

Portland Streetcar
Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
May 17, 2000

Members in attendance: John Carroll, chair; Kay Dannen; Steve Fosler; Rick Gustafson; Stan Lewis; Kenneth McFarling; Vern Rifer; Chris Smith.

1. Lovejoy/Northrup Traffic analysis

Rick Gustafson said that Portland Streetcar, Inc. has retained the Kittelson firm to simulate traffic conditions on Lovejoy with two-way traffic after the streetcar is in operations. The consultants will analyze the traffic for travel times and other relevant issues. Rick said that the firm estimated that two-way traffic on Lovejoy probably wouldn't slow the streetcar significantly. The reason is that the streetcar operator will exercise the ability to lengthen the green light for traffic on Lovejoy at 23rd Ave. to clear traffic out of the intersection and position itself at the 23rd Ave. stop. That means it will be first in line at the light when the signal changes back to green and would have no traffic ahead of it on Lovejoy after it turns left. The only traffic-related slowing that might occur after that is cars cuing to turn left on 18th.

Rick said that Kittelson may be retained do simulate the rest of the alignment for traffic analyses.

2. Private Marketing Proposal

Rick reported that Les Schwab has made an offer to PSI to tie its advertising to the streetcar. They are proposing to give away streetcar tickets in conjunction with advertising in or on the cars or at the kiosks.

3. Construction update.

Kay Dannen reported on the progress of construction. She said that as of May 22, SW 11th would be fully open to traffic and parking, and the east side of SW 10th would be complete. Morrison is open westbound as far as SW 10th, and Yamhill is fully open to traffic.

Between May 22 and June 1, construction will shift to the west side of SW 10th, with only one lane of traffic and parking available on the east side of the street. All work will stop between June 2 and June 11 for Rose Festival, after which construction will begin again on SW 10th, completing the sidewalks, street reconstruction and the turnout track. Work will be on SW 10th by or before July 7, making it up to two weeks behind schedule. This was a tremendously complicated project, and Kay said that running a short time beyond schedule in such situations was not unexpected.

The extension to the PSU Urban Center will be completed between July and December. Work in the Hoyt Street Property/Lovejoy area is scheduled

between September and November. The current schedule calls for all work to be done by January 2001.

Stan Lewis mentioned that a long-time streetcar supporter who is a member of DCA was surprised to learn about the proposed extension down Market Street. She said she has been trying to get the city to slow traffic speeds on that street.

Steve Fosler wanted to commend the construction workers, whom he has seen stop to give people directions and explanations about project construction. Kay said that one flagger saw a toddler run into the street and was able to return him safely to the sidewalk. Another construction worker ran to get a bicycle pump to help a person using a wheelchair who got a flat tire in the middle of the street. She said the construction crew is very responsive.

4. Service Frequency

Rick Gustafson reminded the committee of the previous meeting at which the members recommended reducing the number of hours of streetcar operations, rather than cutting down the frequency of service, to meet the budget constraints. The committee remains committed to frequent enough service (every 10 minutes) so that people would not need a schedule and would find it more convenient to use the streetcar than a private auto.

Rick referred the members to the chart in their packet showing schedule scenarios based on different numbers of annual revenue hours under the current budget.

He said that achieving an estimated 6.88 mile-an-hour speed, which consultants believe is feasible, it should be possible to maintain 10-minute frequencies with the available number of cars on the original alignment. However, at this speed with the given number of cars and the existing budget, they cannot maintain 10-minute frequencies on the full alignment to the Urban Center.

John Carroll clarified that there are enough cars, but there is not enough money to operate at 10 minute frequencies along the full line.

The committee discussed various ways to achieve the frequency and reliability of the system within the budget. For example, Vern Rifer suggested asking drivers to go without a break for two hours during rush hour, then slow the system down after rush hour, allowing them to take breaks. Rick said that it may be possible for supervisors to operate the cars for part of the route, giving drivers a break until the car arrives near the maintenance area half-way through the loop.

John said that if service is less frequent than every 10 minutes, PSI and the committee must be prepared to anticipate negative feedback, given that they have promised verbally and in writing that the streetcars would run that often. He said this has been a long-standing commitment, and there will be serious implications should this commitment not be met. He

said it must be made clear that there's a need for \$600,000 more in the budget.

Vern suggested limiting the operating hours and operating on 10-minute intervals during the times it does run. He said it is not the streetcar's job to provide commuter service to people who must be at work very early or who work the night shift.

Stan said that shutting down service at 11 p.m. will discourage people from using the streetcar to attend movies, plays or other evening events downtown. He said he frequently takes MAX at 10:30 in the evening and finds it is very busy with a variety of people.

Steve made the following motion: Given the CAC's expectations of 10 minute service frequencies and the decision to increase the alignment by 15 percent after the operating budget was set for the original length, the CAC encouraged the PSI Board and the City of Portland to consider increasing the streetcar operating budget.

The committee unanimously approved the motion.

Rick Gustafson said that there are discussions ongoing about ways to guarantee an operating budget that will be adequate not just for the first phase, but for the extended phase into RiverPlace and the North Macadam District. He said it will be most effective to look at long-range strategies for operating funding.

Vern asked the staff to examine the marginal costs of providing additional service.

John encouraged staff to use the CAC to work with Tri-Met to discuss funding. He said his preference would be to shorten the hours, for example, to 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., with excellent service so that the system works very effectively from the beginning.

Kenneth McFarling asked if the streetcar would offset Tri-Met service, saving the agency money that could be applied to the streetcar system. Chris Smith said that the commitment to the Northwest was that the system would not replace bus service.

5. Vintage Trolley

Rick Gustafson said that it's time to confirm how the Vintage Trolleys will be used in the streetcar system.

He said that during the week, it should be possible to operate as intended with no trolleys. The system will have five new streetcars, leaving one as a spare to provide for maintenance and repairs. If they expand the number of hours of service during the week to 24,000 from the planned 21,000, it may be necessary to use a Vintage Trolley occasionally as a back-up. If that is the case, the schedules will have to indicate where in the rotation the trolleys will be used, so that people will know at what times a car may be in service that is not fully accessible.

The system would use two Vintage Trolleys on Saturdays and one on Sunday, so that there would be 10-minute service, with accessible service only every 20 minutes. He said that the trolleys will be an entertainment amenity for the system, not intended to be used for emergencies.

Rick said that the important thing is to make clear up front that not every vehicle on the system will be fully accessible all the time. Rick explained that on the original Vintage Trolley route, people with wheelchairs were able to ride by getting on and off at two specially designed stops equipped with lifts. Kay said that virtually nobody using a wheelchair rides the trolley.

Vern moved the proposal of using the trolleys as described. The committee approved the motion unanimously, with the understanding that the trolleys would be used for emergency back-ups only with full approval of Tri-Met's Accessibility Committee.

Vern said staff should determine if the Americans With Disability Act requires that all the vehicles on a system be fully accessible. Stan suggested the staff talk with Steve Kautz at Tri-Met on accessibility issues.

6. Marketing Strategies

Rick said that marketing strategies for the streetcar are intended not so much to increase ridership, but rather to connect riders to the retailers and advertisers along the route, including those property owners contributing to the Local Improvement District (LID). Rick said that \$100,000 of the operating budget will come from advertising.

Rick said that the current strategy is to sell sponsorships in the following way:

five sponsors, one for each of the vehicles, contributing in the neighborhood of \$15,000 a year, for the benefit of having their names imprinted in an attractive way on the car they sponsor

station sponsors, contributing \$8,000 to \$10,000, plus

advertising inside the cars.

There will be no ads on the cars' exteriors with the exception of the sponsors' names.

Vern suggested trading for services in exchange for LID payments: for example, Wyden and Kennedy might consider providing copy and graphics help.

Kay said that in Australia, the streetcars are decorated by fine artists.

Rick said LID owners may receive one or more annual passes.

The committee discussed having a party on the streetcars to celebrate the opening. They also discussed the possibility of renting out the streetcars for parties to raise operating money. Rick said that the Vintage Trolley does that, but the costs to the system are very expensive.

6. Other Topics

Stan discussed the idea of making a model of the streetcar vehicle to insert in the model of the PSU Urban Center that illustrates the streetcar line.

He also suggested using the term "first" in the promotional campaign, building on Tri-Met's "first low-floor car in North America. Kay suggested it could be the "First Modern Streetcar" in North America.