

EVENT: MPACT Conference (formerly known as RailVolution)

DATES: November 5-8, 2023

LOCATION: Phoenix, Arizona

ATTENDEE: Dinna Schwiering, Chief of Staff of Councilmember Radiant Cordero

INTRODUCTION: *What is MPACT conference about? Why is it important for Honolulu government to attend?*

The "MPACT Mobility" conference, formerly known as RailVolution focuses on the intersection of transit, mobility, and development investments to create inclusive and thriving communities.

The conference takes a holistic approach to urban development and transportation. It recognizes that a well-functioning and equitable transit system is not just about moving people but also about creating vibrant communities.

The conference's core priorities include advancing equity, addressing the climate crisis, and fostering equitable transit-oriented communities. These priorities underscore the importance of creating urban environments that are socially just, environmentally sustainable, and resilient. It covers a wide range of topics, from transit-oriented development to multimodal corridors, community engagement, place-making, technology, and data. It provides a comprehensive overview of the key elements that contribute to building better communities.

Sunday, November 5

Welcome Reception 6:00pm – 9:00pm Phoenix Art Museum

This was a perfect location and opportunity to meet the Honolulu delegation and shared schedules, workshops, and sessions that we planned to participate in. I also met and talked to some people from different municipalities that I met that day during my transit from the airport to Sheraton Phoenix Downtown Hotel where the conference was held.

Monday, November 6

Opening Plenary – Health in All Places 8:00am – 9:30am

Welcome:

Darryl Slim, Diné Wellness Educator, Mesa, AZ

Jessica Mefford-Miller, Chief Executive Officer, Valley Metro, Phoenix, AZ

Speakers:

Jon Ford, Denior Regional Field Manager, Federal Reserve Bank, San Francisco, CA

Jon Vu, VP of Strategy for Community Health, Kaiser Permanente, Berkeley, CA

Debarati "Mimi" Majumdar Narayan, Officer, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Washington, DC

Overview:

John Vu spoke about the evolving role of healthcare organizations like Kaiser Permanente in addressing social determinants of health, taking on community responsibilities, and exploring initiatives beyond traditional medical care to contribute to overall community well-being. An example from Charlotte is mentioned, where a study showed a connection between the introduction of light rail and improved health outcomes for riders. The discussion indicated that factors like transit can play a significant role in community health particularly the people's access and connections to health care facilities.

John also mentioned how Kaiser Permanente has been focusing on community health beyond traditional disease rates for about 30 years. The Affordable Care Act mandates nonprofit hospital systems to conduct Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years, evaluating health needs in their community footprint.

Mimi Narayam discussed about the concept of "health in all policies" and its practical application. It is vital to integrate health considerations into policy making, the importance of community engagement, and the diverse factors influencing health outcomes in different communities. She emphasized the need to listen to communities and consider impacts of policy decisions, especially in the context of mobility and urban planning. The Coffelt Lamoreaux Public Housing Redevelopment Project in Phoenix was brought up where community input revealed unique challenges, such as long transit times to the nearest grocery store. Mimi described that working with local communities and using tools like Health Impact Assessments to understand the potential health impacts of policy decision.

Mobile Workshop: 10:30am – 1:30pm

Cultivating Community: An Urban Garden Hub on the LRT

Overview:

On this mobile workshop, we explored two urban gardens situated near light rail stations that functions as vibrant community hub. Our first stop was CamelBackyard, an urban farm that grows organic produce through an aquaponics greenhouse and offers raised beds for community members, along with space to wash and process produce, a shaded outdoor classroom and an adjacent community kitchen with a refrigerator for food storage. Each plot is rented out for \$5 per month.

The next urban garden we went to was 19th North Community Garden which is nestled between single family residential area and low income apartment complexes. Once a problem area with homeless encampments and illicit activities, the transformation of this space began with the completion of the Northwest Extension of the light rail along 19th Avenue. The 19th North Community Alliance was established to guide this community through its next chapter with the support of community leaders and residents. The garden now invites everyone to partake in the joys of gardening and harvesting, fostering a sense of community and shared abundance.

While the concept of community gardens, such as CamelBackyard Community Garden is not new to Hawaii, the key distinction lies in its operation as a non-profit relying on donations.

Additionally, the aquaponics system and techniques are slightly less advanced and impressive than what we have here in Hawaii.

On the other hand, the model presented by 19th North Community Garden concept caught my attention, suggesting an approach that our City could consider adopting. Operated by a non-profit, this garden does not impose fees or memberships, encouraging widespread participation in gardening and harvesting. Every Saturday, the garden opens its doors to the community, providing a list of tasks for everyone to contribute to the upkeep. Harvested produce is shared among participants, creating a sense of communal benefit. The caretakers, mindful of Arizona weather, strategically grow seasonal vegetation and conduct educational tours and gardening workshops for schools and organizations.

Session: 1:30pm- 3:00pm

Transit Stops: Unlocking the Potential

Moderator: Monica Carney-Holmes, Executive Manager, Corridors of Opportunity, City of Charlotte, Charlotte, NC
Kimberly Cella, FAIA, Executive Director, Citizens for Modern Transit, St. Louis, MO
Sheila Holm, Community Outreach Director, AARP St. Louis, St. Louis, MO
Jen Krava, Director of Programming + New Initiatives, Forecast, Saint Paul, MN

Overview:

This session encourages a reimagining of transit stops as more than mere waiting areas. It underscores the potential for transforming these spaces into valuable community assets through placemaking and public art, guided by community input and vision. These creative interventions not only enhance safety and activity at transit stops but also strengthen their connection to neighborhood identity. The importance lies in offering opportunities to introduce elements like green space, playful atmospheres, and initiatives to address longstanding inequity. In Charlotte, NC non-profit organization not only took initiative in transforming transit stops but also responsible of maintaining it.

Tuesday, November 7

Mobile Workshop: 9:45am – 12:30pm

The Asian District: Along the Light Rail in Mesa

Overview:

The Asian District in Mesa, Arizona, positioned as the Southwest's dynamic hub for Asian culture and commerce adjacent to the light rail. This mobile workshop offered insights from city leaders and business owners, shedding light on district's evolution, community engagement efforts to create a brand, business development initiative, sales tax growth, and a public-private partnership. The Vice Mayor of Mesa explained to us how this initiative came about and future plan for this area. However, it is worth noting that the workshop attendees including myself were not thoroughly impressed with the observation that the Asian District brand appeared to be

merely a strip mall. Additionally, the murals were not as impressive and extensive as what we have here in Kakaako. Despite this, I acknowledge that this might be just the beginning of the brand.

With the extensive Asian communities we have in Hawaii, the creative branding concept to elevate and promote an area or community is something that the City and County of Honolulu should consider adopting.

Session: 1:30pm- 3:00pm

Station Design and Wayfinding: Enhancing the Customer Experience

Moderator: Anna Crider, Partner, Entro Communications, Inc., New York, New York
Julie Montgomery, Director of Architecture and Art, Sound Transit, Seattle, WA
Adam Light, Senior Director, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (METRO), Los Angeles, CA
Seth Garland, Director, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), Washington, DC

Overview:

This session focused around transformative impact of customer-focused station design in attracting and retaining riders in transit systems. It draws on national examples that showcase effective strategies employed by major cities. It also emphasized the significant investments in both legacy and non-legacy transit system. It was demonstrated how cities like Seattle and Los Angeles are balancing the preservation of existing infrastructure with the integration of innovative features to enhance overall transit experience.

Wednesday, November 8

Session: 9:00am - 9:45am

Mobility Hub: Hype or Substance

Moderator: Javier Paredes, AIA, Principal, Studio Massivo / Board Trustee, VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority, San Antonio, TX
Todd Hemingson, AICP, Senior Transit Consultant, HDR, Inc., Austin, TX
Krute Singa, Principal Regional Planner, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), San Francisco, CA

Overview:

Mobility hubs are recognized as a crucial concept with potential solutions for various challenges. It is seen as having the potential to enhance customer experiences and promote equity in transit system. During the presentation, the elements of a mobility hub were provided which are; retail/programmable space, electric car-share/charging, information/wayfinding, bike/scooter share/secure bike parking, and safe walk and bike access. The key takeaway is that existing transit stations can become an asset to the surrounding area, for community retail or recreation purposes in addition to travel options, especially in dense area.

CONCLUSION:

"MPACT Mobility" conference is important because it offers a unique opportunity to engage with a community of professionals dedicated to creating better, more equitable, and sustainable communities. It is important for our City government to attend and participate on this conference especially because we are building our first rail station. There are many things that we can learn from other cities and municipalities. It provides a platform for learning, networking, and collaborating to address pressing urban development and transportation issues. This conference can help us stay informed, inspired, and equipped to make a positive impact in our community.

City Council
City and County of Honolulu

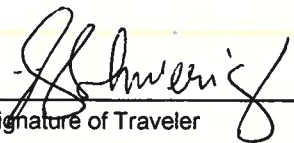
CLAIM FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Date: 02/01/2024

Traveler: **2023** Dinna Schwiering
Event: **MPACT Mobility Conference** *Transit + Community*
Location: **Phoenix, Arizona**
Dates: **From November 5, 2023** **To November 8, 2023**

Description	Amount	Notes:
1. Registration Fee		
2. Airfare		
3. Hotel		
4. Meals		
5. Ground Transportation		
6. Tips		
7. Other		
Other		
Other		
8. Adjustment		
TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT	0	

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

2/01/2024

Date