

Portland Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 2, 2011, 3:30-5:00 p.m., City Hall, Pettygrove Room

Members in Attendance: Owen Ronchelli, chair; David Brandt; Carolyn Brock; Paul Carlson, Bill Danneman; Michael Dennis; Peter Finley-Fry; Gerik Kransky; Susan Pearce; Cora Potter; Zoe Presson; Bob Richardson; Richard Ross; Sara Vonde Veld (for Brian Newman); Dan Zalkow

Others: Michael Cannarella; Bill Crawford, HAND alternate; Toya Fick, OHSU Government Relations; Pete Collins, South Waterfront TMA; Tim Orr; Lee Perlman; Barbara Spencer; Ian Trout

Staff Attendance: Julie Gustafson, Rick Gustafson, Shoshannah Oppenheim

1. Meeting to Order:

Meeting was called to Order by Owen Ronchelli, chair. Bob Richardson made one correction to the minutes from February 2, 2011. The minutes were approved as amended.

2. Public Comments:

Pete Collins testified that the South Waterfront TMA is concerned about the possible increase in headway times as streetcar closes the loop and goes south to Lake Oswego. The South Waterfront TMA requests that streetcar headways stay the same as today, 12 minutes, to best serve the growing population in the South Waterfront. Toya Fick from OHSU seconded Pete Collins' request. Owen Ronchelli thanked them for their comments, as they will help inform the committee's decision.

Tim Orr, a student at PSU, stated that he feels that streetcar is painstakingly slow and not often worth his time to ride. He would like to see streetcar have signal priority and be treated less like a car and more like light rail.

3. Proposed Transit System Development Charge (TSDC) Overlay

Shoshannah Oppenheim presented to the CAC on the proposed Transit System Development Charge (TSDC) Overlay for the Central Eastside and University District. Funds raised by the proposed TSDC would potentially go towards five projects: the Milwaukie Light Rail Project; the Streetcar Close the Loop Project; relocation of SE Water Avenue; SW 4th Avenue streetscape improvements; installation of a true Cycle track on SW Broadway incorporating streetscape improvements and an elevated Cycle Track; and the Clinton to the River multi-use path. A map of the proposed TSDC Overlay area and a table of project costs were distributed to the CAC. Susan Pearce asked Shoshannah Oppenheim to explain the costs table. TSDC money can only be used for projects that increase the capacity of a corridor. Eligible costs for a project would be those costs that can be contributed to improving capacity. The list of projects and the percentage of funding for projects has been reduced since prior versions of the list. Bob Richardson asked if this TSDC Overlay will operate like an LID by increasing in percentage/cost the closer a property is to the funded projects. Shoshannah Oppenheim answered that the charge is levied only against new development/redevelopment and is based on the type of development rather than the distance from the projects. Richard Ross asked if the CAC has reviewed the Close the Loop Project and if he could get more information on that. He then asked Shoshannah Oppenheim if a land owner in the proposed Overlay area were to add a "granny flat" would they incur the TSDC Overlay charge as well as the city wide TSDC. Shoshannah Oppenheim responded that the property owner would incur both TSDC charges. Owen Ronchelli responded that the committee has discussed the Close the Loop Project and will continue to discuss the project as it proceeds. Shoshannah Oppenheim requested a letter of support from the CAC for the proposed TSDC Overlay.

Dan Zalkow moved that the CAC write a letter of support for the TSDC Overlay. Susan Pearce seconded. Sara Vonde Veld requested more information before a vote occurs. Bill Danneman added that there are some members of the steering committee for the TSDC Overlay such as the Portland Business Alliance that are opposing the overlay and that the CAC can make a decision today from their point of view but that he advises the CAC to have more information before making a decision. Bill Danneman added that the overlay boundaries are still in flux at this time and that the term “developer” can be misunderstood to be just the large developers, however it impacts any property owner who would like to improve their property. David Brandt stated that he generally supported the TSDC overlay but requested a letter be drafted and circulated for an email approval so that the committee can be knowledgeable about its contents. Richard Ross stated he needs to abstain from a vote as he feels he doesn’t know enough about the proposed TSDC Overlay at this time. Susan Pearce stated that she would like more information as well. Bob Richardson commented that he feels this is an example of the pendulum swinging too far in the other direction and that not only are we taking away some of the former incentives for development but are now also putting up barriers to potential development. Owen Ronchelli agreed that more information could be solicited from Shoshanah Oppenheim and PBOT to be shared with the committee and will try to get emails out with further information as well as a draft letter. Michael Dennis added that he would like to see more information on the expense side to make sure we are more educated before a vote. Gerik Kransky requested further information on the funding plans for the projects included in the proposed overlay. Paul Carlson added that some of the projects are close to fully funded and this would be a top off and for some projects this money would be a big leverage towards other funding. Sara Vonde Veld requested more specifics on overlay fee amounts, as it will greatly impact OHSU. Owen Ronchelli tabled the motion until the next meeting.

4. Color Concepts for New Vehicles

Owen Ronchelli shared the two new vehicle colors of purple and magenta with the committee and showed them the proposed color combinations.

5. Service Allocation

Rick Gustafson presented on the major issues that are facing streetcar and the committee over the next few months. The 4 issues are 1) Operations Funding, 2) Service Allocation, 3) Start Date of Operations for the Loop, and 4) Fares.

The funding agreement for Loop Operations is not yet firm and needs to be soon.

Service allocation is under review and discussion and a decision needs to be made. Operations funding is pinched in the region. Streetcar has been able to maintain the service levels on the existing line due in large part to the generosity of the city of Portland to come up with increased funding as the contribution from TriMet has decreased annually. The proposed service allocation options are being refined with each discussion.

The start date is currently proposed for September 21, 2012, which would be the Friday before PSU classes begin. This is not yet set as the Project Construction Grant Agreement (PCGA) with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) calls for service to begin in April 2012. Streetcar will not yet have the new vehicles at that point making it difficult to start service. Streetcar is in a process with

the FTA to get them to agree to the change in the date. Peter Finley Fry asked if the cars and operators would be on the system before that date. Rick replied that Streetcar will have additional operators beginning as early as June 2012 to begin certifying all operators on the new line as well as new operators on both lines. We will also begin “burning in” the new vehicles. Service will begin running September 14, 2012 to simulate the actual service so that bugs can be worked out. Rick Gustafson guaranteed that cars will not be run in revenue service if they are not certified. Zoe Presson asked where the cars are being manufactured. Rick Gustafson responded that they are being made in Clackamas, Oregon by United Streetcar. The vehicles are scheduled later than the original contract delivery date because of the redesign work involved in developing a US made propulsion system. Rockwell’s drivers passed their heat test last week, which was on schedule. This test is a key milestone in the manufacturing of the propulsion system.

The peak on Streetcar service runs most of the day; a full set of 7 trains operates for 12 hours at 12-minute headways. The headway increases to 14 minutes from 3:30pm-6:30pm due to traffic congestion. When the Loop opens there is funding allocated for a 12-train operation. The first option is to run 5 trains on the new line at 12-minute headways as well as maintaining the current service on the current alignment. This option produces a forced transfer in the Pearl District where a rider would get off the Loop at 11th & Marshall and then have to walk to 11th & Johnson to catch the next train. A second option is to run six trains on each line which would have the Loop run from OMSI to SW 10th & Market and double up service on 10th & 11th which is where Streetcar experiences the majority of its crush loads. This option would provide 15-minute frequencies on the eastside, in NW and in South Waterfront. Susan Pearce asked if the headways would increase during the pm peak. Rick Gustafson responded that the cycle times were increased in this option to maintain the 15-minute headway with some reliability. Sara Vonde Veld added that collaboration between OHSU and PSU will increase with the new development that is about to begin and that ridership in that area is expected to increase.

If further funding can be allocated, Streetcar could run a 13-train operation that would maintain the 12-minute service on the current line and the 15-minute service on the Loop overlapping to provide 7.5-minute service on 10th and 11th.

When Milwaukie Light Rail opens in 2015, Streetcar is planning to run the entire Loop crossing the new transit bridge. With 14 trains, Streetcar could run 15-minute service on both lines and 7.5-minute service from the Pearl District to the OHSU Life Sciences Building. The question is how far do you run the Loop in 2012 and what do you do with it in 2015. The dream plan is to run 17 trains, which would be 12-minute service on both lines with 6-minute service in the overlapped section. This is where Close the Loop comes into play as we can not run a 17-train operations with only 17 trains in our fleet, so there is a need to purchase more vehicles. There is a potential for a further change upon the opening of the Lake Oswego Project. Peter Finley Fry asked how the Loop will operate once fully opened. Rick Gustafson responded that 4 trains would run clockwise and 4 trains would run counterclockwise on the Loop and that headways would be at 15 minutes each. Toya Fick asked when/if the 13-train operation option would be operational. Rick Gustafson responded that this option may never be in place because the priority of TriMet, which Streetcar supports, is to restore regional bus service as more funds become available from the payroll tax and that our funding would not increase until that service is restored. David Brandt asked about the three-legged loop he had brought up at a prior meeting and if that had been investigated. Rick Gustafson stated that it had not been investigated. Bill Danneman stated that the ridership needs to be served and

that the highest ridership is currently on 10th/11th. Michael Cannarella asked if there have been projections made regarding the projected ridership for the Loop. Rick Gustafson responded that yes, modeling has occurred. Westside ridership grew very rapidly (at a rate of around 15% a year) but has leveled off in the past three years. Streetcar currently has approximately 4 million annual riders. Metro's projections for ridership on the existing line average about 50% less than the actual ridership due to the large number of non home-based trips on the system. Their projections for the Loop have 12,000 daily riders by 2035 on the east side. Michael Cannarella stated that the reason for his question is that the projections in ridership should be taken into consideration as Streetcar decides where to allocate service. Rick Gustafson responded that MLK and Grand will respond/develop differently than 10th and 11th, but that the greatest strength of this is the Loop circulation and that it may be transformational to the Central City as a whole. Whatever Streetcar does in 2012 will change in 2015 when the transit bridge opens. Rick Gustafson stated that he is concerned about a bad impression for the Loop if Streetcar opens it in a way that is not conducive to the future operations. Susan Pearce stated that she can live with 15-minute headways and that consistency is important but that what really needs to be discussed is fare equity and that with current fare practices the people who would benefit from an overlapped system are currently in the free rail zone and that the people who would be at 15-minute headways would be paying for the service. Richard Ross asked if we have looked at other rail transit loops in other cities to see how their loops work. Rick Gustafson responded that there was a lot of work done on this in the Central City Plan of 1988. This loop originates from that plan and from a commitment by the city to move from a Downtown focus to a Central City focus as it links all of the Central City Districts with one transit circulator. The Loop will allow for lower expense expansions such as a potential expansion from N Killingsworth along MLK. By adding two miles of track, a four-mile line can be created from North Portland all the way to the South Waterfront.

6. Streetcar Fare Discussion

There is a fundamental service problem with the Zone 1-2 fare that would have all of the eastside, NW and South Waterfront paying for service and potentially experiencing 15-minute headways and having the riders within the free rail zone having shorter headways for free. Peter Finley Fry asked how many riders board with a pass. Rick Gustafson responded that 50% of the riders in the fare zones have a pass. The percentage of ridership in the free zone without a pass may be substantially higher. Cora Potter asked that the riders with fixed income be taken into consideration as several of them use the Streetcar as a circulator and never leave the free zone. Owen Ronchelli responded that he has asked the fare study team to report back to the committee before they get too far on issues such as this. David Brandt requested a PDF of the Service Allocation and Fare Study presentation be sent out the CAC accompanied by a list of questions and issues for contemplation before the next meeting. Rick Gustafson agreed that this is a good idea and agreed to have a PDF sent out. Bill Danneman suggested starting the CAC meetings earlier to try and cover all of the issues, as they are so vital to the future of Streetcar. Bob Richardson suggested there is a possibility of having an online discussion list. Susan Pearce reminded the CAC that they need to make sure and maintain the open accessibility to the public no matter what process is used for the discussions.

7. Loop Construction Update

Julie Gustafson reported that March 25-27, 2011 the track turn from Weidler onto 7th would be under construction. This work involves closing Weidler from Grand to 8th and closing NE 7th from Broadway to Clackamas. The closures will start Friday evening and roads will reopen Monday morning.

8. Other Business

Richard Ross handed out a map of the 20-minute neighborhoods for the Portland Plan and requested that the Portland Plan and the Streetcar System Concept Plan make presentations to the CAC.

The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, April 6, 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.