

Portland Streetcar  
Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
February 10, 1999

Members in attendance: John Carroll, chair; Kay Dannen; Steve Fosler; Rick Gustafson; Mary Kennedy; Catherine Lawson; Stan Lewis; Ken McFarling; Vern Rifer; Kim Warkentin; Sterling Williams.

Others in attendance: Kay Dannen; Claire Levine; Gordon Ranta; Britt Parrott; Kim Roske; Judy Van Alstyne.

Member Information

The members introduced themselves and discussed changes to the CAC. Kim Warkentin, who represents the NWDA, announced that she would be leaving Oregon to take a job in Iowa in March. Steve Fosler said he would be doing some consulting work for PSI and needed to remove himself from the CAC. Stan Lewis introduced the newest member, Ken McFarling, whom he called "a walking encyclopedia of rail transportation."

February 23 Workshop

John Carroll said that the Portland Streetcar, Inc. board wants to make sure that the project maintains clear, open communication with the public during the construction process to limit impact on the neighborhoods. He said that given the continuing change in neighborhood association board members and residents it will be important to continue contact with the community through newsletters and other tools.

Catherine Lawson said that Brian Chase of Portland State had expressed concerns about the impact of construction on the university's water service.

Kay Dannen said she has compiled a data base with the names and addresses of property owners, businesses and residents on 150 blocks surrounding the alignment. The data base is sorted into construction segments to help keep neighbors informed as construction proceeds. She will be able to provide specified information to a targeted set of recipients. She referred to her communications plan, which was included in the members' packets.

She said that she would be sending out a postcard notifying people of the workshop in addition to the notice included in the newsletter.

Gordon Ranta said that any delays in starting or completing construction should be acknowledged as soon as possible to the community. Kim Roske of PDOT said that the Bureau of Environmental Services and the Water Bureau have speeded up their plans in response to the tight timelines related to construction. Catherine Lawson said that a web site will be critical to providing timely information.

Vern Rifer said it appeared that the construction schedule was already slipping. Streetcar staff assured him that at this point things were on schedule.

John said that the CAC's role is to raise questions and alert staff to possible problems of perception and impact on the part of the public, and that these questions about timing were part of the committee's charge. He asked for a monthly presentation from the construction contractor about construction progress, and he said any delays should be made public as soon as possible.

Kim Warkentin said the NWDA board already was concerned about delays in the schedule. The more open the project is about the timing, the better the neighbors will feel about it.

Kay said that Stacy and Witbeck have worked out a solid schedule that should allay fears about the project.

In response to a question from Sterling Williams, Kay said that a construction phone hotline will connect directly to her office. She said she has already begun to field some calls.

Kay said that Vicky Diede has scheduled meetings with the NWDA, Pearl District and Nob Hill Business Association boards.

#### Maintenance Facility

Steve Fosler presented plans for the maintenance facility beneath I-405. He said the plans have changed somewhat from the version mailed out in the members' packets. The newest plans are being circulated for cost estimates and technical comments. Construction is scheduled to begin in June.

He said the building will be located under the freeway at Lovejoy and Northrup. The building will occupy the middle of one block. Size is constrained by the pillars from the freeway and the need to maintain a buffer for electrical isolation. ODOT has given approval for the building. The plan builds in the potential for expansion without conflicts with other land uses.

#### Stops

Rick Gustafson said that the technical staff has advised the board of difficulties with the proposed stop locations on NW 19th, so stops in both directions will be moved to NW 18th, leaving a gap between 21st and 18th without a stop.

Ken suggested moving the stop on 21st closer to 18th to equalize the distance between stops. Rick said there's a need to balance access to 23rd Ave. and the entrance to the hospital.

Rick said some technical issues are emerging having to do with stop construction and the height of the curbs.

John noted that there is also a gap without stops between Madison and Yamhill. He asks if it is possible to create stops where there aren't ten-inch curbs. These would not be wheelchair accessible but could be available for other passengers. Catherine said that it might not be apparent where the preferred stops are until after the system operates for awhile.

Vern asked if it was possible for the streetcar to stop on demand. John said a passenger shouldn't have to walk more than two blocks in any direction to reach a stop. He asked if it would be possible to create interim stops that aren't handicapped accessible.

Catherine said it will be necessary to see how additional changes change the run time for the streetcar. Rick said that signals, not stops, are the constraints to efficient timing. Tri-Met has studied the impact on more frequent stops and determined that it makes negligible difference because the same number of people are boarding.

Rick said that it would be possible to add more stops later if they are determined to be necessary.

Vern moved that the CAC recommend a policy that the streetcar stop at non-established stops when there is a distance greater than three blocks between stops, and that staff should report back to the committee on the feasibility of this suggestion. The committee approved the motion unanimously.

Stan asked how it will be possible to keep one streetcar from being late and filled up, followed by another immediately behind it that is empty.

Ken said that in the Bay area, a series of pennants show passengers how far they are from the next stop in either direction.

Vern asked how the gap is bridged between the car and the curb. John said he has a video that illustrates this situation. Sterling said that the new low-floor buses have a panel that folds out that seems to work well.

#### Lovejoy/Northrup Traffic

Rick said that it is important to meet with the neighborhoods on the issue of changing traffic patterns during construction. He said the NWDA board has indicated that they don't want Lovejoy and Northrup operating as one-way streets, even during construction.

He said there are three options that the contractors believe can work well, and he will ask the neighborhoods to recommend one: 1) Use the existing traffic patterns during construction. This will be acceptable, although it may make construction on Northrup more difficult and may prolong construction time. 2) Create a one-way couplet on all of Lovejoy and Northrup as long as the Lovejoy Ramp remains open for traffic, so traffic coming from the east side can use Northrup to reach NW 23rd. 3) Create a one-way couplet on all of Lovejoy and Northrup for the duration of the construction on those streets.

Kim Warkentin said that the NWDA board is concerned that once the traffic patterns are changed, they will remain that way permanently. Rick said staff would be meeting with the Pearl District on February 16th and with the NWDA on the 18th.

#### North Macadam Extension

Vern said that PDC has hired a consultant who has been working on the streetcar alignment to North Macadam. He wants to know what the CAC's involvement in this issue will be.

John said that this extension was always considered to be part of the larger project, which was part of the CAC's charge. He said he would like some discussion about the committee's capacity to fulfill its primary charge – completion of Phase I – while working on Phase II.

Mary Kennedy said she would like to meet with the people working on the North Macadam alignment to investigate the possibility of working together.

#### PSU Urban Center

Catherine presented a map of PSU and the urban center, which she said is half completed. She said that now is the time to lay the track for the streetcar before the urban center is finished. She said that the vehicles will not be able to lay over on the plaza as it would interfere with other activities in the area, and the university is suggesting they create a double track a block away for the layover. She said this issue must be resolved quickly as the construction is proceeding.

Catherine said that PDOT, Tri-Met and streetcar consultants have been meeting with PSU to clarify grade issues and other technical matters.

Rick said that from the beginning there had been an understanding that rail would be installed in the plaza.

Catherine asked if the Park Bureau staff is involved in discussions about the south end of the alignment.

Vern said that the message should be conveyed that these are high priority issues that should be addressed immediately.

Stan asked if work had begun on a logo for the streetcar. John said that the vehicle selection committee would be considering this. Stan suggested citizen involvement in the decision. He said the logo should not be cold and austere.

Rick announced that a ground-breaking has been scheduled for April 5.