

July 29, 2008

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*hawai'i chapter
of the*

*american planning
association*

p.o. box 557

honolulu

hawai'i

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www.hawaiiapa.org

Honorable Ann Kobayashi, Chair
Executive Matters Committee
Honolulu City Council
Honolulu Hale
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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**SUBJECT: American Planning Association Hawaii Chapter Testimony
Bill 10, CD 1, CD 2, Relating to Transit Oriented Development**

Councilwoman Kobayashi and Members of the Executive Matters Committee:

The American Planning Association, Hawaii Chapter (APA Hawaii) is a professional organization dedicated to practicing and advocating for good planning. Both our national organization and the local chapter have a longstanding interest and expertise in Transit Oriented Development (TOD) as part of our professional practice. Used wisely, TOD ordinances and programs can be one of the most significant ways to shape city form towards efficient and sustainable patterns of living. Our membership, consisting of members from public agencies, academia, and private consulting practice, are eager to be part of TOD planning in the community where we live and practice.

Our comments on Bill 10 CD 1 CD2 are provided below. We stand ready to work with you for successful implementation.

- Good TOD starts with good planning, and good planning starts with community involvement. Thus, we applaud the features of Bill 10 which require community-involved planning, but we ask that you return deleted material regarding having an inclusive, open process.
- The planning that has gone on for Waipahu is a start. APA Hawaii cautions against combining too many stations into a single effort. We urge greater participation and outreach to landowners, large and small, and to operators and managers of condominiums, shopping areas and institutional facilities.
- There is nothing cookie cutter about TOD. Each neighborhood is unique and TOD needs to support and be sensitive to each unique context.
- We urge that the TOD plans include not just the land use types, height, density and subdivision requirements, but all the elements of a safe pedestrian environment between the station and the environs of the major land uses. As things now stand, there is a jurisdictional gap when it comes to the walking environs that connect the stations to the community, a gap between the station planning by the City Department of Transportation Services (DTS) and the TOD planning by the City Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) consultants. Should a Transit Authority move forward, we urge that the planning gap be filled by assigning responsibility for this area to the Transit Authority. Bill 10 meanwhile should assign streetscape planning to the TOD Plans, and to DPP unless or until a Transit Authority is in a position to take over.
- APA Hawaii supports the amendment that TOD plans be consistent with the sustainable community plans and development plans.

*founded in 1962, the
hawai'i chapter has over
300 members, including
planning officials, public
and private sector planners,
and community advocates,
on the major islands
across the state*

*e mālama pono i ka 'āina;
nānā mai ke ola
take good care of the land;
it grants you life*

MISC. COM. 1565

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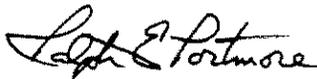
Honorable Ann Kobayashi, Chair
Testimony on Bill 10, CD 1, CD 2
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- APA Hawaii considers Section 5 (c) on parking to be too prescriptive. Details regarding parking are very important and should be a key consideration in the area planning.
- APA Hawaii recommends that Section 5 (h) allowing hotels be removed. Experience has shown that for financial success, hotels should only be allowed in designated tourism districts and downtown or central business districts that through critical mass can sustain support facilities including restaurants, entertainment and transportation. A blanket allowance of free-standing hotels at transit stops is not good planning.
- APA Hawaii does not support the provision mandating establishment of a special district at transit stations after January 1, 2010 where no plan has been adopted. Special districts are a planning tool for implementing a plan, not an across-the-board form of default zoning. Furthermore, we do not believe that DPP has the funding to hire consultants for 34 plans OR the staffing to manage such an ambitious undertaking. This is an artificial deadline, one that while perhaps well meant, will ultimately back-fire.
- APA Hawaii does not support having the developers and landowners conduct and prepare the neighborhood plans. Rather, their participation along with other stakeholders is strongly urged, as stated above.
- APA Hawaii strongly recommends that the TOD Plans belong in the planning and zoning section (Chapter 21) of the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu (ROH), and urges the City Council to ensure that preparation, review and adoption procedures follow the Land Use Ordinance (LUO) amendment process that is in place now.

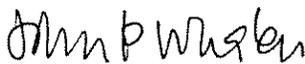
Finally, given that the political season is in full swing with rail as a central issue of contention, we recommend deferral of this bill until after the fall elections. TOD is too important to be either a political football or to be decided during this contentious period of time.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We will continue to participate in this important subject.

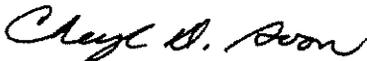
Respectfully,



Ralph E. Portmore, AICP
Chapter President



John Whalen, FAICP
Transit Committee Co-Chair



Cheryl Soon, FAICP
Transit Committee Co-Chair