

Portland Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 8, 2009, 3:30-5:00 p.m., Shiels Obletz Johnsen

Members in Attendance: Chris Smith, chair; Debbie Cronk; Bill Danneman; Sorin Garber; Stan Lewis; Janet McGarrigle; Brian Newman; Carol "Zoe" Presson; Bob Richardson; Vern Rifer; Scott Seibert; Joe Vaughn

Others: Sam Beresky, Metro; David Brandt; Adam Matar, Kaiser; Grant Moorehead, PBOT; Steve Pinger; Dustin Posner; Patrick Sweeney, PBOT

Staff Attendance: Kay Dannen, Julie Gustafson, Rick Gustafson

1. Meeting to Order:

Meeting was called to Order by Chris Smith, chair. The minutes from the February 4, 2009 meeting were adopted.

2. Public Comments:

No public comments.

3. Portland Loop Project Update:

Rick Gustafson presented that the project is still not funded at this time. We are in the President's Budget for \$45 million but can not get the money until we get a Construction Grant Agreement from the FTA. The current roadblock for funding is the "Dear Colleague" letter that stated that cost-effectiveness was the primary criteria that needs to be met for Small Starts funding. Secretary LaHood has indicated that the letter will be rescinded but has not done so to date. There is also \$1.5 billion available in stimulus funds that have not been allocated as of yet.

The project is progressing as if we had the funds. We will receive bids next week to move the water line. If we don't have the Construction Grant Agreement from FTA before we go to the City Council we will get a notice to precede contingent upon receiving the Construction Grant Agreement. On April 15 we will be receiving the price and bid from Oregon Ironworks/United Streetcar which can be an added incentive for the federal government to rescind the "Dear Colleague" letter. We also plan on placing the order for rail in May which has a 6-8 month lead time.

Kay Dannen gave the committee a copy of the newest Loop Newsletter which will be mailed next week. Dannen and Julie Gustafson have been meeting with various Community Associations and Business Associations and will be participating in four "Chats" along the alignment where people can come ask questions and meet with contractors and designers.

May 15, 2009 a truck is scheduled to deliver the prototype car from United Streetcar to the tracks. We are trying to tie the new car into National publicity. This is the first American made modern streetcar built in 57 years. Congressman DeFazio has been a big part of this project from the beginning in 2005 when he helped make the grant available to us and United Streetcar for production of this vehicle. Congressman DeFazio has been speaking with Secretary LaHood about coming to Portland for the launch of the car and connecting this with his Livability Initiative. The second idea for the celebration of the vehicle is having a big event July 4th weekend. At this point we will be staying flexible as to how we celebrate the release of the car based on who is available and when.

Joe Vaughn asked if there was any effort being made to source rails locally rather than the one manufacturer from Austria. Rick Gustafson answered that yes, the topic has been discussed, however at this time, only the Austrian manufacturer produces this rail. Gustafson added that this is the classic example of public/private partnerships and that building a consistent market is crucial to the success of any such project.

4. Loop Fare Policy:

We have heard updates from TriMet as to where they are going with Fareless Square. In 2011 we will have the issue of the west side of our alignment being almost entirely in Fareless Square and the east side being a pay system which is not equitable. There are two objectives: 1) maintaining one fare structure that incorporates all transit, 2) making the system usable and equitable on both sides of the river, and 3) structuring the Streetcar and TriMet so they are seamless to the riders. Rick Gustafson would like us to look at how we charge fares and how we move forward as the system grows. Currently we adopt TriMet's fare structure. Joe Vaughn stated that the fare should be consistent throughout our system and that maybe we should take the money we get from Fareless Square funds to "buy down" the fare on the entire system. Gustafson added that he thinks we should promote carbon free circulation and those modes of transportation that are carbon free (renewable energy electric rail, electric vehicles, walking and bicycling). One possibility is a \$1 fare everywhere within the central city.

Vern Rifer emphasized the environmental improvement related to Fareless Square which was one of the original goals in the 70s. Scott Seibert said that it makes more sense to extend the Fareless Square through the Lloyd District to allow for riders to choose how they get to the same destination for the same price. Bob Richardson stated that currently 43% of our stops are located outside of Fareless Square. He also asked if we could present to TriMet the idea of a "short-hopper" fare which would cover the entire Streetcar system as well as busses within Fareless Square (if they are removed from the future Fareless Square). Dustin Posner asked if fare parity really impacts ridership on the system. Gustafson responded that convenience is as important if not more important than the actual fare.

The future of fares could include new technology such as a smart card that could be entered like a credit card each time you ride the train and could even lead to a distance based fare to increase fare equity. Scott Seibert stated that he sees the potential benefit of technology such as the smart card but that he thinks that it should potentially be a separate conversation than the fare policy. Gustafson added that Fareless Square is an icon in our city and that to make any change in Fareless Square work we should try to make it better and more effective. Steve Pinger asked where the relation between security, safety and Fareless Square has been settled on with TriMet. Joe Vaughn responded that it seems to be an argument that runs in place and doesn't make any progress.

5. System Plan Update:

Patrick Sweeney from the Portland Bureau of Transportation presented an update of the system plan. In May there will be 6 joint open houses for the Bike Master Plan and Streetcar System Plan. Sweeney requested input from the committee as to what information should be presented to the public about streetcar or streetcar planning at these open houses. Bob Richardson suggested that bike safety should be covered including bike turning over rails. Chris Smith suggested that Streetcar Operation advantages over buses or trolley buses should be discussed. Scott Seibert added that he often hears from people who don't live downtown asking "how can I get a streetcar in my

neighborhood”. How can you make it happen for a neighborhood and how will it affect a neighborhood. Sweeney said that the System Plan Advisory Committee suggested putting a design overview in place to allow neighborhoods to have a say in how streetcar would look in their neighborhood. Joe Vaughn suggested including an outline of the System Plan Process to date. Sorin Garber suggested having a check box of all the things we hope to accomplish with a streetcar alignment and also a check box of the criteria and hopes for existing streetcar. Vern Rifer added that upzoning may need to be discussed especially in connection to financing. Smith clarified that the system plan has been formed using the current zoning potential and not requiring upzoning. Bob Richardson commented that the System Advisory Committee stated that their goal was to provide no loss of service, for example if currently a corridor has bus service every 10 minutes and streetcar is added that the two could overlap at 20 minutes each maintaining the 10 minute service. Bill Danneman stated that we need to be clear and upfront about the relationship between development and streetcar. Seibert added that people want to know how it’s going to impact them personally and how they can get involved in the process. Stan Lewis added that there should be a consideration into the sociological advantages of various transportation options.

After the open houses the current map will be reconfigured into potential streetcar corridors prioritized by what can be feasibly done in the next 20 years and what can be done after that. The corridors will not be labeled first, second, third, etc. The System Plan Advisory Committee will be looking at modal integration, how to keep people involved in streetcar as it expands into the city, the role of the CAC in the future, and how to maintain a mixed level of socioeconomic levels near the streetcar routes. Sorin Garber asked why the CAC was not asked to be the Advisory Committee for the system plan. Sweeney responded that the issue was raised when the project first started but that this group oversees the current alignment and does not have representation city wide and the Sytem Plan Advisory Committee needed representation all over the city.

6. High Capacity Transit Update:

Sam Berseky, from Jean Lawson and Associates, presented Metro’s High Capacity Transit System which is part of the Regional Transportation Plan. Metro is currently in Phase 2 of the project. 55 corridors were identified in the first phase. 15 corridors are currently being analyzed based on four categories of criteria: community, environment, economy and deliverability. There is a build-a-system tool online at www.metro-goingplaces.org/bast/ where users can click on individual segments and find information such as cost of construction, travel time, etc. Users can choose which routes would benefit them the most and submit the system to Metro. Metro will take the submitted systems into consideration through the process. Brian Newman asked if the potential downtown tunnel is still being considered. Berseky responded that it is still being looked at as part of the study.

7. Project Updates:

- Burnside/Couch Couplet (Eastside) – no update
- Burnside/Couch Couplet (Westside) – no update
- Portland/Lake Oswego Project
Funding has been allocated for the EIS. The EIS is expected to be completed by the end of 2009.

8. Other Business

Scott Seibert suggested two topics for future meetings:

- The issue of disruptive riders (smellier)...– Gustafson responded that there is a City Ordinance in the works allowing us to exclude problem riders.
- Adding a sign within the car with a place to call/email with comments

The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, June 3, 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 if you have any questions regarding this committee or have items for the agenda. The CAC meetings are open to the public.