Portland Streetcar
Citizen Advisory Committee
May 9, 2001 Streetcar Construction Office

Members in attendance: John Carroll; Mike Dale; Bill Failing; Steve Fosler; Peter Finley Fry; Stan Lewis; Ken McFarland; Jon Putman; Vern Rifer; Steve Shain; Chris Smith
Staff attendance: Rick Gustafson; Kay Dannen

The meeting was called to order and the minutes were approved.

1. Car Testing and Delivery Highlights:

Kay reported that car testing continues with car #1 on the alignment. We expect cars #2, 3 and 4 to arrive this weekend with delivery to the maintenance facility on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of next week. Within two-three weeks of delivery these additional cars will be out testing on the tracks. Car operates very smoothly with better braking than MAX, because the car is half as heavy and has better acceleration. An invitation has been received from Tri-Met for a preview ride on Airport MAX. This is scheduled for June 19, 7PM. The CAC is invited.

2. Safety Concerns with Operations:

Portland State University Urban Plaza and between Lincoln and Cramer Halls and the Park Blocks have been identified as potential safety pinch points during Streetcar operations. Kay attended a meeting at PSU in which it was decided that a special PSU committee would be formed that will deal specifically with safety issues in relation to Streetcar operations. Information will also be included in the school newspaper on a regular basis regarding Streetcar operations. Testing at PSU will be conducted on Tuesday and Thursday, May 15 and 17 from 11AM-3PM at the Urban Plaza, between Lincoln and Cramer and the west end of the these two buildings. PSU staff will be assisting with this testing. They will also video via web cam movements during train operations. John C. felt this would be a valuable tool and may be something we can show the PSI board at the next meeting. A report will be prepared to illustrate the movements at PSU and possible recommendation for safety mitigation from staff at PSU. Further discussion was held on safety and possible safety measures. John has recommended that a camera be placed at the head of the train in order to document incidents. These would be particularly helpful in dealing with possible claims. Rick reported that cameras would be installed inside the vehicles when the 6th and 7th cars arrive. It takes about one week to install the four cameras on each car and we can't take the cars out of service for that length of time. It was confirmed that Streetcar is covered under City of Portland liability insurance and that the City is self-insured. Kay mentioned that the disabled office and members of the disabled union would be invited on a preview ride of the Streetcar.

3. Grand Opening Report:
Plans continue forward on event celebrations for the grand opening. Initial budget was $30,000, but with solicitation of funds, that amount has expanded to $100,000. Headliner groups have been booked at each district event.

4. Frequency of Service:

Operators from Tri-Met have been selected and will start June 4. The CAC is invited to join this training session. Their first week will be classroom training and then they will be put on the cars. Mike Dale reported that during testing a very aggressive use of horn was noted, that he felt was excessive which could produce uncomplimentary reactions from the community. Rick indicated that the operators would be trained to be non-intrusive and respectful of the community. Jon P. indicated that this emphasis on respectfulness should be ingrained at the start of training in order to ensure that operators understand Streetcar expectations in regard to interaction within the community. The horn should not be used when vehicles are making legal movements. Rick is contemplating whether a schedule should be produced. He is intending to run trains as quick as possible with the utilization of 4 trains on weekdays. Emphasis will be placed on customer service and reliability. Currently it is uncertain what our roundtrip times will be, considering incidents along the alignment that could impact service. We believe that our headways should be 11-13 minutes. Rick is investigating the possibility of a GPS system, which would give real time arrivals at the platform stops and indicate possible service disruptions. Currently we have no electrical outlets at the stops and this system would have to be run on batteries. Hardware has not been located as yet. There is some consensus that we should not publish a schedule that we can’t maintain. The ideal is to have a 35 minutes roundtrip time. We will have 4 trains, 7am-6pm, Monday-Friday with 11-13 minute headways and 4 trains on Saturday, 3pm-6pm. On June 18 we will start simulated revenue service to do time tests, reliability tests and test the operations budget. The one uncertainty is maintenance costs.

5. Other business:

Chris asked whether new service on Tri-Met bus line #77 will begin on July 20. Kay to check with Tony Mendoza at Tri-Met to confirm. It was recommended that Tri-Met be required to use only low-floor buses on the routes that use the Streetcar alignment. There has been desire on the part of the PSI board to plan for success. If that success is achieved, the board is willing to meet with Tri-Met to discuss additional operating support. It costs about $100.00 per hour to run and $350,000 would cover about 350 more hours. More than likely we will need more service later in the evenings and on Saturday. We will be running one vintage trolley on Saturday between 10AM-6PM and 1 VT on Sunday. Rick has some concern about the 11pm shutdown on Mon-Thursday and the confusion it may cause because of the different shutdown times.

Monthly CAC meetings will be held at the maintenance facility from now on at 1516 NW Northrup, the second Wednesday of each month at 3PM. CAC has been invited to a ride on Streetcar, Wednesday, May 23, 3:00PM. Meet at the Streetcar maintenance facility by 2:45PM on Wednesday.