

Portland Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 1, 2010, 3:30-5:00 p.m., Shiels Oblatz Johnsen

Members in Attendance: Owen Ronchelli, chair; Debbie Cronk; Bill Danneman; Stan Lewis; Janet McGarrigle; Susan Pearce; Zoe Carol Presson; Bob Richardson; Vern Rifer; Scott Seibert; Dan Zalkow
Others: Congressman Earl Blumenauer; Ree Armitage, Congressman Blumenauer's Office; David Brandt; Michael Canorella; Bill Crawford; Art Pearce, PBOT; Dustin Posner

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

1. Meeting to Order:

Meeting was called to Order by Owen Ronchelli, chair. Bob Richardson moved to approve the minutes. Susan Pearce seconded. The minutes from the June 2, 2010 meeting were adopted.

2. Public Comments:

Stan Lewis stated that he feels the time has come for the Committee to have a discussion at one of the meetings to discuss how streetcar can go beyond our present literature as far as the maps we distribute and brochures. We still don't have a map that helps people get where they want to go. Lewis recommended a square map to pay respect to the east side as well as the west side. Often visitors need to use the streetcar and then transfer to another form of transit and our map does not address that. Owen Ronchelli added that with the new web redesign we have the opportunity to provide electronic maps that users may print out. He agreed that a small sub-committee would be a good idea. Susan Pearce seconded Lewis' concerns and volunteered to be a part of the sub-committee. Bob Richardson suggested using the vacant space above or around the fare machines to install a touch-screen map/trip planner for popular destinations, aimed primarily at tourists.

3. Comments by Congressman Blumenauer

Congressman Blumenauer thanked the committee for their continued effort put into supporting streetcar. Portland plays an important role in the streetcar movement nationwide. He is pleased that the new administration in DC has been able to implement the Small Starts program for the first time and within a short period of time we saw construction underway. He continues to be impressed by the systematic way that people are moving through the development of the program and being attuned to the needs of the citizens. The citizen infrastructure in our streetcar system is a key in why our system is successful. The Congressman hears from members of Congress who hear from their constituents about Portland and the infrastructure we have here. Building the national movement will help make it easier to continue doing what we are doing here in Portland. It will increase business for United Streetcar and will increase access to funding for future expansions. We are excited about developments in new technology in the industry such as developments in wireless vehicle technology that may open up new avenues for Portland. He would like to brainstorm with the committee the possibility of developing streetcar districts that may be able to help accelerate developing streetcar lines in neighborhoods that want them. Blumenauer is excited that Rail-Volution is coming home to Portland in October. Rail-Volution was started in order to take the first Light Rail line from being a line to a system in a cooperative manner and has become a national conference and a national movement. He is hoping that this will be the largest conference to date. Rail-Volution is a great time for us to show off what we've done and also to reinvigorate the local movement. He reinforced that the time that the members of the committee continue to put in are crucial to what Portland has become and what Portland will be in the future.

Bob Richardson asked about the Milwaukie Light Rail project. Since the FTA came back with a 50% match instead of a 60% match is there a way to “dig in the cushions” and find more funding for the project. Blumenauer responded that no one else in the country with projects of this magnitude are getting more than 50% and that Portland has had more money spent on these projects per capita and that they believe in us, there is just no more money at the moment. We don’t want to make the FTA the bad guys in this process as they are giving us as much as they can right now. Susan Pearce added that the project is looking into other sources of funding for projects along the line that might have otherwise been included in the project costs. She also added that there is a meeting tonight that presents a report on what could happen around the Milwaukie Light Rail line. Blumenauer added that Portland was also awarded a TIGER grant to help with reconstruction of the streetcar in the South Waterfront.

Vern Rifer added that proposed extension from South Waterfront to Lake Oswego is the first attempt in Portland to utilize the streetcar as a form of commuter transit. Blumenauer thinks that the extension to Lake Oswego has the potential to transform transit. Rifer thanked Blumenauer for being in the “front seat of our bicycle” and that his leadership has helped us a lot.

4. Project Updates

Loop Project Update:

The Broadway Bridge will open this Saturday September 4, 2010. Two lanes of traffic will open as well the south sidewalk. The north sidewalk will open September 17, 2010. Track construction will begin in the Pearl District Tuesday, September 7, 2010 and will last until November 4, 2010. The track work will close NW 10th and 11th from Johnson to Northrup, NW Lovejoy from 9th to 12th and NW Northrup from 10th to 11th. There will also be a streetcar system shutdown from September 13-26, 2010 to allow for three intersections of current track to be replaced with new switches and crossings for the Loop. The streetcar will be replaced for those two weeks with a bus service that will mirror the regular alignment as much as possible. The bus service map will be available at www.portlandstreetcar.org.

Portland/Lake Oswego Project Update:

No Update. Meetings are ongoing.

5. Update by PBOT on Moody track relocation in South Waterfront

Art Pearce of PBOT presented about the Moody track relocation in the South Waterfront. The current alignment from Riverplace to OHSU is a temporary alignment. Over time the City hopes to have a Moody/Bond couplet as part of the future plans for the north part of South Waterfront. It was also decided that the streetcar should go in both directions on Moody Ave to provide the best rider experience. This made the reconstruction of Moody Avenue a priority for the city. Last year the city applied for and was awarded a TIGER grant which requires that the project is substantially complete by February 2012. Information on the project can be found online at www.swmoodyproject.com. During construction vehicle traffic will be southbound only on SW Moody, north bound traffic will be rerouted. The finalized streetscape will include two southbound lanes on Moody, one with the streetcar running in it and one northbound lane that will eventually be an exclusive streetcar only lane for northbound streetcar. Northbound vehicle traffic will eventually have two lanes on Bond. Debbie Cronk asked how long the construction will take as the South Waterfront is concerned by the detour for northbound traffic. Art Pearce responded that the design process is still underway and that the schedule has not been set as of yet. Vern Rifer asked if

bicycle and pedestrian access will be maintained. Art Pearce responded that yes, there will be bike/ped access. Zoe Presson asked if there will be wheelchair access on the temporary pathways. Rick Gustafson responded that the pedestrian access will be ADA compliant. Rifer asked if the bids will be opened for the pedestrian bridge next month. Pearce responded that yes, plans are in place to open bidding on that bridge.

As part of the construction Moody will be raised 16 feet. It will be a hill at first but after the adjacent lots are developed it will be less noticeable. Susan Pearce asked about the grade of the road. Art Pearce responded that the grade is gradual, approximately 2%. Janet McGarrigle asked what is being done to help prevent the road from sinking, which is currently an issue in the rest of South Waterfront. Art Pearce responded that work is being done in the planning process to prevent the sinking. Kay Dannen asked when the temporary track will be completed. Gustafson stated that they are hoping to start construction in January 2011. Bob Richardson asked if it would be less expensive to run a bus replacement shuttle rather than construct temporary track. Gustafson and Art Pearce responded that evaluations are being completed to make the decision between a bus bridge and temporary track taking into consideration the experience for the rider as well as cost. This project is critical in the timeline of the Milwaukie Light Rail project as they can't start their work in the area until the road and the streetcar tracks are constructed. Work has been done to make both ends of the new transit bridge as safe and efficient as possible. Some of the design options that have been accommodated include the ability for a future streetcar alignment to cross the bridge and turn south on Moody. There is space and the ability to install this added alignment at a later date. The new streetcar stop that will be added at SW Mead will allow for transfers from the Loop streetcar to the NW 23rd/South Waterfront streetcar. The project will be at 60% design by the end of 2010.

6. Discuss public process for future operations

Rick Gustafson presented a few items for discussion at future meetings about the future of streetcar operations. The first topic is how to designate the individual lines as they are built. Currently TriMet has given us the colors of Amber and Aqua for our two lines which are difficult to designate in lights. Stan Lewis stated that letters or pictographs are preferable to colors. A second discussion needs to be held about the operations of the Loop once it opens. Currently there is funding to operate the Loop from OMSI to the Pearl District. There is concern about the forced transfer in the Pearl for riders coming from the east side heading to the brewery blocks. With the current operations budget for the loop there are a couple of options for how to operate the two alignments with the best service possible for all riders that need to be discussed. The third issue that needs to be discussed is the difference between the free rail zone on the west side and the fare zone on the east side and the lack of equality of this. We need to start looking at the options as the opening of the Loop approaches. An operational plan needs to be in place by the spring of 2011.

7. Other Business

Bob Richardson brought up that the committee had discussed having a liaison with the PSI Board and wanted to know if anything had been done about that. Owen Ronchelli responded that he received an invitation to be a member of the Board and that his first meeting will be next month.

Zoe Presson brought up that vehicle 8 appears to be at the incorrect height making it difficult when using the ADA ramp and asked if that could be checked into and remedied.

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