

Portland Streetcar
Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2000

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

1. Construction Update

Kay Dannen told the committee that brochures about the streetcar had been reprinted using the colors of the actual streetcar and featuring the new official name, "Portland Streetcar."

She said that the approaching weekend would be the third during which MAX service would be interrupted downtown because of construction where the Max and streetcar rails intersect. She said this would be the most challenging of all the four closure weekends, with 10th and 11th closed to traffic between Taylor and Alder.

She said that with good outreach and media coverage, plus personal interaction with businesses like the Governor Hotel, people are well informed about the situation. There have been no noise complaints from hotel residents and no complaints about the bus shuttle from MAX riders.

Kay said that Marshall Street would be open by early May. Don Singer and Kay agreed that this closure has not been a problem because Northrup has worked so well for through traffic.

Kay said construction is currently taking place on S.W. 11th between Jefferson and Clay. The next phase is S.W. 10th between Main and Clay. She said that plans are in place to start on the extension to the PSU Urban Center during the summer.

John Carroll said that he has seen property values escalate since the track work began throughout the neighborhoods. Vern Rifer said he has been hearing complaints about how long the work has been going on around SW 10th. John said that not all the work in that area has been related to the streetcar. Some has been utility work independent of the streetcar project. 2. Operating Scenario

Rick Gustafson said that PSI has been negotiating with Tri-Met and the Amalgamated Transit Union, that represents drivers and other Tri-Met employees. He said they have come up with a satisfactory hybrid system that will fit the streetcar's budget and also meet some of the union's expectations.

The solution includes the use of Tri-Met employees to be drivers and journey level mechanics. Some of these will have the title of managers and will be allowed to deviate from certain union rules. Other employees need not be union members.

PSI will hire employees who will serve as superintendents. They will have scheduling and other administrative duties but will also be authorized to operate the trains on a back-up basis.

The agreement acknowledges that certain Tri-Met rules, such as having a 10 percent back-up pool of drivers, may be waived. Instead, the agreement allows PSI to call on Tri-Met's pool to operate the streetcar, in case of streetcar operator illness or other emergencies.

Rick said that the superintendents would serve as the "utility infield," ready to fill in as emergency drivers or in other capacities as needed. The typical day shift will have one mechanic/manager, two mechanics and two operations supervisors.

Vern Rifer questioned whether that level of staffing was necessary just to ensure there was a back-up driver. He suggested that calling Tri-Met or contracting with a private agency would be more efficient.

Rick explained that all the supervisors would be certified mechanics, with ongoing maintenance as well as supervisory duties. He also noted that OSHA rules wouldn't allow a single mechanic to be on duty. He said that with this situation, the supervisors would be able to relieve the operators for short periods during the day.

He said the system will not have fare inspectors, but the superintendents can serve as "customer service" people to help people who need tickets and other assistance. The setup of the trains precludes the operator from dealing with tickets or fares. He said that in the Tri-Met system, fare inspectors are paid more than operators.

Stan Lewis noted that Tri-Met bus and light rail operators are prohibited from making any kind of operational decision in an emergency. They are required to call the dispatcher. They would not have the option of calling directly a back-up operator.

In response to the possibility of contracting for services, John Carroll said that there is no pool of trained people who would be available for contract work. Since there wouldn't be any other work for them with another transit system, it wouldn't be practical for them to be available on contract for temporary and back-up functions. Don said that as the system expands, the ratio of supervisors to workers would seem less top-heavy.

Stan said that as long as there is one customer riding the train, there is a liability issue that could cost the system millions of dollars. It's critical that well-trained and qualified operators be available immediately when needed.

Rick cautioned that there was not full agreement on the supervisor system. He said the union might not agree to allow a supervisor to work next to a mechanic or operate the train without being a union member. He said they might allow it on an emergency, but not on a routine basis. The union is not requiring union membership for maintenance of tracks, the

electrical system or other infrastructure. Steve Fosler pointed out how far the negotiations have come from where they began.

John Carroll said he was impressed at the flexibility shown by the unions. He said that PSI had looked at the issue of privatizing the system fully, but issues of insurance, training and other operation concerns were so vast that it didn't seem to be a feasible option. 3. Operations: Service Frequency and Quality

Rick said that as more information is available about traffic, the impact of the extension to the Urban Center, etc., it was time to look again at whether frequency assumptions were still valid, and what it would take to maintain the kind of frequency that the CAC has always advocated for. Rick said he hoped the CAC would help establish priorities and tradeoffs. Some of the categories included hours of operation, number of cars operating, and frequency of service.

Vern said he thought one of the main ridership groups would be "impulse" riders, people like tourists and others who spontaneously decide to ride to a destination along the alignment. He said the ability to attract these people relies on a relatively high frequency of service during the day. John said he believed regular commuters would use the system as part of the integrated transportation system. However, he said that didn't mean it needed to run 24-hours-a-day.

Rick said the assumption was that the trains would ride from 6 a.m. to midnight. Vern thinks they should look at shorter hours if it means they can achieve better frequencies.

Stan said that studies indicate people perceive "waiting time" as longer than "riding time." People would rather spend more time on the train riding than the same amount of time waiting.

Mary Kennedy asked what parameters are already established and what can be negotiated.

Rick said that what is set is the operating budget of \$2.4 million a year. The operating assumptions on which the system was developed were trains running between 6 a.m. to 12 p.m. with 10 minute headways during most of the day. Mary suggested that if 10 minute frequency is a priority, they could look at what other changes would make that feasible.

John Carroll said that predictability is a priority, but they would be amenable to other changes. Vern said that frequency, as well as reliability, are critical issues.

The members discussed who would ride the trains. Vern said he thinks the system will serve impulse riders. Ingrid Stevens said she thought that after the novelty phase wears off it would be seen as a serious, routine transportation option. Kay said that if it were reliable enough it would attract both daily and impulse riders.

Don said that it makes sense to start at 7:30 or 8 a.m. on weekends rather than at 5:30 a.m. Kay said they should not have 15-minute

frequencies in peak hours. It needs to be more frequent during those hours. Rick said that cutting hours on the weekends would save money.

Rick drew a chart illustrating the hours and timing for weekdays

Time of Day

Minimum Operating Frequency

Preferred Operating Frequency

5- 7 a.m.

Minimum Operating Frequency : 0

Preferred Operating Frequency : 20

7 a.m. - 10 a.m.

Minimum Operating Frequency : 12

Preferred Operating Frequency : 00

10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Minimum Operating Frequency : 12

Preferred Operating Frequency : 10

3 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Minimum Operating Frequency : 12

Preferred Operating Frequency : 10

7 - 11 p.m.

Minimum Operating Frequency : 12

Preferred Operating Frequency : 10

11 - 12 p.m.

Minimum Operating Frequency : 12

Preferred Operating Frequency : 10

Rick said that because of traffic, the hardest frequencies to reach would be during the 3 to 7 p.m. rush hour. To ensure that, the Vintage Trolley would have to be called into service, and it would have to be designated to run at certain times to alert people using mobility devices at what time they can expect a car that they cannot use.

John said they should advocate for the highest frequencies.

Rick said that the extension to the Urban Center means the route is 6/10 of a mile longer than the original alignment, and that the system will be serving a bigger area without any new operating revenue. He said PSI should look for an additional \$360,000 a year for operations, about 15 percent of the operation budget for the alignment without the extension. The only way that adding distance will not negatively impact service is to increase the budget.

John said that the CAC's position must be that they are happy about the extension, but they have made a commitment to the neighborhoods of 10-

minute headways during peak hours. Rick said it is critical to come up with the extra operating dollars. He said that to reach 10-minute headways from 3 to 7 p.m. might require six cars on the extended alignment.

The committee agreed to look at eliminating service in the earliest and latest hours of the day. Don questioned whether service to 12:30 every night is essential.

Rick said that for the next meeting he would lay out some alternatives for minimum and maximum service on Saturdays, Sundays and weekdays, with and without the extension.

4. Lovejoy Operations

Rick said that the Lovejoy Operations Task Force is preparing simulations to analyze two-way traffic on Lovejoy, including streetcar operations.