Portland Streetcar

Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2000

Members in attendance: Kay Dannen, Rich Davidson, Vicky Diede, Steve Fosler, Rick Gustafson, Mary Kennedy, Stan Lewis, Carter MacNichol, Ken McFarling, Vern Rifer, Ingrid Stevens

Others in attendance: Brad Carman, Art Lewellan, Paddy Tillett

1. Construction Update

Kay Dannen reported that construction crews have opened NW 16th between Northrup and Lovejoy and in turn closed Marshall between 15th and 16th to connect the Streetcar maintenance facility storage and running tracks. Construction on Marshall to extend until the first week of April. Traffic on NW 14th is being rerouted to Northrup westbound. Walls on the maintenance facility are being installed. Overhead wires have been completed in Northwest from NW 16th on Northrup, 23rd Avenue and Lovejoy.

Track work in downtown continues on SW 11th from Main to Jefferson with completion about April 1. Track work then continues from Jefferson to through Clay on 11th. Once SW 11th is completed, the contractor will move their track work construction to SW 10th and work from Main to Jefferson and then Jefferson through Clay. Platform stop construction continues on 11th at Taylor and will move next to 11th and Jefferson. Hand railings are being installed on platforms on 10th and 11th.

The weekend MAX closure occurred March 3-6 with around the clock Streetcar work at SW 11th and Morrison/Yamhill. The contractor, Stacy and Witbeck, were able to accomplish more work than anticipated and logged about 900 labor hours. MAX service downtown was shutdown between 7:30PM, Friday, March 3 - 4:00AM, Monday, March 6 from Civic Stadium to 3rd and Morrison. In the construction zone, there are two apartment buildings nearby as well as The Governor Hotel. No noise complaints were received during this weekend work. Patronage was reported as normal at most of the restaurants in work zone.

About 50 volunteers from PGE, COP, Charlie Hales’ office, PSU, PDOT, Portland Center for the Performing Arts, etc., assisted Tri-Met MAX customers during the weekend closure with directions to the bus shuttles that ran through downtown. Tri-Met ran special shuttle buses from the Blazer game to Civic Stadium to accommodate the extra crowds. Everything went well. Steve worked as a volunteer at Civic Stadium and reported that most MAX riders treated the bus shuttle as an adventure, except for some soccer fans that felt a little inconvenienced. The next weekend closure will occur March 24-27 at the same locations. Tri-Met currently has about 25 volunteers and will be contacting the agency coordinators to recruit more volunteers.
Ingrid visited several of the businesses in the MAX crossing construction zone during the closure weekend and found businesses were okay with the construction and have been kept well informed.

Carter mentioned that the overhead catenary poles will be painted a flat black. Crews are currently painting traffic signal poles and will work on the silver catenary poles next. Art asked what kind of base will be provided. Carter said the sand is a temporary measure for safety purposes and also to give the contractor the opportunity to make the necessary placement adjustments. When these adjustments are complete, the base will be filled in with concrete.

Art asked about the vintage trolley cars and how they will be transported to the Streetcar alignment. Carter said a turnout track at 10th and Morrison will be provided to make that maneuver to and from the MAX line. This turnout track to MAX will also be used for the Streetcar to move its vehicles to Tri-Met facilities for maintenance work when needed.

Brad Carman, Carman and Company, 1431 SW 11th, had some concerns about the shelter that will be placed at the station platform stop at 11th and Clay. He has been in business at this location for 16 years and is in a basement location. His signage is about 4-5 feet high. He is concerned that the placement of the shelter will obstruct vision of his business signage from cars on 11th as well as Clay. The view of his signage will need to be through the shelter, which he feels will be inadequate because the shelters usually get marked up very quickly and it will be hard to see through them. He is in the Clay Tower building and contends that there is a high amount of tenants in that building that use wheelchairs and that these shelters are inadequate. He is asking that the project look at a different type of shelter, maybe just an awning with poles, no sides or move the placement of the shelter further north, possibly in front of an existing tree or turn the shelter 90 degrees.

Vicky stated the project will look into shelter alternatives at this location. She appreciated getting information regarding the number of wheelchairs in that area and that maybe this station deserved something different for a shelter. Stan mentioned that Clay Towers has the highest number of wheelchairs users, second only to Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital. Carter mentioned that the project has to take into consideration at each of the stop locations, different grades, ADA requirements, and the difficulty of retrofitting these platforms with the existing sidewalk grades. Stan also mentioned that Tri-Met shelters are inadequate for wheelchair passengers. He also mentioned that more wheelchair users are opting for scooters, which are larger than wheelchairs.

2. Urban Center Extension

Rick brought to the attention of the CAC Resolution 00-3 adopted by the PSI Board which calls for construction of the extension to the PSU Urban Center. Some time was spent going over the attached drawing and discussing the alignment which uses Mill and Market Streets. Carter announced that at City Council today, March 15, the Council agreed to authorize the project to order rail to accommodate this extension. This
order of rail needed to be executed by March 20 to meet a rail production date and a fixed price. This extension is in design with construction scheduled to start this summer. Carter also announced that PDOT and the water bureau have come to an agreement on the water work and this extension will be able to be constructed within the budget. Our track work construction will be on the north side of Market to avoid a large water main. The future extension to N. Macadam, when financing is allocated, will be able to be built without affecting Phase 1 Streetcar operations other than the tie-in. Carter stated tentative stops have been assigned at Park and Market, 6th/Market, between Mill and Montgomery on 5th, PSU Urban Plaza, 10th/Park and 10th/Clay.

Rick reported that the selected Streetcar alignment beyond the Urban Center to North Macadam is at a projected cost of $45 million. Currently, there is a gap of about $7.5 million in funding (a request for federal funding has been submitted). It is anticipated this additional alignment would require 4-6 additional cars.

3. Car Update

Carter reported that Inekon-Skoda will begin assembly of our 5 Streetcar vehicles the end of April 2000 with delivery scheduled for February 2001. All assembly of the vehicles will be done in the Czech Republic and shipped to Vancouver. During this assembly, we have nearly full time inspection of Skoda’s work on site and will expect track testing done in advance of shipping. The cars have a 5 year warranty backed by a letter of credit. 2-5 employees from Inekon-Skoda will be in Portland at a minimum of two years, to assist with Streetcar operational and maintenance issues. Tacoma, WA issued a notice to proceed with Skoda for 3 streetcars today. Vern had some concerns about the quality of work coming out of the Czech Republic currently. Trips by staff and PSI board members are scheduled currently for June and October, with more inspection trips added if necessary.

4. Streetcar Service Level

Rick recommended that the CAC committee commence discussion on the service level for streetcar operations. The initial plan calls for ten-minute frequency from 7AM to 7PM with 20-minute frequency from 6AM to 7AM and 7PM to midnight. The estimated cost for this level of service is $2.4 million. There is some contingency that would like to see extension of 10 minute service to 11PM and hours to 1AM on Friday and Saturday nights. Rick expects the City Council will approve start-up costs of Streetcar operations at the March 29 council meeting.

Currently negotiations are being formulated with the Amalgamated Transit Union #757. Informal agreement is to use Tri-Met operators and mechanics with the remainder of staff being Streetcar employees. Portland Streetcar staff could include a general manager, administrative support, five superintendents, (which would have the ability to fill in as operators/mechanics as needed). Some of the issues to be resolved are mobility of drivers, cost of training, time commitment by operators and mechanics to the Streetcar Project, sick and vacation policies.
Rick would like to suggest that the CAC select a set of recommended priorities with regard to assuring the service frequency during all levels of traffic and the impacts of extending service to the PSU Urban Center. It was moved by Vern and seconded by Steve that the CAC take on this task. The motion passed unanimously. It was understood that Rick would prepare for the CAC, a set of recommended priorities and the trade-offs necessary to maintain the level of service needed for reliable, on-time operations for CAC evaluation and recommendations.

Some of the issues the CAC would discuss; how the streetcar organizes its level of service, develop a set of policies, maintenance of schedule, establishing reliable consistent service and frequency, desire to run 10 minute frequency, etc. Cannot guarantee 5 trains and may have to add a Vintage Trolley to maintain 10 minutes headways. This decision to add Vintage Trolley would have to have approval of the disabled community. It was discussed that roundtrip times could vary from 32 minutes to 45 minutes depending on time of day and congestion of traffic.

5. Other Issues

Art asked about the grade differential at SW 11th between Morrison and Yamhill. Carter stated that the sidewalk at the east side of 11th will be raised to meet appropriate street grades. Vern asked about the status of our change orders. Carter stated that the project is at a negative change order status with about $300,000 savings to the project because of freight crossings that have been eliminated from the project.

Art asked if the CAC Committee had thought about recommending the decoupling of Everett and Glisan? Rick discussed that this issue has been discussed for many years, with no resolution. Also the Lovejoy/Northrup Traffic Analysis Task Force Committee, which has been meeting for the past 3 months, have brought up this same issue. Rick stated that the Lovejoy/Northrup Traffic Analysis Task Force (which is comprised of members from NWDA, Pearl District and Hoyt Street Properties) has recommended three options to be evaluated:

Existing traffic operations (Lovejoy/States).

Lovejoy/Northrup One-Way Couplet (10th to 21st).

Lovejoy Two-Way Operation.

This committee will be preparing preliminary rankings of the three options with regard to impact on livability, economic vitality, pedestrian access, bicycle access, transit access, traffic operations and on-street parking.

Carter mentioned that the project has hired Anderson Krygier along with ZGF to design a signage proposal for platforms, cars, route maps, etc. Stan Lewis offered to serve on this committee.
Kay offered the first issue Portland Streetcar t-shirts to CAC members as well as promotional Streetcar banks.

The meeting was adjourned.

Attachment - Streetcar route ideas submitted by Art Lewellan.