

**Portland Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday, November 5, 2008, 3:30-5:00 p.m., Shiels Oblatz Johnsen**

**Members in Attendance: Chris Smith, chair; Debbie Cronk; Bill Danneman; Mike Dennis; Steve Fossler; Sorin Garber; Janet McGarrigle; Brian Newman; Ann Niles; Bob Richardson; Vern Rifer; Dan Zalkow**

**Others: Bill Barber; David Brandt; Bill Crawford, Portland Sentinel; Patrick Sweeney, PDOT;**

**Staff Attendance: Kay Dannen, Julie Gustafson**

**1. Meeting to Order:**

Meeting was called to Order by Chris Smith, chair. The minutes from the September 3, 2008 meeting were adopted.

**2. Public Comments:**

Bob Richardson commented that Ed Gorman could not make it and had issues he would present for the Rose City Park Neighborhood Association in regards to the Streetcar System Plan.

**3. Portland Loop Project:**

The committee was shown the visualizations of the Loop alignment. Kay Dannen presented that she and Julie Gustafson have held tablings for the Loop Project and have spoken with 375 people so far including 2 Neighborhood Associations and 1 business association as well as the residents at Calaroga Terrace. They have also worked with JLA to produce a Informational Newsletter that was mailed to the Loop constituents on October 1, 2008.

We're expecting to be at 75% design in January 2009. We are required to produce 8 acres of bioswales as part of the BES requirements. Vern Rifer suggested looking into other options such as underground mitigations that would satisfy BES requirements.

The ridership numbers for 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter are in. We are up about 25% from 2007. There are an average of 13,000 riders each weekday, 12,000 riders on Saturday and more than 7,000 riders on Sunday. We have asked for some specifics on boarding stations so we have more information on where people are riding. Those statistics will be available in the Spring.

Dannen presented the plans for the Maintenance Facility upgrade that will expand the current facility by a block so it will be from 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> and from Lovejoy to Overton. We will have the capacity to store up to 25 vehicles. The construction of the facility will coincide with the Loop construction. Maintenance staff will be housed in a new building north of Northrup. This site will also include a wheel truing machine.

We are now Green Power Partners. Streetcar has pledged to offset all of its electricity use with purchases of renewable energy. That means the system, which has about 3.5 million riders a year, will be offsetting 480 tons of carbon emissions, or the equivalent of not driving more than 1 million miles. Ann Niles asked if we are going to advertise this new partnership in the Streetcars and not just on the website or in a press release. So many of our riders are tourists and it would be nice to have a permanent reminder of the benefits of riding transit. Sorin Garber seconded Niles' idea.

The prototype streetcar from United Streetcar/Oregon Iron Works is at TriMet being painted and will be on our alignment in June or July 2009.

Portland Streetcar has never had the capability of excluding people from riding the Streetcar for repetitive negative behavior and we are starting to work on a process so we have the capability to deal with situations in a more firm manner. Chris Smith added that this is an area where we are deficient in relation to TriMet. He added that he would like the committee to have the opportunity to review the regulations. Vern Rifer asked if the rules about excluding animals will be added to the ordinance. Janet McGarrigle asked how long it takes to get a supervisor to a car if there is trouble. Dannen responded that it takes 5-10 minutes depending on where the car is on the alignment.

**Bicycle Plan:**

There is still work being done in the Pearl District in regards to the bicycle plan. The decision has been made to move the bicycle lanes from Lovejoy to Marshall. There is an issue for two blocks where there are cobblestones and a final decision needs to be made on how this will be dealt with and how it will be financed since it is outside of the project's budget. A second bicycle issue is on NE 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. One option that is being discussed is a bike track which would place the bicycle lanes between the parked cars and the sidewalk. Work is being done to find ways to fund the bicycle improvements that go further than what is in the budget.

**Northrup Loop/Lovejoy Option status:**

Most people are falling in line with the Northrup Option. There is an organization of property owners in the Pearl District that have gotten together and are trying to find funding for the bike improvements on Marshall. There is talk of forming a LID in the Pearl District to pay for it. They are also looking for other City funding in lieu of the LID. Vern Rifer asked if most people have moved past the issue of "out-of-direction" travel in the Pearl. Chris Smith responded that the Northrup Loop leaves open the option of a NE to NW alignment in the future. Ann Niles added that the Loop PAC voted to support the Pearl District's choice of the Northrup Loop as long as funding for the bike improvements can be secured.

**4. System Plan Update:**

Chris Smith presented on the System Plan. The timeline has been extended at the request of the Neighborhoods. The system plan committee is still requesting input from the communities and neighborhoods to include when they make a recommendation in Spring 2009.

Bob Richardson brought up a frustration from the Rose City Park Neighborhood Association. They are frustrated by the lack of response to their concerns. They are concerned that the cost of the project will be born primarily by the neighborhood. They are also concerned that streetcars would affect the historic aspect of Sandy Blvd. and that the speed would be less than a bus. They suggested the use of Electric Trolley Busses rather than streetcars on some of the suggested alignments. Patrick Sweeney responded that at Rail Volution he attended a session about streetcar marketing and development where he asked how the developers in Seattle answered the question "why streetcar instead of electric busses?" They answered that streetcars support development in a way busses don't. Vern Rifer added that electric busses are more of a response to a fuel source issue and are not a replacement for rail transit and really don't promote new development. Sorin Garber added that in his experience people revert to trolley busses when they are afraid of having their district/neighborhood overrun by new "modern" construction that changes the feel and atmosphere. Mike Dennis added that by looking at the history of how streetcar lines have been

built in Portland it's not solely the neighborhood that determines where streetcar goes but that we are a city of public/private partnerships and we need to have the private voice to compliment the public voice we are hearing. Dan Zalkow commented that there is a missing option when we discuss transit. There is a jump from a regular bus to a streetcar when there should be a third option in the middle such as a fancier electric trolley bus option that may be the best option in some situations. Sweeney responded that there is a difference in what each form of transportation accomplishes. Electric busses are great to solve transportation issues but they don't spur development like rail transit does. Steve Fossler added that who we're talking to should affect how we answer the question. Bob Richardson added that the various neighborhoods do have different views and opinions about streetcar and transit based on the area they are in and how they view their neighborhood. Richardson also expressed that trolleybuses do represent enhanced local transit service and a capital improvement, and there does not appear to be a venue right now where these improvements can be requested/discussed, and that it also naturally comes up as an alternative in conversations where streetcars are desired but engineering issues preclude them. So we shouldn't be surprised when this keeps coming up as a topic, and we should consider whether and how to address the issue.

Sweeney reported that the System Plan public surveys are all closed. They had over 2100 responses to the surveys. Letters from the Neighborhood and Business Associations are coming in now until the end of 2008. Technical work will be ramping back up by the beginning of December 2008. They will start to look at where some of the priorities are for the alignments based on reviews, letters and surveys.

#### **5. Project Updates:**

There is not much to update on the Burnside/Couch Couplet, the Conway Project in NW or the Portland/Lake Oswego Project, but Chris Smith would like to keep them on everyone's radar. Congress is looking to rewrite/resubmit the Small Start program so that it is more supportive of streetcars as originally intended rather than just busses as it is now. Sorin Garber asked if there are any political leanings we should know about in the Lake Oswego project. Chris Smith responded that Jack Hoffman was elected as mayor of Lake Oswego and that every indication has him championing Streetcar.

#### **6. Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, February 4, 2009, 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](mailto: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.