

Portland Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, November 3, 2010, 3:30-5:00 p.m., Shiels Obletz Johnsen

Members in Attendance: Owen Ronchelli, chair; Bill Danneman; Michael Dennis; Sorin Garber; Peter Kilbourne; Janet McGarrigle; Susan Pearce; Zoe Carol Presson; Bob Richardson; Dan Zalkow

Others: David Brandt, Michael Canerella, Louis Hall, Lee Perlman, Dustin Posner, Michael VanderKam

Staff Attendance: Julie Gustafson, Rick Gustafson, Brodie Harvey

1. Meeting to Order:

Meeting was called to Order by Owen Ronchelli, chair. Susan Pearce moved to approve the minutes. Bill Danneman seconded. The minutes from the September 1, 2010 meeting were adopted.

2. Public Comments:

Michael VanderKam commented that the bright blue “engage ramp” sign has been removed at the door opposite the ramp door. This is a difference between the older and newer streetcars. Anyone not in the cut out side has to call out and hope the person at the cutout will hear them and push the button. This makes it exceedingly difficult and decreases accessibility. The ramp request is side dependant (i.e. if you push the button on the left side, the right side ramps do not deploy). Zoe Presson responded that when the streetcar was out of service in September she attended a “ride together” class with several of the streetcar operators and they told her that no matter which button you push to call for the ramp that will activate the ramp on the curb side. Dan Zalkow said he would like clarification from Portland Streetcar as to what the differences are between the cars and to what changes can be made going forward. **Note:** Julie Gustafson followed up with Gary Cooper the Manager of Maintenance for Portland Streetcar. The ramp buttons are in the same location in all 10 cars. The only changes that have been made are that the ramp buttons in the older cars (cars 1 – 7) were originally side specific and that it would be up to the operator seeing the request light to engage the ramp. Upon arrival of cars 8-10, that problem was remedied. The software from those vehicles was used to update the original cars. Now all 4 ramp buttons will activate the ramp on the open door side. The signage is exactly the same as it has always been and is maintained in good condition.

Louis Hall commented on 5 negative situations that he feels should be addressed. The first is noisy, obnoxious passengers on the cars. Some of these are intoxicated; some are swearing; and some with animals. Rick Gustafson responded that in May 2010 Portland Streetcar saw a sharp increase in these types of issues. Operators are undergoing training in how to deal with these issues. We average only two calls to the Central Police precinct a month. The majority of the calls are to CHEERS. We do not have formal ordinance authority to exclude individuals from the car, to do so requires City Council approval. The second issue is that there are too many bicycles and large strollers crowding passengers. We have begun looking at the possibility of adding the bike carriers on the front of the vehicles to aid in this issue. The third issue is irresponsible mothers with screaming babies. The fourth is teachers with noisy middle school students. The fifth is operators overloading the streetcar (“Walking Tours” and rush hour folks in particular), which cram people against the window. Rick Gustafson responded that the operator could announce that the train is loaded and to wait 12 minutes for the next train, but the following train will most likely be just as crowded. He added that the best thing we can do is continue to try and accommodate everyone. Owen Ronchelli added that there is a limited amount of space and that we try to accommodate all riders. Michael Dennis supports the idea of getting the streetcar to a 10-minute service but

understands the financial obstacles to such a service. Louis Hall asked if we are looking at acquiring larger vehicles. Rick Gustafson responded that the vehicles were chosen to fit into the urban environment and that the best way to respond to the capacity issues is adding more trains but that to increase service that involves an increase in operations funding.

3. Project Updates

Loop Project Update:

Julie Gustafson reported that the Pearl District opened Monday, November 1 to the new couplet formation: Lovejoy is now eastbound only from 13th to 10th and Northrup is now westbound only from 10th to 16th. The remaining barricades will be removed Thursday, November 4 thus opening all lanes to traffic. Westbound traffic will be restored on the Lovejoy ramp by November 19, 2010. Track construction restarts Monday, November 8, 2010 on SE MLK from Washington to Belmont. Sewer mainline work has been completed with only lateral connections remaining. Water utility work will be starting on SE Stephens this month, followed by work on Grand at the I-84 crossing.

Dustin Posner asked about the Maintenance Facility expansion and if there will be a streetcar shutdown associated with the expansion. Rick Gustafson responded that there will be a shutdown for four days January 13 – 16, 2011 with a bus replacement service. Maps for this service will be posted on the website closer to the shutdown dates.

Portland/Lake Oswego Project Update:

The Environmental Impact Statement has been completed and submitted to the FTA and we are awaiting FTA authorization for publication. There will be a 45-day comment period once the EIS is published. Then a locally preferred alternative will be chosen and the project will begin the engineering process. Susan Pearce asked what is happening in Dunthorp. Rick Gustafson responded that the debate is intensifying and that some of the information that has been distributed by the opposition includes inaccurate information. Janet McGarrigle stated that she read a letter to the editor from a resident of the Dunthorp area whose home is right on the current tracks who is in support of the streetcar and does not understand why her neighbors are so upset. Susan Pearce asked if the final route has been designated entering into Lake Oswego. Rick Gustafson responded that there are two alignment options on the north side of Lake Oswego. One option is the Foothills alignment which is a development opportunity area that connects Lake Oswego to the riverfront. Michael Dennis asked if the possibility of an extension from the South Waterfront to the Sellwood Bridge is included in this study. Rick Gustafson responded that yes, the way an extension is handled is through the Environmental Impact Statement.

4. Discussion: Loop Operations Plan

Rick Gustafson presented on potential Operations plans once the Loop opens. The PowerPoint can be found on the Portland Streetcar Website at www.portlandstreetcar.org/node/15. This is an issue on which Rick Gustafson would like to have the CAC dedicate time to discuss and formulate a recommendation.

Susan Pearce asked what came of the concept that the committee devised of a central city fare of \$1 when there was talk of ending Fareless Square. Rick Gustafson responded that the idea was suggested during the Fareless Square study but that nothing ever came of it. Susan Pearce asked if the topic of a central city fare should be part of the CAC's conversation moving forward. Rick Gustafson responded that continuing to brainstorm and developing possible solutions to the fare

inequity is a big piece of what he would like to see the committee tackle. Dustin Posner would like to advocate a day ticket rather than single ride tickets. Rick Gustafson responded that currently a paid fare is good all day on streetcar.

Susan Pearce asked about the Close the Loop project. Rick Gustafson responded that the project has been put together and is awaiting reauthorization of the transportation bill which, as currently written, would increase the maximum federal funding for a Small Starts project from \$75 million to \$100 million. We were hoping to apply for that increase in funding for the Close the Loop. With the latest election the reauthorization looks less sure which may cause the City to look at other funding sources and federal applications.

Dustin Posner suggested adding a downtown circulator from PSU to the Pearl using Vintage Trolley vehicles to supplement service in the high ridership corridors of 10th and 11th. Rick Gustafson said that the idea of a circulator is a good one and that he is looking for that type of creative solutions to the operations issues raised in the PowerPoint.

Sorin Garber asked if it would be helpful for a small group to meet before the next meeting to start brainstorming ideas. Rick Gustafson suggested the possibility of having the Loop Project Advisory Committee meet to discuss these issues. Susan Pearce agreed that giving the Loop PAC an opportunity to voice their opinions and offer some ideas is a great idea.

5. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, January 5, 2011, 3:30pm-5:00pm location TBD.

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.