

DURP Students *Reflect on Their First* *National Planning* *Conference In* *New Orleans*

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*Brandon Soo '18, Amanda Rothschild '19, Laura Mo '18, and Bear Braich '18 in front of their project poster at the conference.
(Photo: DURP team)*

Our Project

Our project focused on providing research and design concepts for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in Waipahu, fulfilling requests from our client, the State of Hawai'i Office of Planning. Project goals included creating innovative conceptual site plans that address the broader TOD-related objectives of the State while serving the needs of the community. The site plans were meant to initiate conversation between key stakeholders to coordinate and make decisions on how to develop state lands near the Pouhala transit station. The Waipahu TODs could serve as precedent for the rest of the developments along the rail corridor.

Our group placed much emphasis on balancing community needs with Honolulu's smart growth goals and climate change risks in long-range island planning. Drawing on information from site visits; an extensive literature review; interviews with State, City and community stakeholders; assessments of social, physical, and economic vulnerability to flooding, our plan featured the concept of "flow"-- of water, people, generations, culture, and history. Since the plan was conceptual, we assumed no budget constraints, allowing creative ideas to emerge. We were inspired by the history and social fabric of Waipahu to create a vision that incorporates a live-work-play construct, as well as the 8 80 cities concept that healthy cities should be just as great for an 8-year-old as an 80-year-old resident. We had fun putting this plan together, and wanted the site plan itself to convey fun.

Our plan used the idea of water (flow, coalesce) to inform our vision and generate design ideas. Our anchor institution, the Hawai'i Exploratorium, is a symbol of the rich culture and history in Waipahu and is meant to bring more economic development to Waipahu while tying into existing regional resources (Hawai'i Planta-

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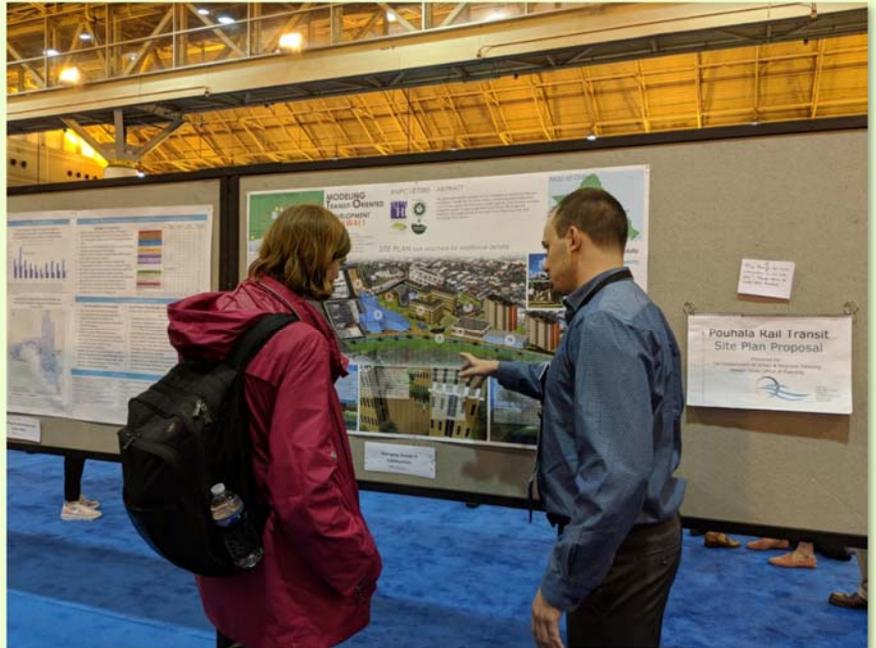


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tion Village, Waipahu District Park, Waipahu High School, Bishop Museum). The exploratorium could attract the attention of transit riders and serve as a hub for knowledge about climate change and Hawaiian culture. Our site includes mixed-use developments designed to create lively spaces for pedestrians. We decided to keep existing elderly public housing with the intention of fostering intergenerational community relationships, while preventing displacement due to the demolition of existing low-income housing. In addition, parking is a strong area of concern for Waipahu residents. Our parking suggestions included minimizing surface parking by creating adaptable parking structures. We crafted our site plan as a story, rather than as individual parts.

The site plan we presented at the conference was the winning final project for the site planning course at DURP; our fluid presentation and strong group dynamic is what stood out to the contest judges. Our plan was successful because we were able to harness the strengths of our team members and benefit from solid team leadership. We began by creating a team vision that provided a foundation for our individual research and contributions. After the site plan course was completed, we continued to conduct research on the Waipahu TOD in a practicum class by forming working groups around five key themes: transportation, housing, placemaking, economic development, and climate change. In this class, we collaborated with the



Bear Braich '18 and a conference attendee discuss the team's project (Photo: DURP team).



Jackson Square (Photo: DURP team).



A New Orleans streetscape (Photo: DURP team).

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University of Hawai'i Community Design Center in the School of Architecture to design and facilitate a community talk story in Waipahu.

The Conference

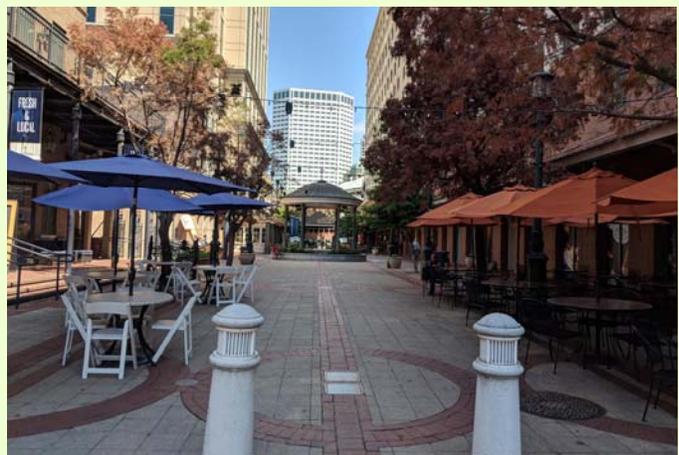
We presented our posters in the Exhibition Hall at the National Planning Conference 2018 in New Orleans. The 3D model of our site plan caught the interest of those walking around the exhibits. People were unfamiliar with the area of Waipahu but were generally interested in the Honolulu rail project and how TOD would be developed around the rail. During our three-day visit, we attended informative seminars and learned about various planning issues facing cities throughout the U.S. It was refreshing to hear speakers from professions other than planning as they offered a different perspective. For instance, one of the speakers was a lawyer who explained land value capture mechanisms. We also got to experience nightlife in New Orleans, attend an APA trivia night, and saw familiar faces at the Hawai'i Chapter APA Pau Hana. The Director of the State of Hawai'i Office of Planning invited us to dinner where we met the APA leadership. Our favorite area was Frenchmen St., the heart and soul of the New Orleans jazz music scene. We are immensely grateful to our donors for giving us the opportunity to experience such a lively city and our first (but definitely not last!) National Planning Conference. Mahalo!



The team at a dinner with APA leadership during the 2018 National Planning Conference (Photo: DURP team).



The team at the APA trivia night.



A New Orleans pedestrian mall. (Photos: DURP Team).