Portland Streetcar Citizen Advisory Committee
March 1, 2006, 3:30PM, Shiels Obletz Johnsen, 520 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 400, Portland, OR 97204
Members in Attendance: Bill Danneman, Michael Dennis, Steve Fosler, Mary Kennedy, Stan Lewis, Janet McGarrigle, Carol “Zoe” Presson, Vern Rifer, Chris Smith, Dan Zalkow
Other Attendees: Dick Barnard, David Hampsten
Staff Attendance: Kay Dannen, Rick Gustafson, Carter MacNichol

The meeting was called to order by our chair Chris Smith. The minutes from January 11, 2006 were approved as presented. Introductions were made by all.

1. Mall Light Rail Project – bus relocation plan update.
Kay provided information on the proposed Portland Mall bus relocation plan in preparation for the construction of the Portland Mall Light Rail project, where light rail will be included on SW 5th and 6th Avenues from Union Station to Jackson. I-205 and the Mall Light Rail Project are being constructed at the same time and this line, when completed in September 2009, will travel from Clackamas Town Center to Gateway, utilizing the Banfield alignment to Union Station and south to a temporary terminus at SW Jackson Street. It is intended in the future to continue south to Milwaukie from the terminus at SW Jackson, across the Willamette River with a landing near OMSI and continue to Milwaukie. This is part of our regional transportation plan. During construction on SW 5th and 6th Avenues, all the buses need to be temporarily diverted off the mall from January 2007 through spring 2009. TriMet has developed two options that will maintain safe, reliable, convenient and accessible transit service throughout downtown by distributing buses onto 3rd & 4th avenues, Columbia & Jefferson streets and possibly 10th & 11th avenues. The public is invited to comment on these plans through the open comment period to March 31, 2006. The plan will be finalized in June 2006. Kay provided bus service relocation brochures and postcards advertising the open houses and also providing ways to testify. There were concerns from CAC members, that allowing 6 bus lines on 10th and 11th avenues would jeopardize reliable streetcar operations, as streetcar is currently experiencing operating delays south of Burnside. There was some concern about the maintenance of our streetcar stops, the ability to handle the extra load of passengers and the possibility of buses breaking down and causing streetcar delays. Buses would be sharing all the streetcar stops on 10th & 11th avenues during this temporary rerouting period.

Rick indicated that the entire city will need to share in the pain of the mall construction and the temporary relocation of the buses. He indicated that the bus relocation plan may actually strengthen streetcar’s position with the city to make some changes in and around NW 11th/Burnside. Mitigation methods currently being discussed are: prohibiting a right turn off 11th to Burnside, signalizing 11th/Couch, remove parking eastside of 11th between Powell’s garage entrance/exit and Burnside. The Pearl District Neighborhood Association is currently doing a transportation study for the Pearl District, including issues associated with streetcar operations. At risk currently, is the
Burnside/Couch couplet project, which, if completed, would have a positive impact for streetcar operations.

Vern made the motion that the Streetcar CAC support all TriMet bus relocation options associated with construction on the Downtown Mall Light Rail Project, conditioned on resolving traffic issues surrounding NW 11th and West Burnside. It was also suggested that TriMet be requested to assist with the maintenance and trash removal at the proposed shared streetcar/bus platform stops. This motion was seconded by Stan Lewis and approved by majority. Chris Smith will prepare a letter to TriMet on behalf of the CAC in response to the temporary bus relocation plan.

2. Lowell Extension / ConnectOregon Grant Application.
Rick indicated Portland Streetcar has applied for a $2.1 million Connect Oregon grant to complete the financing package for the Streetcar SW Lowell Extension. A decision on this grant application will be made in July 2006.

3. Application for Visioning Grant.
Chris indicated that he had applied on behalf of the Streetcar CAC for a visioning grant sponsored by Mayor Potter. Unfortunately, streetcar did not make the list for consideration of a grant.

4. Eastside Alignment – description of Morrison and OMSI minimal operating segments (MOS).
Carter MacNichol, from Shiels Obletz Johnsen provided DRAFT maps and information regarding the Streetcar alternative analysis alignment options for the Eastside streetcar in detail, including street design, traffic, signals, stop locations, bike accommodations and pedestrian improvements. Carter described the overall description of the loop with MLK/Grand, Loop with 2-way Grand and minimal operable segments (MOS) for Oregon, Morrison and OMSI. Today’s briefing included the Morrison MOS and OMSI MOS. The Oregon MOS was discussed at our past meeting in January. Some of the motivations/options are to minimize the removal of on-street parking, improve pedestrian/bus/streetcar connections at the Morrison and Hawthorne bridgeheads and coordinate with the Burnside Bridgehead project. SE Grand/MLK Avenues are currently not bike designated corridors. Possible alignment to OMSI includes fly-over (bridge) over railroad tracks and coordination with the MLK viaduct project. It is intended that streetcar share the Caruthers Bridge crossing with MAX light rail and integrate both systems for that crossing south of OMSI.

Some discussion was held on the two-way Grand alignment option. This particular option does not have the support of the Central Eastside businesses as well as the neighborhoods of HAND and Buckman. Carter explained that the 2-way Grand has some interesting elements in itself, but the downside is the significant changes that would need to be made on SE 7th northbound to handle freight movement and other traffic. This option also has a cost impact and currently SE 7th is a designated bike corridor.

5. Other Business.
Vern, as a member of the Lake Oswego Project Advisory Committee (PAC), briefed the committee on the current status of the Lake Oswego transit corridor study. The Lake Oswego PAC is looking into a streetcar extension from SW Bancroft, in the South Waterfront District to Lake Oswego. He indicated the process; being managed by Metro through an alternative analysis process is slow. Rick is encouraging the project to divide the project at the Sellwood Bridge as the alignment option south of the bridge has significant environmental impact issues. The current Willamette Shoreline right-of-way south of the Sellwood Bridge is in unincorporated Multnomah and Clackamas Counties and physically and financially constrained. The Johns Landing area and Lake Oswego are advocates for a streetcar; however, within the approximate three miles in between, there is much opposition. At the last Project Advisory Committee meeting, ODOT did a presentation on the widening of Macadam between Portland and Lake Oswego - as indicated by the presentation, the challenges and costs are enormous and cast serious doubt as to whether this could ever be accomplished. Vern indicated URS has been awarded the design contract for the Lake Oswego transit corridor study.

Chris indicated he had tickets available for a sponsored table at the BTA sponsored Alice B. Toeclips event on Saturday evening, March 4. If you are interested in attending contact Chris.

6. Next CAC Meeting:
The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, May 3, 2006, 3:30pm-5:00pm at Shieis Obletz Johnsen, 520 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite #400, Portland, Oregon. Please call Kay Dannen at 503/478-6404 or email at dannen@portlandstreetcar.org if you have any questions regarding this committee or have items for the agenda. The CAC meetings are open to the public.