Portland Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, March 5, 2008, 3:30-5:00 p.m., Shiels Obletz Johnsen  

*Members in Attendance:* Chris Smith, chair; Bill Danneman; Mary Kennedy; Peter Kilbourne; Stan Lewis; Janet McGarrigle; Susan Pearce; Carol “Zoe” Presson; Bob Richardson; Vern Rifer; Scott Seibert  

*Others:* Mark Dorn; Jim Howell; Wendy Smith Novick – Streetcar System Plan, Public Involvement; Shoshanah Oppenheim; Heidi Patarozzi; Steve Pinger; Patrick Sweeney – PDOT; Karen Withrow – Metro  

*Staff Attendance:* Julie Gustafson, Rick Gustafson  

1. **Meeting to Order:**  
Meeting was called to Order by Chris Smith, chair. Introductions of members and visitors were made. Also, a special presentation was made to Mary Kennedy who will no longer be a member of the CAC.  
The minutes from the January 16, 2008 meeting were adopted.  

2. **Public Comments:**  
Stan Lewis made a comment about safety along the streetcar line. He worries occasionally about little toddlers running around on the platform and is concerned about the lack of signage on the platforms to warn parents about the danger of letting their children run around unsupervised.  

There will be an Open House for the Streetcar Eastside Loop Environmental Assessment Open House March 6, 2008 from 5pm to 7:30pm at the Multnomah County Building on East Hawthorne in the Commissioners Conference Room.  

3. **Milwaukie Light Rail Project:**  
Karen Withrow from Metro made a presentation about the Milwaukie Light Rail Project. Metro started on the Portland-Milwaukie project approximately a year ago and they are preparing to release the Environmental Impact Statement in April 2008 which will start the public comment period. They will hold three open houses and a public hearing during the comment period. Metro wants to make sure that people are aware of the project and aware of ways they can contribute input into the project. Bob Richardson asked about where the bulk of the cost increases are going to be. Withrow responded that a substantial piece of the costs increase is that they are looking to extend the project further south approximately two miles from the original design, which includes some elevated track. Also, the cost of construction has increased since the original cost estimates were released. There will be a lot more information in the Environmental Impact Statement about the expected costs.  

Chris Smith asked about the bridge crossing. Withrow responded that there is good discussion coming out of the partnership committee. Metro and the committees have been talking to property owners about the bridge alignment and it seems there may be something between Porter and Mead (Southern end of the OHSU campus) on the west side. On the east side the most support is for Sherman. None of the bridge crossing options come close to touching the island. They are all North of the Tram. Smith asked about the difference between the draft EIS and the final EIS. Withrow responded that the draft is more minimal and that there will be more detail when the final EIS is submitted. Susan Pearce asked about the height of the bridge. Withrow responded that there are ongoing discussions with the users of the river and that the two heights that are being discussed are 65ft and 72ft. Based on the discussions so far it looks like 72ft is more likely (the Sellwood Bridge is
Richardson asked about what the highest incline we can have and still have a navigable bridge. Withrow responded that the current grade is designed at an incline between 4% and 5%.

4. Project Updates:
Loop: Rick Gustafson reminded everyone that the Open House for the Environmental Assessment is tomorrow and that the public comment period ends March 10, 2008. We are expecting to be able to release a FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact). The project is moving along nicely. The Federal Transit Authority’s assistance and acceptance of the EA is another piece of evidence that they want to fund the project. We are still at a rating of Low-Medium and need to continue to work on getting that rating to a Medium. We are working almost daily with the FTA in trying to improve this rating. The bottom line is there must be a cost-effectiveness of $23.99 price/benefit ratio. We are at $29.00 right now. The regional model which we used to conduct the analysis of the streetcar ridership was right on the mark for bus and light rail ridership, but only 52% of actual Streetcar ridership. A lot of the work that is being done towards reaching our rating centers around ridership surveys and discovering how many people are riding and what purposes the streetcar is being used for. A lot of people are choosing to use the streetcar as a circulator and not just a home based mode of transportation. Some numbers that have come to light during these ridership surveys are: that 32% of weekday riders are between the ages of 25 and 34; 21% of riders are 19-24 years old; and 31% of Streetcar trips do not involve going to or coming from home. According to our benefits, we could find our cost/benefit ratio at closer to $14.00. The FTA insists that we do all our comparisons against a high-end bus system that is actually higher than we would actually make or get the support to make. If we can get the FTA to agree that the demand numbers are higher than the model predicts, we will make our rating of Medium.

We are 98% towards the completion of our cost estimate and are actually running late on it. We are late due to waiting for reconciliation with the Water Bureau because we have to replace a water line. We are highly confident that we will meet the cost estimates and budgets. The FTA normally has their own cost analysis done, though they did not have it done in our project (mainly due to the capped financial input from the FTA). The $50 million that has been earmarked for the Loop Project is a down-payment for the $75 that we will get from the FTA for the entire project. On March 20, 2008, PSI is in front of the City Council to get approval of the final design contracts. We are asking for approval so we are ready to go when we get our cost/benefit rating to Medium with the FTA. We are right in the middle of this project and are working diligently to see this through. Vern Rifer asked about the connection between the Milwaukie Light Rail Bridge and the affect on the Streetcar. Gustafson responded that to complete the Loop we will need 5 more cars and between $35 – 40 million to complete the Loop (installing track from the bridge to the current South Waterfront tracks). When all of this happens we will make a request to the FTA for an additional grant if they increase the maximum federal money available for Small Starts. Smith made a motion to allow Chris Smith to speak for the CAC at the March 20, 2008 City Council meeting. Bob Richardson seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously. Pearce asked if all of this does not work to get us funding before January 20, 2009, would we resubmit the project to the FTA or have to start the process all over again. Gustafson responded that the general feeling is that whomever the new administration centers around, it will be friendlier than the current administration. If in September progress has not been made, there is a chance we would have to consider the possibility of a Plan C. If the budget gets approved in January or February of 2009, we will still be in that budget’s mark ups in June/July. Pearce also commented that Portland is becoming more and more visible as the leader of Streetcars around the country and she was wondering if that makes it harder for the FTA to say...
no to our project. Gustafson responded that yes, that is true and that is why Simpson (FTA Administrator) stated in 2006 when he entered his office he declared that he wanted to get our project funded. Tucson will be applying for Small Starts in the coming months. Smith read a written comment submitted by Michael Dennis that there were rumors about shortening pedestrian signal lengths on the east side to increase the flow of traffic. Gustafson responded that nothing to that detail has been discussed or dealt with yet, but that we are looking into signal overrides and more serious circulation plans in areas (relationships between bikes, streetcar, busses, cars, and pedestrians). These studies are being done in the Pearl, Lloyd, OMSI and Burnside/Couch Districts.

Rifer asked about Oregon Ironworks and their Streetcar division United Streetcar and if they are really building the new cars. Gustafson responded that yes they are manufacturing the cars and that the first one will be on the tracks in Portland in December 2008. We will be testing their car here in Portland and it will be different in color and paint design than all other cars because it is the first car manufactured in the United States (and Oregon). There are two bids that United Streetcar will prepare in the coming weeks. The first is that we have been given $20 million by the state for 7 cars for the Loop and they will competitively bid for that. The second is through Shiels Obletz Johnsen for 4 cars for the Dubai Streetcar Project which will be in competition against worldwide companies.

5. Streetcar Operations Report:
January was a good month. No accidents! We have been surveying the runs and schedules which led to a new schedule for streetcar starting in March. We used to get around the operators’ lunch break by giving them split shifts. This will no longer occur with the new schedules. We continue to have a great safety record. Our reliability is at 96% of our runs arrive within 5 minutes of the schedule. Traffic continues to be the number 1 variable in reliability. There has been $3.5 billion dollars in development along the alignment since 1997 with 5.5 million square feet of non-residential development. We continue to have 11,000 weekday riders on the streetcars. Rifer asked if there are any of the safety and crime issues from TriMet transferring over. Gustafson responded that no, the problems are not transferring to streetcar. Richardson commented that when doing ridership counts the raw numbers don’t match the way TriMet does it. For example we don’t have stop by stop ridership so we can’t make statements about which stops are busiest. Gustafson said he will look into that.

Julie Gustafson reported to the committee that the Lowell stop closure has been delayed until early-mid April. Also, the work on the Green Line Max will close Streetcar from 11th and Clay south from 7pm Friday, March 28, 2008 to 5am Monday, March 31, 2008. There will be bus shuttles replicating the service for the weekend.

6. Streetcar System Plan Update – Patrick Sweeney:
Patrick Sweeney updated the CAC on the corridor technical evaluation process. PDOT has been narrowing the scope of potential routes from 210 miles down to the current count of 123 miles. The eliminated miles are areas with “fatal flaws” i.e. steep inclines and utilities. They are in the process of the Phase 2 screen which will narrow the potential routes even further. Wendy Smith Novick, Streetcar System Plan Public Involvement, reported to the CAC that we are narrowing the plan to see if there is public support for the potential plans. There will be workshops in each of the districts that are potentially involved. People at these workshops will be asked if there is anything the public feels has been omitted from the plan. The second thing they will be asked is if there is support and interest in the community to make the plan a reality. Steve Pinger asked why the Westside was not
divided out further and what the Central area of town would fall under. Sweeney responded that the Central area of the city will be included in meetings with the entire Westside as well as more meetings that are separated into neighborhoods. Stan Lewis made a comment that he has been looking at maps of historic streetcar routes and that it would be fascinating to have the historic maps as well as the new maps so people could see what used to be and what is possible. Novick responded that they have included those maps in previous Open Houses and would continue to include them. In the public meetings people will be able to identify potential alignments in their neighborhoods that could be Tier 1 (more immediate review) or even ones that there is some support for but that are not ready for Tier 1 status. The community will also be able to comment on any potential alignments that have no support. Sweeney added that PDOT will provide reading materials to the various neighborhood working groups and will help them through the process. It will be exciting because all over the city there will be neighborhood based discussion groups evaluating potential alignments. Pearce asked if there will be different groups for each individual alignment or if there will be larger groups for each district (North, Northeast, East, Southeast and West). Sweeney responded that the more public involvement there is, the more groups there will be with the hope that each alignment will be able to have a focus group. Richardson asked if people will be allowed to be on more than one group based on their interests. Novick responded that that is possible, but that the more people they can get involved, the better it will be. The first workshop will be April 3, 2008.

7. Other business:
No other business was discussed.

The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, May 7, 2008, 3:30pm-5:00pm at Shiels Obletz Johnsen, 1140 SW 11th Avenue, Suite #500, 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.