

Portland Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

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

Members in Attendance: Owen Ronchelli, chair; David Brandt; Carolyn Brock; Bill Danneman; Peter Finley Fry; Arlene Kimura; Janet McGarrigle; Sue Pearce; Zoe Cora Potter; Carol Presson; Bob Richardson; Vern Rifer; Richard Ross; Dan Zalkow

Others: Sharane Antoinette, Ruth Ann Barrett, Leon Charvarria, Pete Collins, Dan Friedman, Len Michon, Tom Noguchi, Lee Perlman, Richard Rahm, Wendy Rahm, Ian Trout, Bob Wright

Staff Attendance: Kay Dannen, Julie Gustafson, Rick Gustafson, Shoshanah Oppenheim, Art Pearce

1. Meeting to Order:

Owen Ronchelli, chair, called the meeting to Order. The minutes from the October 5, 2011 meeting were approved.

2. Public Comments:

Wendy Rahm encouraged opposition to end the free rail zone for the downtown portion of the streetcar. Rahm stated that the data she had seen was dated, faulty and incomplete and that eliminating the streetcar from the free rail zone could have negative impacts on greenhouse gases and congestion in the downtown core.

Daniel Friedman of the Downtown Neighborhood Association presented a handout that addressed the equity issue related to the Streetcar Fare Study. Friedman stated that the first thing that can be said about equity is that most of the residents served by the streetcar in downtown are not affluent. Second thing to tell them is that most fareless riders do not live downtown. Transit in the central city is not a special entity just for those that live there but is a benefit for all those who visit and work downtown. The notion of fairness or equity is not to treat all cases alike, but to treat like cases alike.

Richard Rahm added that on the issue of equity he was surprised at the importance that has been placed on equity and that the health of downtown should be weighted equally. Richard Rahm stated that equity in transportation policy gets you into a swamp. The health of downtown is why the fareless zone was created. He went on to add that downtown and the close-in eastside have different needs and different footprints within the City.

Ruth Ann Barrett commented that she moved here from San Francisco because of Portland's sustainability. When speaking with people outside of Portland she encourages them to visit Portland while travelling and that afterwards, they only talk about the free transportation system and not about the sustainability and green buildings. Barrett added that the second issue in this debate is the climate change problem and that changing the policy will encourage people to return to their cars which puts streetcar on the wrong side of the issue. She advocates doing more due diligence and that the numbers will prove her point.

Sharane Antoinette stated that she has concerns about how TriMet operates their hearings. The last hearing that she attended only one board member showed up and she felt that the citizens were not being listened to. Antoinette implored the CAC to encourage the TriMet board to take these issues more seriously. Antoinette is also concerned about the environment as she is convinced that everyone who travels from PSU to NW will drive if free rail is eliminated.

Len Michon stated that he understands everyone's concerns about changing the rates and encouraged the CAC to increase fares gradually rather than all at once.

Vern Rifer asked if the Downtown Portland Neighborhood Association had taken a position on this decision. Daniel Friedman responded that the letter the DNA sent to the PSI Board and the Mayor simply requested additional time and information but that the DNA will most likely oppose eliminating the free rail zone.

3. Update on Application for Equivalent Facilitation

Shoshanah Oppenheim of the Portland Bureau of Transportation presented that PBOT is applying to the FTA to request a finding that our current bridge plates meet the FTA guidelines without meeting their exact specifications. TriMet recently went through a similar process and found that the added side guards the FTA requires present a trip hazard. TriMet was granted equivalent facilitation after their application process was completed.

Bob Richardson asked what the feasibility and cost would be to upgrade the fleet. Oppenheim responded that we haven't done that evaluation as of yet. Rick Gustafson responded that in 2003 when we replaced the bridge plates the cost for 5 vehicles was \$200,000. Arlene Kimura asked what triggered this application. Oppenheim responded it is because we are purchasing new vehicles. Richard Ross asked if there is any requirement under the ADA regulations that requires the "lip" on the edge of the bridge plates. Gustafson responded that under ADA, there is a requirement for a 2" lip on any bridge plate or the finding for Equivalent Facilitation needs to be done for the new alignments. Oppenheim notified the CAC of a further public hearing on December 13, 2011. Information on the hearing can be found on the Portland Streetcar website. Zoe Presson added that a major difference between rail transit and buses (for which the rule was created) is that on all of our low floor buses we have a ramp that lifts up and goes outside of the bus and sometimes can be quite steep. On the streetcar the ramp is not very steep.

4. Streetcar Fare Study Update

Shoshanah Oppenheim told the CAC about two upcoming Open Houses on the Fare Study. Oppenheim, along with Art Pearce and Julie Gustafson, has presented to several neighborhood and business associations including: Downtown Portland, Pearl Joint Land Use Committee, NW Land Use Committee, South Portland Neighborhood, South Waterfront TMA, Central Eastside Industrial Council Land Use Committee, Hosford-Abernathy Neighborhood District, and the Lloyd TMA.

Vern Rifer asked for clarification on whether the fare study discussion deals with the entire Streetcar system or just the Loop. Oppenheim confirmed that the entire system is part of the discussion. There are concerns from RiverPlace residents about the interim years between the opening of the Loop in 2012 and the opening of the transit bridge and "Close the Loop" in 2015 as they will need to transfer to have full use of the system.

Owen Ronchelli commented that a theme that has come up time and again is how the streetcar is perceived. Is it seen as a stand-alone system or as part of the larger system? He asked for a straw poll of the committee of where they stand on the fare study. He welcomed general comments before the poll.

Carolyn Brock asked what the impact was on ridership when the fareless square was eliminated for buses and asked if there is another model of a city that has a free public transportation system only in one area of the city. Gustafson responded that the PSI Board asked TriMet this morning and that there was a negligible impact on ridership when the buses were removed. We are anticipating an

impact in ridership and have incorporated that into our evaluation. We are not aware of another city with free transit. Oppenheim responded that there are other cities that have the circulator fare model, but not free. Seattle is in the process of ending their free system that they have in place. Bob Richardson commented that he likes the idea of phasing the price of the annual passes but suggested starting the phasing at the beginning of 2012.

Vern Rifer commented that from the very beginning there were fundamental principles that have been part of the discussion including accessibility and making the system easily understood to maximize ridership and that these same principles should be part of the discussion of the fare system today. Peter Fry added that easy access was the whole purpose of streetcar. Ronchelli asked if that means we are a victim of our own success. Rifer responded that he is concerned that we are taking a step away from those principles and that we need to make sure to keep those in mind. Gustafson added that in 1988 the city changed from a downtown orientation to a central city orientation and have made the transition in every aspect of the city but not in transit. It is awkward to run a Loop around the central city that was called for in the 1988 plan and offer free service to one half and a full fare service to the other half of the same line. Rifer added that the principles that were adopted by the 5 neighborhood association have served us well and recommended we stay with those principles and not lose track of what made us a success.

Straw poll:

- Sue Pearce agreed that staying with the underlying principles is crucial. Streetcar has changed and is growing and will grow further and that we have to maintain the principle of making the system work but what makes it work might have changed. Creating a different fare system within the same Loop especially when one side of the Loop will have a much higher frequency needs to be addressed. She can't imagine that because of a \$1 fare so many people will be getting in their car and driving and paying for parking (which will cost more). She agrees with the concern of the jump in cost from \$100 to \$250 and thinks that phasing would be a good idea.
- Dan Zalkow supports the streetcar circulator fare which encourages use on the east side, NW and SW. He likes that the circulator fare is low and has not been pigeon holed as of yet. He also likes the precedent to start looking at less frequent \$.25 increments in fare rather than frequent \$.05 increments. He suggested not having the \$2.10 fare be good all day but suggested rather having the \$2.10 fare be the option if a rider wanted access to the full system including TriMet. Zalkow added that the more Streetcar can be consistent with TriMet the less confusion there will be for the transit riders. Zalkow thinks the annual pass needs to go up a good bit and that the focus needs to be on marketing and partnerships.
- Peter Fry commented that the Central Eastside is going through a parking process and that there is consensus to have meters there. Moving forward there will be regulated parking. The city needs to be treated fairly in all parts and thinks people should pay fairly across the city. The interface between TriMet and Streetcar should be as seamless as possible.
- Zoe Presson likes the Honored Citizen fare and would like to see Streetcar go to a \$1 fare for the entire system. \$1 is a nice round number. She would like to see it valid for the standard transfer window.
- Bob Richardson stated that he agrees with almost everything Dan Zalkow said. He expressed a disappointment that extending fareless zone to the entire system was not studied, but he understands the fiscal realities. He agrees with the need to maintain

compatibility with TriMet's system in as many ways as possible to make things as simple as possible and recommends the \$1 fare.

- Bill Danneman stated that he likes the \$1 fare and that it should be good all day at least until the full Loop opens. He thinks that the annual pass jump is too high until the full Loop opens, and suggested maintaining the price at about \$150 for an annual pass.
- Arlene Kimura agreed with Danneman, that the fare should be \$1 all day and an annual pass should cost somewhere between \$100 and \$150.
- Richard Ross agreed with Richardson on the need for a seamless, affordable system. He added that he appreciates the public comments as the value of the fareless system is not something we should discard easily, but that the MAX system is a bigger draw. Ross favors the 2 hour window for the circulator fare and keeping it at as low of a cost as possible.
- Carolyn Brock supports some fare for everything. When these systems were instituted they were novelties. That is no longer the case. Brock stated that she is a big supporter of equity and added that we need to do as much as possible to remain consistent with TriMet.
- Janet McGarrigle stated that one of her biggest concerns is simplicity. A good portion of her friends have not used the streetcar because they believe it is too complicated. Having a consistent fare for the entire system is important and \$1 if we can afford it is great! McGarrigle would like to see a small increase in the cost of an annual pass, and would like to see the cost increase phased in.
- Sue Pearce agrees with the desire for seamlessness, and agrees with concerns over starting with a lower fare at beginning. She proceeded to ask that everyone get on the streetcar once it opens and come visit the east side.
- Rifer asked if we will be able to maintain the Tram access with the pass as that is part of the appeal. Oppenheim stated she believes that will be possible but discussions are ongoing. Rifer supports the written proposal from the fare study group, but with a smaller increase in the cost of an annual pass.
- David Brandt sees the streetcar as a piece in the larger system. He supports having a fare and ideally would like it to be a simple, rational system that fits into the larger picture but that depends on TriMet in some ways. He supports the \$1 fare and sees it as something that can be plugged into the larger system as it develops. He does believe that the proposed pass increase is too much for one jump. Brandt also likes that the option to honor the \$10 downtown only bus pass is still on the table. Brandt does not have strong feelings one way or the other on how long the fare should be valid, but would lean toward the normal transfer window established by TriMet.
- Cora Potter stated that she supports the \$1 for 2 hours (transfer window). She does not think the \$2.10 should be good all day but rather just open up the entire system to the rider. Potter encouraged PBOT and Streetcar to do extensive outreach on the \$10 downtown bus pass.

Ronchelli thanked the CAC for their input. He asked if there was a way to run the numbers from some of the suggestions that came from the committee. Oppenheim stated that Nelson Nygard will be running some more numbers and that they can add a new equation to the mix. Art Pearce agreed that it is worth looking at and they will have those numbers evaluated.

5. Loop Marketing Strategy

Owen Ronchelli tabled the Marketing discussion until the December meeting due to time constraints.

6. Project Updates

a. Lake Oswego Update

Vern Rifer presented that the technical evaluation is underway with the plan of bringing the responses to both the Lake Oswego and Portland City Councils in early 2012. Rick Gustafson added that there is a team working on a cost estimate for the line. Lake Oswego will have an election in May 2012 as to whether or not to support the streetcar. 20% of the construction costs are in retaining walls due to the slope of the alignment. Goal is to get the local cost down.

b. Loop Construction Update

Julie Gustafson reported that all of the track has been installed and that the majority of work has been completed on the Broadway Bridge. Overhead wire installation and work on the sidewalks and swales at the Morrison and Hawthorne Bridgeheads will continue through the end of November with amenities and punch list items following.

7. Other Business

Kay Dannen handed out a copy of the art etching that has been approved for the Loop stops.

The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, December 7, 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.