

Portland Streetcar Citizen Advisory Committee  
August 8, 2001, 3PM, Streetcar Maintenance Facility

Members in attendance: Bob Amundson; John Carroll; Mike Dale; Steve Fosler; Mary Kennedy; Stan Lewis; Ken McFarland; Janet McGarrigle; Jon Putman; Vern Rifer; Chris Smith  
Staff attendance: Rick Gustafson; Kay Dannen

Others: Carol Presson

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

#### 1. Customer Service

The committee is in agreement that we could use two more cars right now. With four cars running most of the time and one in abeyance for a spare, it does not give us the luxury to perform some modifications. These modifications, such as the relocation of the ticket machine and installation of cameras, will wait until we receive cars 6 & 7. If we had more cars in service, what would it do to ridership counts? Rick announced we have about 6,000-8,000 riders per day, which is over the 5,000 originally estimated as a daily total. Saturday ridership is as high as weekdays. What will the ridership become when PSU is back in full session this fall? Streetcar is fulfilling its intent by operating as a circulator. Peak ridership is from 9am-7pm Monday through Saturday. We are not getting a high volume of early morning commuters. 20-30% of our riders are not able to pay because they have no change for the coin only machine. Rider counts improve as frequency improves. Currently we are operating with 4 trains with 15 minutes headways between 7am and 6pm. Jon has observed in riding the trains on a daily basis that at most platforms, the train makes a stop. May be more convenience for the customer, to make a mandatory stop at each platform. This would decrease the anxiety level of passengers that are trying to signal the operator for a stop. As originally planned by the CAC, the goal is eventually to have 10-minute headways. Customer quality and comfort for the rider seems to be more important than the frequency. Time and frequency will become more important as more commuters ride the system. Travel speed variations have been noted with the change of operators. Travel speed is tied to boarding increases. If we can maintain the frequency to fewer than 10-minute headways, a schedule would not need to be prepared.

Stan made the comment that passengers like the streetcar because it is more intimate. More standing room can be a problem because when an operator takes a sudden acceleration - passengers have fewer places to secure their balance.

Rick has suggested that we prioritize our fixes based on the desire to operate streetcar at \$120.00 per hour. Tri-Met currently runs light rail at \$170.00 per hour. PDOT will face a \$5 million dollar shortfall this year - streetcar is not in a position to ask PDOT for more operating money. Streetcar is collecting \$500-600 in fares daily. We also will be managing the 72-space parking lot south of Marshall in order to generate additional revenue for operations.

The fare machine has been identified as a problem because it will not accept dollar bills. In our search for a vendor for the ticket machine, we could not locate a machine that would accept paper money and that would fit inside our cars. We discussed the possibility of adding a money-changing machine on the platforms or cars and/or add the capability of paying with a debit card on board. The ticket machine is in a poor location and will be moved. However, this move will not occur until we receive cars 6 & 7. The cars need to be taken off line about 1 week in order to move the fare machine.

Fare evasion could become a problem if people continue to have problems trying to pay. Rick informed the CAC that Vintage Trolley conductors have been riding the cars answering questions and taking comments. It was agreed by all that we need to figure out how to collect fares and provide random fare inspection.

Rick informed the group that we have only had 3 tows since July 20. Streetcar pays for the tow and one day of storage. Owner of car pays for additional storage. The Mark Spencer Hotel has been the biggest problem in blocking the streetcar. Grayline buses continue to block the tracks in front of the hotel. We have changed our policy at PSU and allow passengers to stay on board as we pull into the tail track at 4th/Montgomery. The operator then switches ends and pulls into the PSU Urban Plaza stop, leaves the doors open for boarding and sometimes has a layover. So far, PSU has been OK with this procedure. We feel this better suits the customer. It has been noted that our validator does not accept all Tri-Met tickets. Our complimentary tickets are printed incorrectly so that you cannot read the validation date.

Rick informed us that there will be curtains installed on the cab doors to stop the glare the operators are experiencing and also to afford the operator some privacy. Signage is being prepared to place at 4th/Montgomery that this is not a stop. We continually have passengers try to board or deboard at this location. Jon felt it was poor practice to have operators picked up a train at the maintenance facility where there is not a stop. Operators from now on will use a designated stop.

Opticom has been installed at Broadway/Mill and 10th & 11th/Burnside to assist with streetcar operations. Operators are still being trained on this system. The Streetcar controls the intersections through V-tag at 23rd/Lovejoy & Northrup and 11th & 5th and Market. Safety is the number one issue for streetcar.

Bridgeplate has been identified as too short and does not fill the door opening. It was suggested that we paint an indication inside the car and paint the edges of the bridgeplate to assist passengers in wheelchairs. Carol has identified 5 stops in which the bridgeplate is too steep for her to make the grade without assistance. Jon suggested that these slopes be measured for grade and repaired as need be. All stops are within the tolerance of the specifications of the contractor. These stops need to be repaired. We may do more testing with a wheelchair.

Kay to follow-up with customer service folks to take the 238-RIDE calls for streetcar. It has been determined that Tri-Met's information to

potential streetcar riders is not always accurate. Kay will also follow-up with Tri-Met's CAO office in Pioneer Square.

## 2. RiverPlace extension

Currently under discussion is a proposal from a property developer to purchase land in the Macadam area for redevelopment purposes, which would in turn assist with the finances of the RiverPlace extension. Portland Streetcar has extended our option to purchase 19 Skoda vehicles through September 2003. Tri-Met is being considered a possible resource for operating funds when the extension comes on line. It might be appropriate during the construction of the RiverPlace extension to place an order for two additional Skoda vehicles.

## 3. Marshall Street closure update

Discussion was held with the Lovejoy/Northrup task force committee members regarding the two options currently on the table for the treatment of NW Marshall between 15th and 16th. Currently the street is closed to auto traffic and open for pedestrians and bicycles. Option 1 would close Marshall to car traffic and maintain a pedestrian and bicycle pathway. Option 2 would close Marshall to cars, pedestrians and bicycles. Both options are under discussion.

## 4. NEXbus update

We need a quorum by council in order to bring NEXbus agreement before the City Council for adoption. Currently it is proposed that 22 stops can receive power quite easily. The other 10 stops will need to be done creatively.

## 5. Other business

Jon suggested that many of the stop locations have not been cleaned adequately. He suggested pressure-washing these stops periodically. Quality of streetcar service should match the quality of the environment that it serves. Portland Rehabilitation currently does our stop cleaning. Of concern is the cost incurred in order to keep the stop locations adequately cleaned. A planning for success contingency of \$300,00 has been endorsed by the PSI Board and understood by Commissioner Hales.

Monthly CAC meetings to be held at selected locations on the second Wednesday of each month at 3PM. The next meeting is scheduled Wednesday, July 11, 2001. The public is invited.