



Where the Rubber Meets the Road: Implementing Complete Streets in Downtown/Chinatown

Melissa White, AICP



Community lunch and learn session at Hawaii Public Health Institute

IN 2009, HAWAII PASSED A LAW REQUIRING COMPLETE STREETS POLICIES FOR COUNTIES THAT WILL MAKE STREETS, SIDEWALKS AND NEIGHBORHOODS SAFE AND INVITING FOR USERS OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES.

In 2016, the City and County of Honolulu finalized its Complete Streets Design Manual and hired a Complete Streets Program Administrator. Since then, the City has been working to implement Complete Streets by updating policies, adopting guidelines, and applying these principles in all aspects of work. Planned roadway rehabilitation projects for Downtown and Chinatown over the next 2 to 4 years offer an outstanding opportunity to accelerate Complete Streets by incorporating pedestrian safety and bicycle network improvements.



Group photo of complete streets stakeholders at the Community Symposium and Expo

Improvements include pavement markings for bike lanes, bulbouts to extend sidewalks and improve pedestrian visibility, all-way crossings, and protected intersections that separate bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicle traffic.

SSFm has had the opportunity to steward the process of design and review of solutions that will be incorporated into the Chinatown improvement plans. “We are proud of what we were able to achieve with the Downtown/Chinatown component of the project. In only three months we not only completed data collection and traffic analysis at 12 intersections but were able to engage hundreds of stakeholders to gather input on the project and generate awareness and support for Complete Streets in general. The maps, online platforms and educational materials we developed for the project will endure and continue to be used in promoting Honolulu Complete Streets. It was a herculean effort for such a short time frame, and the team that came together to make it happen felt a lot of camaraderie and a great sense of accomplishment.” SSFM met the challenge of managing a complex process that entailed more than two dozen neighborhood and community meetings, communicating findings and assimilating feedback in an especially accelerated time frame.



Bishop Street protected bike lane

Of SSFM’s effort, Mike Packard, Honolulu’s Complete Streets Program Administrator offered the following acknowledgement.

“Thank you for the hard work the SSFM team put into making this project a reality. What you pulled off in a short 3 months was extraordinary. The presentation, response at the meeting and people’s expression of appreciation were made possible because of your close relationships in the community, and your ability to connect with total strangers and make them feel heard. This project sets an incredibly high bar for what a true context sensitive project entails. Thanks to the SSFM team for an incredibly time intensive couple of months and to your leadership for enabling you to do this on such quick notice.”



Pop-up event at Bishop Square to engage Downtown stakeholders

We are grateful to Mike and the City leaders for this important opportunity and their confidence in our capabilities.