

Portland Streetcar

Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
December 8, 1999

Members in attendance: John Carroll, chair; Kay Dannen; Vicky Diede; Steve Fosler; Rick Gustafson; Mary Kennedy; Stan Lewis; Kenneth McFarling; Vern Rifer; Don Singer; Ingrid Stevens.

Others in attendance: Otto Condo; Rich Davidson; Art Lewellan; Roger Shiels; Steve Shain; John Sporseen.

1. Construction Update

Kay Dannen reported that on Friday, December 3, the streetcar project gave our general contractor, Stacy & Witbeck, notice to proceed with construction of the maintenance facility. Kay estimated construction would take nine months.

She reported that construction work in retail areas has been halted for the holiday moratorium, but platforms are being built throughout Northwest on Lovejoy and Northrup, and construction continues at NW 16th and Lovejoy near the maintenance site.

Kay reported that most of her interaction with neighborhood people has been very positive, and they have been able to resolve any issues that arise. She said that with major construction coming up at the MAX crossing downtown she is looking to the CAC for suggestions about mitigation ideas to lessen the construction impact. She said she has developed a community relations plan and has been working with the Association for Portland Progress, District Retail Council, City of Portland and Tri-Met on ways to reduce problems.

Kenneth McFarling asked if some of the MAX tracks near the layover area (between Morrison and Yamhill at 11th) would be removed. Roger Shiels said those tracks would remain, but it took special design work to allow the streetcar tracks to intersect the MAX line.

John Carroll said that he heard an example of a commercial building along the alignment that had an estimated value of \$750,000 a year ago and was now valued at \$1.5 million. Don Singer said that business people were interested in locating in property he owns at 11th and Alder specifically because the streetcar will go past there.

2. Vehicle Colors

Roger Shiels presented a concept for color and design of the outside of the streetcar vehicles. The proposal called for using graphics on the vehicles that would reflect the colorful nature of the neighborhood and attract riders. The design for the vehicles is not "transit" driven, but "graphics-driven." Each side of the car would be painted a different color scheme, and there would be two different color schemes (half the

car would be painted in one set of colors, the other cars would be painted in a different set of colors).

The proposal calls for intense colors - orange, green, red and purple, plus a blue design element that would carry through on both sides of all cars.

However, when the PSI Board was presented with the proposal, someone suggested that having two different colored cars may be confusing, as people may think the different colors represent different "lines." So the board decided all the cars should be painted the same way. Roger said that the board didn't have adequate time to discuss the reasoning behind the color proposal.

The CAC discussed other cities that use very vivid colors on their transit vehicles. Kenneth McFarling speculated that dark cars would not be seen at night, increasing the chance of collision. John Carroll said that drivers would see the bright lights through the windows, so there was little chance of the cars not being seen.

Steve Fosler moved to send to PSI the CAC 's strong endorsement of the original color scheme and proposal.

Stan Lewis asked if the lights at the front of the streetcar would be as bright as those on the MAX train. Roger said he thought the lights would be more like bus headlights.

Mary Kennedy asked if there had been a policy established about advertising on the outside of the vehicles. Vicky Diede said that advertising would be inside only.

Rick Gustafson said the PSI board was concerned that if the city adds more streetcar lines, people might think they were boarding the wrong car going the wrong destination based on the vehicle color. Roger said the decision to use different colored cars precludes the option of using colors to symbolize the different lines. However, he said, that wouldn't have been done anyway, as Tri-Met already has a color system in place.

Steve suggested starting out by identifying the first phase as the "A" line, and having the readerboards clearly marked with "A" in case other lines are added later. Those other lines can be assigned different letters.

Art Llewellyn asked if passengers would be confused by the vehicle colors if two lines shared one set of tracks. John Carroll noted that the transit mall has many buses going to different places that are clearly distinguished by their reader boards.

Vern Rifer asked if the name of the line had been changed from Central City Streetcar to Portland Streetcar. Roger said no formal decision had been made. He said that it might be possible to sell sponsorships, so that a vehicle could become the "PGE Streetcar," for example. Vern said that the name should be clearly identified and should be consistent.

Stan said it would be helpful to have a very distinctive logo on both the vehicles and associated signs. He said that Tri-Met once considered using advertising on the outside of a vehicle designed to transport people with development disabilities, but that advocates were concerned that people who can't use written signs would be confused when the advertising changed. It is important that the vehicles be clearly and consistently identified.

The committee voted unanimously to support the motion of strong support for the original color proposal. Roger noted a number of issues on which the CAC's recommendations had encouraged PSI to change its positions.

3. Future Alignments

Rick reported on decision-making by the committee considering alignment options to PSU, RiverPlace and North Macadam. He said that the committee selected the Harrison option over the Columbia route with one dissenting vote.

One committee member wanted to make the route light rail compatible now. However, the slope of this route is too steep for light rail, and to make it ready for light rail would require major street reconstruction. Streetcar vehicles are equipped to handle the slope. The committee voted to build the streetcar line with the least expense now and deal with reconstruction if plans for light rail proceed.

The committee also decided to proceed with a couplet on Mill and Market for the extension to the Urban Center, rather than using a single track on Mill. To make the Mill street single track option workable would require about \$1 million in additional investment that would ultimately not be useful when another track is added. So they decided to try to find the money to build on both streets for the extension to the Urban Center, rather than waiting until the line is built to RiverPlace.

Vern asked if Market Street can handle the traffic with the streetcar. Rick said the engineers believe it has the capacity.

Art Llewellyn presented his proposal for a streetcar extension. He distributed maps, which are available from CAC staff. Art's proposal was a way to serve Columbia. He said one problem with his option is how to turn onto Naito Parkway.

Rick said that the intersection at Clay/Market and Naito is very congested and doesn't have any capacity for more traffic, and it's not a problem that can be remedied by signal improvements. He said the City is considering the option of burying Naito Parkway. He also said that Art's option has five blocks between the different sides of the couplet, which would not be a preferable solution. Art said that as it crosses the transit mall, people could move back and forth easily on the mall.

Vern reported on the task force's recommendation for the alignment through North Macadam. The committee recommended that the streetcar go straight to River Parkway (a road to be built along the river through

North Macadam), rather than staying on the west side of the district along Moody and Bond. Halfway through the district, the route would jog west to Moody and Bond to meet more dense development. He said that for about ½ mile, the streetcar would travel next to the river, providing a scenic ride.

4. Lovejoy/Northrup Task Force

Rick said that NWDA has named members to serve on the task force, and he is waiting to hear from the Pearl District neighborhood. He said that Lovejoy serves many roles in the area: as a through street for commuters from Washington County; as a neighborhood collector; a streetcar route; a bike route; and a street used by many pedestrians. So the task force will need to focus a lot of attention on Lovejoy.

He said that they had previously thought that Lovejoy would be made two way after streetcar construction was complete. However, he thinks it's better to not institute any changes until it's clear that there is the capacity to handle all that demand on a two-way street.

But NWDA wants Marshall to be changed back to a two-way street, and it's not clear how that will work. One option is to make a Lovejoy/Northrup couplet, but it's a technical challenge to figure out how to connect them. Some of the streets in Hoyt Street Yards are planned to have pedestrian access only and will not allow through motorized traffic, interfering with the links between Lovejoy and Northrup. He said this option also could create more problems at 23rd.

Rick said there is general agreement that Marshall should be a local, two-way street, particularly to reduce traffic passing the maintenance facility). It is currently opened and getting a lot of detour traffic.

Mr. McFarling asked about nighttime security at the maintenance facility. Rick said there will be fences around both blocks, and the gates will be locked at night

Rick said that they have talked with NWDA about leaving parts of Marshall open only to pedestrians and bikes, with no auto access. Rick said another problem with having Lovejoy a two-way street is that they would have to prohibit left turns on 18th to keep the streetcar moving.

Art asked about the rise in terrain on 14th, where the old Lovejoy Ramp ended. Rick said that this whole area would be graded and improved with new streets and sidewalks as part of the Lovejoy Ramp project.

5. Fare Collections

Rick pointed out illustrations of ticket/fare collection boxes that were included in the members' packets. He said that the plan is to sell streetcar tickets, different from Tri-Met tickets. The ticket boxes shown cost \$10,000 a piece. They must be small enough to fit in cars, as they would only be used in cars and not at the stops. He said the project also will purchase six ticket validators.

He said that up to 80 percent of riders will already have valid tickets, passes or short-hoppers from other Tri-Met service. He said they plan to work with vendors to sell streetcar tickets and they may introduce \$50 streetcar yearly passes. So they anticipate that only visitors and occasional users will need tickets.

Steve suggested adding advertising to the back of the tickets.

Rick said that there wouldn't be "fare inspectors," but rather streetcar employees engaged in customer service. The cost of a fare inspector would negate the revenue from collections.

Rick said the farebox will be in the middle section. Stan said that most people using mobility devices have passes, but not all. They should make sure that people in chairs have room to use the ticket machines, or perhaps people in chairs could ride free.

Rick said there are only six seats in the center section, so there should be adequate room. The car seats 31 people, but is designed to serve up to 100 people with standing room.

Rick said that the customer service people would help people buy a ticket if they don't have one. They will not be punitive.

Rick said that it doesn't appear that the vehicles will be delivered any earlier than March 2001.

Rick said that Tri-Met is studying the operational costs of 10-minute headways in light of the union's insistence on using union personnel. He said that union rules are applicable to larger organizations but wouldn't make sense for a small system like the streetcar. For example, the union rules require that 10 percent of the work staff be available to fill in, in case of no-shows. But this doesn't make sense in the case of a system with only two cars running at one time.

In light of these cost considerations, Tri-Met is once again looking at frequency, travel time and how many cars are needed. Tri-Met wants the system to operate five trains with a seven minute layover.

Rick said it might be possible to run five trains in the day and fewer at night. He said it may be possible for a supervisor to serve as a back-up driver. A major issue, he said, is to make sure the trains are reliable.