Portland Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, January 6, 2010, 3:30-5:00 p.m., Shiels Obletz Johnsen

Members in Attendance: Owen Ronchelli, chair; Debbie Cronk; Bill Danneman; Sorin Garber; Janet Mc Garrigle; Susan Pearce; Zoe Carol Presson; Bob Richardson; Vern Rifer; Dan Zal kow
Others: David Brandt, Michael Cannarella, Mike Dennis, David Hampsten, Jason Jones, Dustin Pos ner, Andrew Quentin, Damian Skerbeck, Mark White

Staff Attendance: Kay Dannen, Julie Gustafson, Rick Gustafson, Brodie Harvey

1. Meeting to Order:
Meeting was called to Order by Owen Ronchelli, chair. The minutes from the October 7, 2009 meeting were adopted.

2. Public Comments:
Andrew Quentin, resident at 533 NE Holladay, The Cascadian, spoke in representation of the condo building. The residents are concerned about the noise all day long and into the evening from the vacant lot next door to their building. The lot is leased by the sewer subcontractor Nutter. Jason Jones seconded Quentin’s concern. They request that the project look into alternative locations for staging the equipment as it is noisy and disruptive to the local residents.

3. Project Updates

Portland Loop Project Update:
Kay Dannen updated the committee on the Loop construction. A map of construction the week of January 4, 2010 was distributed to the committee. A new map as well as a three week schedule is posted weekly on www.portlandstreetcar.org. Track work will begin January 18, 2010 on NE Grand from Lloyd to Oregon and on January 25, 2010 on NE MLK from Davis to Burnside. Dannen and Julie Gustafson are continuously attending neighborhood and business association meetings as well as meeting with people along the alignment as needed. The construction work in the Pearl District will begin February 1, 2010. Track construction will occur September 6 – October 25, 2010. This work period will include a two week shut down of the current alignment with a temporary bus shuttle. The project is applying for a Noise Variance Permit for specific areas such as the MAX crossings and the Pearl District. The hearing is scheduled for January 13, 2010. Quentin asked for more specifics on the lot next to his building. Dannen said she would look into it. Dan Zalkow added that PSU starts classes Sept 27, 2010.

Portland/Lake Oswego Project Update:
The EIS is currently being conducted. The study is reviewing the entire alignment from South Waterfront to Lake Oswego. Within this alignment there are three alternatives being studied to get the streetcar through the John’s Landing area. At this time the money looks to be within the range of something that can be done. Thanks to the existing ROW the amount of cash needed is minimized. It is likely that Lake Oswego would form an Urban Renewal District and that John’s Landing would form an LID. It is not possible for the alignment to remain on Macadam at the Sellwood Bridge due to traffic and street needs. There is also discussion about the future potential of extending the streetcar across the Sellwood Bridge into the neighborhoods there. This is not part of the current study, but would be a positive step for the future. Sue Pearce asked why the alignment would be placed on Macadam. Vern Rifer responded that the existing rail ROW at times is within 8ft of private homes and that by placing a portion of the alignment on Macadam, this would keep the streetcar from disturbing the home owners as well as allowing for redevelopment
along Macadam. The question was asked if the current zoning in John’s Landing allows for higher density. Rifer responded that the current zoning does not allow for it but that the City is willing to look at possible changes. David Hampsten asked when construction could start in an optimistic setting. Rifer responded that we could be in design within a year and construction could start in 2011-2012. A concerted effort has been made to bring all of the pertinent parties to the table from the beginning. Rifer added that he appreciates everyone’s willingness to come to the table and discuss the project which has made it a stronger project.

4. Other Business
Bob Richardson asked if the CAC could over the next year leading up to the opening of the Loop discuss how we will designate each line in the future. Currently the MAX lines are each represented by a color, buses are represented by numbers and our maps have the original alignment as amber and the loop as aqua. Owen Ronchelli agreed that this would be a good topic for further discussion.

Ronchelli reported that he has met with the Mayor to discuss the future of the CAC as we add new neighborhoods. There may be some shaking up of representation on the CAC to widen the representation and to include people who were part of the Streetcar System Plan.

Dustin Posner asked for an update on the United Streetcar Prototype and if there is an expected date for this car to hit the streets. Kay Dannen responded that the prototype car currently has a propulsion system that is not working. Originally a Skoda propulsion system was placed in the car but they have not been responsive to advising on or making the needed repairs. United Streetcar will be replacing the Skoda system with one of two systems. The first option is a new system from Rockwell Automation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This would be their first foray into streetcar propulsion systems. A Rockwell system would make the car 90% Made IN USA. The second option is an Elin propulsion system. Elin is based in Austria and provided the propulsion systems for our original 10 cars. The decision on propulsion systems is also being made on the six cars that were ordered for the Loop. In August a delegation went to the FTA to request additional funds to support the design and installation of a Rockwell propulsion system in the prototype.

Richardson asked what kind of risk the City or PSI has if the prototype is not completed. Rick Gustafson replied that the only risk is if Oregon Iron Works/United Streetcar goes out of business. Unlike the prototype, the other 10 cars were tested before they arrived here in Portland. When United Streetcar delivered the prototype they did not have their own test tracks so all of the testing has occurred on our system. Oregon Iron Works/United Streetcar is contractually obligated to provide a car that runs. Sue Pearce asked who is paying the additional expenditures. Gustafson responded that it is two-fold. We go through an extensive certification process that is contracted with LTK through the City and PSI. LTK does not work for manufacturers. Those costs are the responsibility of PSI and the City. The replacement of the propulsion system is the responsibility of United Streetcar. Rifer asked what the relationship between Oregon Iron Works and Skoda is beyond the propulsion system. Gustafson responded that the agreement is a licensing agreement not a control agreement. We’re trying to get money to use the prototype as a test for the Rockwell propulsion system. We are also currently deciding which propulsion system to use in the six cars ordered for the Loop. The City of Tucson is going through a similar decision making process as well as they have placed an order for seven cars. There is a huge amount of interaction between Portland, Tucson and Oregon Iron Works in an attempt to make the decision by the end of January 2010. Posner asked if both cities have to use the same system. Gustafson responded that there are
several variables in the decision-making process. He added that we have the largest collection of expertise in the United States here in Portland to understand the propulsion business.

Rifer asked if there are any other cities in short-term queue that are participating in the discussion about propulsion systems. Gustafson responded that there are currently no other cities currently in the queue; but, that others may start joining the discussion thanks to the Urban Circulator Grant announced by the FTA. To date there are approximately 12 cities that are applying for the grant. David Hampsten asked if Oregon, not having a member of Congress in appropriations, will affect our ability to get these grants. Gustafson responded that Congress will not have much influence over these grants. Also, Oregon’s influence in transit has grown tremendously. Congressman DeFazio is the chair of the subcommittee on transit. Congressman Blumenauer is well placed both within Congress as well as with the Administration. Posner asked if the Urban Circulator Grant took Portland by surprise like many other cities. Gustafson responded that we have formulated three potential applications. The first is rebuilding the tracks on Moody. This would be to place new tracks in Moody since our current tracks are being taken out for the Milwaukie Light Rail. This project is also in the pool for Tiger Grants. The second option is the Close the Loop project which will purchase additional vehicles as well as to connect the Loop to the new bridge on both sides. The second project is a bit premature as the project won’t open until 2015. The third possibility is Lake Oswego, but the grant is limited to $25 million.

Richardson voiced his concerns about putting our money in to build a new propulsion system with Rockwell that turns out to be a “lemon”. There is some concern that contracting with Elin would be a conflict between Siemens and United Streetcar since Elin is a boutique propulsion system company that is owned by Siemens. However, Siemens has its own propulsion system and does not use the Elin system. Elin sells entirely to other companies. Richardson asked if we are potentially paying to be a test site for the Rockwell system. Gustafson responded that actually the additional costs are to have the Elin system so we would be paying not to be the test site. Richardson voiced his support for Oregon Iron Works and stated that his concerns are not just for PSI but also that if this is not successful it could substantially hurt the ability of Oregon Iron Works to make it in the Streetcar business.

Dustin Posner asked about the operations of the Loop after it crosses the Broadway Bridge into the Pearl District. Gustafson responded that this is a discussion that needs to be had. Currently the budget allows for 5 additional cars to be run once the Loop opens which allows for a total of 12 cars being run daily. The discussion would cover several options that balance headways with quality of service to the rider. The local attitude at the City, TriMet and PSI is transforming as we get closer to opening a second line. The role of streetcar in regional transit is being discussed and thought about at all levels.

The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, March 3, 2010, 3:30pm-5:00pm at Shieles 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.