

Portland Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 6, 2011, 3:30-5:00 p.m., City Hall, Pettygrove Room

Members in Attendance: Owen Ronchelli, chair; David Brandt; Carolyn Brock; Bill Danneman; Michael Dennis; Sorin Garber; Arlene Kimura; Janet McGarrigle; Susan Pearce; Cora Potter; Bob Richardson; Vern Rifer; Richard Ross; Dan Zalkow

Others: Lee Perlman; Brad Schmidt; Barbara Spencer;

Staff Attendance: Kay Dannen, Julie Gustafson, Rick Gustafson, Patrick Sweeney

1. Meeting to Order:

Owen Ronchelli, chair, called the meeting to Order. The minutes were approved.

2. Public Comments:

No Public Comment.

3. Service Allocation

Rick Gustafson reported that there are five issues that need to be resolved before the Loop can open. 1) Start Date 2) Operations Funding 3) Service Allocation 4) Fare Policy and 5) Operations Plan. The PSI Board adopted a resolution at this morning's meeting recommending the start date of Loop Operations as September 21, 2012. Once the Federal Transit Administration, the City of Portland and TriMet sign off, the date will be official. Owen Ronchelli asked if the FTA could force streetcar into opening in April with a lack of adequate service. Rick Gustafson responded that opening early (April) is not an option. The remaining four issues will be discussed and decisions will be made over the next year.

The decision on the fare policy needs to be made by early fall as that will determine how many fare machines need to be purchased and installed before the Loop opens for Operations. Bob Richardson asked if there will be fare machines at all of the stop locations. Rick Gustafson responded that there is already a plan to install fare machines at all of the 28 Loop stops and that it is likely that fare machines will be installed on the west side stops as well. Vern Rifer asked who will make the decision on fares as streetcar is separate from TriMet. Rick Gustafson responded that there are already parts of our fare system that are autonomous from TriMet (streetcar only pass, streetcar only tickets). Over 50% of our riders currently board with a transit pass of some sort.

Rick Gustafson credited Sorin Garber with the foresight of seeing the challenge of calling out headway times when discussing Loop Operations plans. Representatives from the South Waterfront, OHSU and PSU have stated their concern over a reduction in service to their area. The transit profile from the South Waterfront is different from that of the profile on 10th and 11th as the peaks to and from the South Waterfront mirror a typical commuter peak (AM and PM) while 10th and 11th have a continual peak from around lunchtime to dinnertime. There may be ways to improve our efficiencies in operating the streetcar on the weekends and in the evenings that would allow for a 7-train operation during the week on the current alignment for less than the projected \$800,000 additional costs. Richard Ross asked if signal preemption would help efficiency. Rick Gustafson responded that there are already several locations where streetcar has the ability to hold the green. Bob Richardson commented that there are several locations where there are still 4-way stops that are not located at the streetcar stop locations and asked if replacing those stop signs with a signalized intersection would improve efficiency. Rick Gustafson responded that yes, signalized intersections timed with the grid would improve efficiency over stop signs however, replacing stop

signs with signals costs approximately \$250,000 per intersection. The discussion was had early on about replacing the stop signs with signals, the neighborhood and several businesses raised concerns over pedestrian safety and that having that forced stop increased the safety for pedestrians in the area. Sorin Garber asked about the distance between stops and the fact that the streetcar does not always stop at every location. Rick Gustafson responded that the streetcar is run more like a bus such that the operators are trained to stop when requested and when passengers are waiting at the stop rather than stopping at every stop.

Rick Gustafson stated that he would really like to see the Loop run all the way to 10th and Market but that requires a minimum of 6 trains on the Loop. He asked for the honest opinions of the CAC members as to what their priorities are for the initial operations of the Loop. Vern Rifer asked if there is a way to schedule the trains so that they match up for transfers in the first option with the Loop running to the Pearl and turning around. Rick Gustafson responded that the schedule could be set so the trains match up, but reminded the committee that the transfer is 3 blocks with that option. Owen Ronchelli stated that he does not want to bias people, but as an east-sider he believes that after the east side fought so hard to get the streetcar, the forced 3 block transfer could cause some ill will towards the streetcar. Richard Ross commented that the east vs. west debate seems off target and that the committee should be looking at what would benefit the Central City as a whole. The first option leaves a disconnect between the two lines and the two sides of the river whereas the second option is more connected. Dan Zalkow stated that he is torn between the two options. PSU would like to maintain the 12-minute service, however, as a general transit planner he sees the benefit of the second option for the future of streetcar. He would like to see the study on fares be tied more closely with the service allocation discussion and increase the discussion for how to improve service with added fares. Rick Gustafson thanked Dan Zalkow for his input and asked if he would help to create a rider profile for PSU to help in the discussion. Bob Richardson added that there is another Loop being created with the 2nd option which is the Loop Streetcar connecting on both sides of the river with the red and blue line MAX. Cora Potter stated that the issue for her is more about timing than about frequency. Rick Gustafson responded that the two functions of the streetcar are very different as it is used both as a commuter option (mainly to South Waterfront) and as a circulator. Carolyn Brock stated that knowledge and dependable information improves the transit experience for the rider. Reader boards have helped riders as they can see when the next train is coming and it makes the system more easily accessible to the average rider. Sorin Garber asked if Rick Gustafson asked about rider profile to help determine between the 12 and 15-minute headway options. Rick Gustafson responded that what he means by profile is what the demand is today and what is the nature of that demand. The goal is to better understand how any changes will impact our riders.

The committee reviewed the current operating budget and sources as well as three possible operations budgets for the opening of the Loop including the options of 12-train, 13-train and 14-train operations. The listed \$2.88 million contribution from TriMet is not the amount from their original agreement. When the service cuts started for TriMet, streetcar and the City agreed that streetcar would partake of the same cuts in funding from TriMet. The hope is that when bus service is restored, the contribution from TriMet to streetcar will also increase. Both TriMet and the City agreed to contribute \$1.23 million to the operations of the Loop, these funds have not been formally committed to date. TriMet projects that streetcar will collect \$1 million from the fare boxes on the Loop, this does not include passes and does not take into consideration any changes to the fare system. The connection to the Lloyd District and the 8000 employees with passes in the

district are likely to be the first users of the system. Rick Gustafson stated that there is a high likelihood that there will be a higher percentage of riders with passes on the east side. Bob Richardson asked if with higher service and the Loop opening, streetcar can expect to collect more fares on the current alignment. Rick Gustafson responded that he started with TriMet's projection and did not want to change the numbers after that and that the table is a way to help us start the conversation. Until the fare study is completed we won't have solid numbers.

Owen Ronchelli asked about the hybrid 12/13-train operation. Rick Gustafson responded that through the operations budget cuts due to the pay roll tax reduction to TriMet, streetcar has maintained the same service and that by pressing the efficiency even more we may be able to come close to maintaining the current levels of service and run the Loop to 10th and Market without running a full 13-train operation. Both the NW and South Waterfront have been strong supporters of streetcar and maintaining their service is important, but the east side has also fought hard for streetcar. It is important that the Loop open successfully. Travel times will be challenged on the east side more than anywhere else. This committee will be very important over the next several years. When the streetcar first opened in 2001, the schedule was changed 3 or 4 times in the first year as efficiency was increased and lessons were learned. That may happen again with the Loop.

4. Streetcar Fare Study

Patrick Sweeney reported that the fare study is going well, but slower than anticipated. A working group has been formed. Preliminary fare structures will be sent out to the working group for discussion. Once they have a chance to discuss, Patrick Sweeney would like to bring the ideas back to the CAC for their input. The earliest report could be at the May 4 CAC meeting. Arlene Kimura asked if Rick Gustafson anticipates major changes in funding amounts. Rick Gustafson responded that Bruce Harder and Dick Feeny are working on negotiations between TriMet and the City for operations funding over the next ten years. They are also looking into the role of Portland Streetcar, Inc. as the system expands. TriMet has entered the picture in a way they never thought they would as they are sponsoring the LOPT study and yet it looks like the line will be run by streetcar, which could involve an entire new governance agreement. TriMet is prepared to commit 100% of the operating costs for the LOPT line. There could be some surprising suggestions about the future of how the whole system is organized and managed.

5. Project Updates

a. Lake Oswego Update

Richard Ross asked about the LOPT hearings coming up. He asked if the CAC had taken a position on the Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS). Owen Ronchelli responded that the CAC has not taken a position on the DEIS but has taken a position on the preferred alignment and mode (streetcar). A letter has not been drafted to date. Lake Oswego City Council will be voting at their April 19, 2011 meeting. Portland City Council will vote at the April 20 meeting. Dan Zalkow asked what the vote predictions are at this point. Rick Gustafson responded that Lake Oswego has been 4-3 in favor of streetcar to date and appears that it will stay that way. There may be one vote that could swing to being opposed. Portland City Council is looking intently at all funding options and what happened with Portland Milwaukie Light Rail (the drop from the 60% expected FTA funding to the 50% awarded FTA funding) has spooked people when it comes to financing plans. The opposition from the Dunthorpe area is well funded and their representative Len Bergstein has been working on the issue at all levels from local, to county to

state representatives. Richard Ross asked if Multnomah County will be voting on this. Rick Gustafson responded that they should be voting on it as Dunthorpe is unincorporated Multnomah County. The plan is to have the two entities that are funding the project vote first (Portland and Lake Oswego) and then have the remaining entities that are not funding the project, but are represented, vote. If there is not an agreement amongst all entities, there will be further discussion until all entities can come to agreement on either side. Susan Pearce asked if there is consideration for a minimal operating segment to the Sellwood Bridge. Rick Gustafson responded that the option does exist, but that the minimum operable segment was not included in the EIS at the insistence of Lake Oswego. What has been buried in this discussion is the agreement in the Macadam alignment option.

b. Loop Construction Update

No report was given.

6. Other Business

Owen Ronchelli thanked the committee for their discussions about the Transit System Development Charge Overlay. Dan Zalkow reported that City Council voted unanimously today to approve the TSDC, Commissioner Saltzman abstained, as he owns property in the Overlay area. Susan Pearce reported that she testified at City Council this morning requesting that the TSDC indeed be “sunsetting” after 20 years or once the requested funds have been raised. She also requested that City Council vote on any changes to the project list or money requests with all the same public outreach process as the original list. Bob Richardson asked if possible changes in bus line routes were taken into consideration in the TSDC Overlay boundary. Dan Zalkow and Susan Pearce responded that they don’t believe changes in bus routes were considered but rather the TSDC Overlay boundaries were determined by distance from the new transit and light rail stations.

Next meeting the committee will be shifting gears a little and will have the Planning Bureau come in to present on the Portland Plan. Richard Ross shared some maps and analysis from the Portland Plan with the committee.

The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, May 4, 2011, 3:30pm-5:00pm at City Hall, Pettygrove Room.

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.