is free. Strategically located Amtrak and Greyhound stations increases the value of the city subway. A tour of the Pittsburgh Port Authority provided historically information about Pittsburgh rail system and bus way.

City Council
City and County of Honolulu


CLAIM FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Date: 6/20/08

Traveler: Todd Apo
 Event: Rail-volution 2007
 Location: Miami, FL
 Dates: From 10/31/07 To 11/03/07

Description	Amount	Notes
1. Registration Fee	425.00	
2. Airfare	790.70	see explanation
3. Hotel	728.85	Rate: No. of Billable Days:
4. Meals		
5. Ground Transportation	30.00	cab fare
6. Tips		
7. Other	63.95	UPS shipping
Other		
Other		
8. Adjustment		
TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT	\$ 2,038.50	
		TOTAL TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT: \$2,038.50

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

6/23/08
 Date