

Portland Streetcar  
Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
June 9, 1999

Members in attendance: John Carroll, chair; Kay Dannen; Vicky Diede; Rick Gustafson; Mary Kennedy; Catherine Lawson; Stan Lewis; Ken McFarling; Vern Ryles; Steve Shain; Don Singer; Al Solheim; Ingrid Stevens; Sterling Williams..

Others in attendance: Chris Armes; Beverly Bookin; Teresa Culp; Steve Fosler; Ann Gardner; Mel Kroker; Art Lewellan; Karen Rabiner, Ken Sanders

#### 1. Construction Update

Kay Dannen distributed information on construction progress. She said the heavy work has been occurring in Northwest Portland. Crews already have laid track on Northrup between NW 16th and 18th Avenues. They will be laying track on Lovejoy by November.

The private utility work was completed virtually on schedule. Water work took three to four weeks. Once the track is in, the traffic and parking patterns will return to the way they were before. Poles and other facilities will be installed later.

The website, [www.portlandstreetcar.org](http://www.portlandstreetcar.org), has a constantly updated three week schedule.

Chris Smith said that Kay had been very helpful in resolving a number of issues and providing information to people in Northwest Portland. He said that some of the businesses have been affected on NW 23rd and 24th Avenues, but most drivers are willing to accommodate.

#### 2. Parking in the Pearl District

Rick Gustafson said that the construction process has exacerbated parking problems in the Pearl District. The problems result from:

Part of NW 12th Ave., once used for parking, is now used to store the rails before they are installed;

The maintenance facility is under construction on a site that previously was used for parking;

The City is installing meters between Hoyt and Overton.

Chris said that the people in Northwest are voting on whether or not to establish a permit parking system. The voting closed June 11.

Rick said he's working with people in the neighborhood to develop a strategy for transitional parking and to plan for long-range parking needs. The City is working with employers to look at other possibilities.

Al Solheim said that the Lovejoy Ramp demolition also will eliminate some parking. He said that the City has been very willing to help resolve the problems. He said that the rail storage is using about 80 parking spaces.

Vicky Diede said the rails will be there for quite awhile, but Rick noted that ultimately these lots won't be available for parking even after the rails are gone.

Right now, Rick said, the important thing is to provide transitional parking during the construction period. Al said this issue has caused particular problems for employers. Rick said the City Commissioners are committed to helping existing employers with their parking needs.

### 3. North Macadam

Rick said that at the previous meeting the CAC heard a presentation on the North Macadam Framework Plan. The CAC had discussed the streetcar extension planned to serve North Macadam. Since that time, there had been a lot of discussion about the preferred alignment, whether it should be on Moody/Bond or on River Parkway. He said the framework plan and the accompanying urban renewal plan would soon go before City Council. Rick passed out a letter from Commissioner Hales asking that both alignments be left open in the framework plan.

John Carroll said that he sees the CAC's role as being a liaison between PSI, the City and the neighborhoods and businesses the members represent. He said that at the last meeting, the CAC members had not felt that they had enough information and background to make a recommendation on a particular alignment. Once the alignment is selected they will make sure that they communicate with various neighborhood constituencies.

He said he would like to become more familiar with the decisions behind the alignment recommendation, but he thinks the CAC should stay with its current position.

Steve Fosler said that the CAC should reinforce the concept put forth in the Commissioner's letter that the streetcar line was intended to leverage housing development.

Steve Shain said that framework plan Steering Committee is made up of a broad-based group of people representing neighborhoods, property owners, advocates and agency personnel. The framework plan is a good vision that balances jobs and housing and responds to Metro 2040 issues like water quality and growth management.

He said that the urban renewal plan calls for a \$35 million investment in T.I.F. money for the streetcar. With limited parking available in the narrow district, this investment will encourage new development. He said that the Framework Plan Steering Committee would be reviewing the Commissioner's letter the following day.

Vern Rifer asked if it would be appropriate for the CAC to say that they would accept either alignment.

Steve Shain suggested that the CAC should vote its support of the North Macadam process and state that it supports the steering committee's decision. He reminded the committee that the North Macadam Transportation Working Group had voted unanimously for the Moody/Bond alignment. The steering committee vote indicated that a very strong majority supported that alignment, although it wasn't unanimous.

Ingrid Stevens said that taking a position could become divisive. Mary Kennedy said that a lot of people had spent a lot of time on the alignment decision. The CAC needs to take this process slowly.

John and Vern agreed that they would not want to be divisive in its dealings with another citizens committee. John said it is not appropriate to step in at this point.

However, he suggested that the CAC should try to become educated about the process and the issues that led to the alignment decision.

Sterling Williams said that when the people affected in the district unify behind one decision, the CAC should support that.

Ken McFarling asked how this alignment would affect people traveling north and south of the district. John noted that the CAC previously had encouraged the North Macadam group and staff to look for funding to make the connection to Phase 1A of the alignment to the north.

Steve Fosler asked if the CAC had confidence that the North Macadam group understood the role of the streetcar and its importance as a tool to encourage housing development.

Steve Shain said they had been well briefed on this point, but the streetcar is not just for housing. He said it will part of a regional transportation system that will support other kinds of development. He said they have identified other funding sources outside the TIF money.

Steve Fosler said that 1,500 to 3,000 housing units is low for the Central City. He is concerned that the framework plan doesn't exploit the district's development potential.

John Carroll suggested that the CAC could compare its goals to the North Macadam plan. He said it was the consensus of the committee that they should not make a recommendation on a specific alignment. He suggested that a subcommittee should meet with the North Macadam group to learn more about specific alignment issues before the final decision is made.

The committee agreed to compare the framework plan with the original streetcar planning goals and objectives.

Ken Sanders and Rick will coordinate a time and place for a meeting.

#### 4. Operating Budget and Assumptions

Rick referred to the material distributed in the members' packets about the operating budget.

He said that over the next four months the City would develop a formal agreement with PSI about operations. He said they will also be working on an analysis of the street system and determine what needs to be done to all the streetcar to meet the 10-minute frequency recommended by the CAC.

The proposed start date is March 1, 2001. There has been some interest in starting up the system by the holiday season of 2000. However, Rick said while the tracks will be built in plenty of time, he doubts there is enough time between the date the cars are delivered and the holidays to build adequate testing and operating training. He said even the planned six month period is cutting it short.

He said the important thing early in the process is to make sure the system is perceived as reliable.

Rick said that it is not the federal government that is driving the training period, as there is no federal money involved.

The delays in vehicle delivery are caused by the complexities of international financial deals. The manufacturer is waiting for a letter of credit that is held up in international bureaucracy.

Art Lewellan asked if Tacoma were ordering the same cars. Vicky said they will be, but they haven't yet, and they don't know how many they will be ordering. She said Tacoma may piggy-back on Portland's order.

Rick said streetcar staff is meeting with Tri-Met to create a training program. It will probably be based on both numbers of hours and miles traveled.

Stan Lewis said that the trial period is very important. He said that there still are problems with new MAX cars that have yet to be worked out, and it's not clear if it's Tri-Met's or the manufacturer's responsibility.

Vicky said that the cars don't have a lot of advanced electronic equipment, which is a plus.

Stan asked if Tri-Met will allow streetcar trials on MAX tracks away from public view. Rick said that they are having difficulty getting permission to use Tri-Met tracks without adding \$150,000 worth of communications equipment and other add-ons.

Nick Di Nicola or Rocco's Pizza represented business owners on Burnside. He said access to their shops will be interrupted during 2000 but they won't have any streetcar service. He said that the streets near him are frequently torn up for construction, and will be torn up several times for the streetcar with only a few weeks between. He is in favor of holiday service.

Rick said they will consider the potential for holiday service, something that may be beneficial in many ways. He said they could run the Vintage Trolley on those tracks. He said if they do run the streetcar, it will be important to let people know that there may be interruptions and that it is operating on a test basis only. They don't want to discourage people from using the service when it is fully operational because they think it is unreliable based on their experiences during the training period. He said they operated the Vintage Trolley with only two weeks of trials.

Vern said he is concerned about the public's perception of incompetence caused by the fact that the tracks are in and the cars are here but there is no service yet.

Sarah Shaoul suggested that the City advertise the holiday service as a trial run and make sure the expectations are reasonable.

Ingrid suggested running it on a limited schedule only.

Rick said this is all possible if they determine it's safe enough.

Chris suggested running it for free during the trial run because it is only a test period.

Nick suggested using celebrity conductors.

Sarah said she owns a Business near Burnside and SW 10th Ave. She said she has been following the streetcar's progress, attending workshops and meetings with City staff. She said the streetcar development is a good opportunity to do something to improve Burnside, which does not have a good pedestrian environment. She said that although Powell's brings in a great number of people, the businesses across Burnside don't benefit from that because Burnside is such a barrier. She said it's questionable if her business will survive until the streetcar opens.

She said she is disappointed that the next streetcar stop after Powell's is as far away as the Galleria. She said it appears that all the energy is focused on the Pearl District. She said the streetcar development will send a message about future expectations. She said she understood that SW Oak Street, where her shop is, would be closed for 16 weeks.

Kay Dannen said that it actually will be closed for three to four weeks for track construction.

Sarah said she had received no notice that Burnside would be torn up. Kay said that work had been for fiber optic installation.

Stan said that Tri-Met had helped businesses along the West Side Max alignment during construction by sponsoring special ads and promotions.

Nick said that if the Weinhard facility is redeveloped for residential use there will be a real need for better pedestrian and streetcar access.

Sarah said that the streetcar will have to stop because of traffic conditions, so there might as well be an additional stop between SW Stark and Oak Streets. Nick noted that the popular Panorama Club should be close to a stop.

Chris said that the City is getting funding for a new study of Burnside to improve pedestrian conditions.

Sarah asked that the streetcar planners consider where the last stop is in Northwest before crossing Burnside.

John said that the streetcars will run in traffic and not be in dedicated lanes. He said that the stops in place now probably will not be the only stops placed along the line - this is just the first step in a continuing strategy. He mentioned the study of Burnside that may bring improvements. He said that Burnside has always posed a problem for streetcar, and the CAC is looking for opportunities. He said the committee is also very concerned about the needs of small businesses.

Catherine Lawson said that the committee had once talked about allowing people to hail the streetcar as a way of learning where the demand was for new stops.

Vern asked if the committee had once agreed that the streetcar could be hailed at any corner. Rick said that the committee has supported that in the past, acknowledging that unimproved stops would not be wheelchair accessible. He said this concept would need the approval of the Transit Access Committee.

Sterling Williams said he supported having the flexibility for additional stops that may not have handicapped access.

He noted that it is important to consider the aspect of federal funding on any decisions.

Referring to the training and testing period, Stan said public education will be very important for safety reasons. He said there were near fatalities on the Westside Max line during the burn-in period when people didn't realize that the tracks were in use.

He said it will also be important not to overextend the system's capacity before it is fully ready to run. But he said it would be good to try to try to do something during the holiday period, even if the system isn't fully ready.

Chris asked if it's possible to send the crews elsewhere for training before the cars arrive in Portland. Vicky said all the comparable vehicles are in Europe. Rick said it may be possible to start training drivers on MAX.

Rick reviewed the budget figures in the document included in the members' packet.

He said the City has ordered five cars, and they plan to run four cars regularly at a time, the minimum necessary for 10 to 12 minute operating frequency. He said the average hourly operating costs will be from \$104 to \$117, compared to \$168 an hour for max and \$68 for a bus.

He said he is bringing these figures back to the CAC to remind them of the assumptions and operational decisions on which the estimates are based. Adding a fifth train running regularly it will significantly increase operating costs. But it may be necessary to use a fifth car to reach 10-minute frequencies.

#### 5. Closing

John adjourned the meeting. He said that he would convene a group to work together with the North Macadam planners.