

Portland Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 7, 2012, 3:30-5:00 p.m., City Hall, Pettygrove Room

Members in Attendance: Owen Ronchelli, chair; David Brandt; Carolyn Brock; Bill Danneman; Michael Dennis; Peter Finley Fry; Sorin Garber; Cora Potter; Zoe Presson; Bob Richardson; Vern Rifer; Richard Ross; Scott Seibert

Others: Lee Perlman, Joe Rowe, Chris Smith

Staff Attendance: Kay Dannen, Julie Gustafson, Carter MacNichol

1. Meeting to Order:

Owen Ronchelli, chair, called the meeting to Order. The minutes from the February 1, 2012 meeting were approved with a correction by Richard Ross.

2. Public Comment

No Public Comment was made.

3. Oregon Sustainability Center

Presentation was postponed until the April CAC meeting.

4. Update on the Broadway Bridge Overhead Wire Pole

Owen Ronchelli briefly reviewed the history of the placement of the Broadway Bridge pole that is encroaching on the width of the sidewalk. A solution to the issue was found. Chris Smith expressed his extreme appreciation to Carter MacNichol and the team for their hard work in finding a solution to this issue. Smith passed around a drawing of the solution. MacNichol explained that the pole placement was a sub-optimal situation and that several options were evaluated. MacNichol instructed the design team to continue looking into alternatives and a workable solution was found. The pole will be moved further towards the curb. We are going to install a surface mounted metal plate and then raise the grade of the sidewalk to become flush with the plate. The raise in the sidewalk will also require raising the railing adjacent to this area to maintain code. The plate is currently being manufactured and will be installed end of March/beginning of April once the plate arrives. The work will involve closing the sidewalk for two-three weeks to perform the work. This moves the pole closer to the curb than Streetcar's standard, but it restores the sidewalk's effective width to what it was before the Loop construction. The final number has not been settled upon, but the current estimate is \$35,000. Ronchelli asked if the fix also includes a bollard. MacNichol responded that half way between the ornamental street light and the catenary pole a bollard will be installed. Sorin Garber asked what the sidewalk closure plan will be during this closure. MacNichol responded that all sidewalk users of the Broadway Bridge will need to use the south sidewalk during the closure. Smith added that this same traffic control plan was used several times during the Loop construction. MacNichol added that some users will detour to the Steel Bridge during the closure of the north sidewalk. Lee Perlman asked when the work will occur. MacNichol stated that the work may start the end of March and that the plan is to have the work completed by mid-April. The plate is not an "off-the-shelf" plate, but one that needs to be fabricated. Ronchelli stated that it is great that a solution was found as he was a little concerned with how the issue was left at the end of the February CAC meeting as it is not necessarily the purview of the CAC to weigh in on technical issues.

Joe Rowe thanked Chris Smith and Kay Dannen as well as many others who have worked hard on this issue. He added that he gets a sense of contempt from many others in the room based on their body language at the statement of the cost to move the pole. Rowe also got a feeling of lack of empathy in the meeting minutes and suggested that the City

Auditor to do an estimate of what just one head injury would cost the city if an accident were to occur because of the pole placement as he is sure it would cost more than the \$35,000 estimated to move the pole. He added that in the meeting notes stated that MacNichol's statements about the pole not being in a dangerous location was his opinion and should be stated as such as Rowe and many other members of the cycling community believe it is an extremely dangerous situation and the process by which it was a field order change is a process they would not like to see repeated in future streetcar projects in Portland or in other cities. He asked that his opinion go on the record. Rowe stated that he is very grateful to Dannen and other staff but that the meeting minutes show a sense of contempt for the issue. Bob Richardson responded that the meeting minutes are just a summary and that the majority opinion in the room was to find out what could be done whether it was to move the pole or find a mitigation project elsewhere along the alignment and that it was all pragmatism. Rowe stated that the point he is trying to make is that people should not be telling other people what they should and should not be concerned about, such as the statement from MacNichol that the pole location was not ideal, but it works. It clearly works for some people, but not for others. Rowe stated that people shook their heads at the cost and he isn't sure if people are in support of ADA requirements, but we've seen a lot of history in America where the power structure does not respect a mild change to moving us as a humanity toward sustainable progress. Scott Seibert responded that he shook his head not in a lack of support for ADA, but more in astonishment for how low the cost is estimated to be compared to the estimates at February's meeting. Rowe stated that that is comforting to know, but that the comments in the meeting minutes discomfort him. Rowe closed by stating that any contingency where this fix will be postponed needs to be communicated to the community. Richard Ross stated that having designed many multi-use paths he appreciates that this issue was caught and that a solution will be implemented. He is glad this was caught before it really goes into effect so that the Streetcar can be both bike and pedestrian friendly.

5. Line Designation

Owen Ronchelli gave credit to the CAC for the discussion they have had to date on this issue but also the amount of outside interest in the issue. There will be a recommendation from the CAC by the end of today's CAC meeting to meet the deadline. Ronchelli added that there has been a lot of thoughtful discussion and we are looking at the issue from a lot of different perspectives which is what is unique and important about the CAC. That has given pause to the recommendation by the PSI Board of Directors as they want to hear what the CAC recommends. The original recommendation was for a Line A and Line L. What we have moved towards are CL or Central Loop and NS for North/South Line. Vern Rifer moved that the recommendation of CL and NS be approved barring discussion. Richard Ross seconded the motion. The NS is an historic designation of a line in Portland that ran a similar route to the current Streetcar line from NW Portland to SW. A map was distributed to the committee and can be found at <http://myplace.frontier.com/~trolley503/NSLine.html>.

There was some concern at the PSI Board meeting about what happens when "Close the Loop" happens as we'll have a complete Loop and all trains will eventually go to OMSI. David Brandt stated that using VIA to list the next closest destination. Bob Richardson stated that he would divide the Loop into a northern and southern "terminus" such as using NS to Lloyd District via Pearl District and Lloyd District via OMSI when the Loop closes. Rick Gustafson responded that technically it is more difficult as the announcements inside the car are tied to how many times the wheels have gone around, but the reader board is changed by the operator. Richardson responded that he would like to see two messages,

once the full Loop opens, one for when the streetcar is travelling north and one for when it is travelling south.

Gustafson stated that he was quite impressed with the discussion as the most important thing we do is to communicate with our customer and that the message that we post on the vehicle has a huge impact on building confidence in the customer that they can use it. We are willing to respond immediately to make this work. We have the reader board and the announcements. Those communication tools are our primary mechanisms to communicate where the train goes. Seibert stated that NS is fine now, but that people who live in both North Portland and NW Portland don't consider NW to be in North Portland. Gustafson responded that it may be good to just call it the NW 23rd to South Waterfront line. Ross responded that NS would be good as the West End (WE was an original suggestion) is not that big and is not a household name for a part of the city. Ross added that this could work in the future if the line crosses the Sellwood Bridge into Sellwood it could become the NW to Sellwood line. Richardson added that he is comfortable with NS with the caveat that we not use compass directions as ultimately we will have other lines that travel north/south so as not to confuse future riders. Garber seconded Rifer's recommendation with the caveat that the CAC will have this same discussion in a couple of years as the Loop will become part of Portland's nomenclature. Ronchelli stated that is why he prefers the CL as it keeps the Loop in the discussion.

Rifer asked to amend the motion to encourage the management to include significant destinations on the signage. Richardson stated that he is still leaning toward CC, Central City, over CL as Central City has been discussed many times in this process and suggested Central Circulator for CC. Seibert responded that the CAC has talked about how streetcars tie neighborhoods together. Central City and Circulator are geek transportation terms that are not widely used. He would like the CAC to find a way to tie as many lines as possible to neighborhoods. The Loop will eventually be a complete loop and that's how people will talk about it. As it doesn't fit the concept of neighborhood end points that it should be referred to as what it is, a loop. Ronchelli added that hopefully the Loop will take on a life of its own. The Loop is uniting the Central City.

Carolyn Brock asked if there was a reason that we couldn't call the line Central City now and Central Loop when it's finished. Dannen responded that once you start printing something it sticks and it is difficult to start changing things as these maps experience wide circulation and the change can lead to confusion. Gustafson added that in 2007 as we were filing the federal application for the Loop, the agencies involved were all broke. In order to file our application with the federal government we pretended that we would only run the Loop service to 11th & Marshall and then return to OMSI as that would take less operations funding rather than continuing service along 10th & 11th, which is where streetcar's high ridership demand is located. As a result of that application, some people began believing that the Loop would turn around in the Pearl District and are still holding to that belief leading to issues like a blade sign at 11th & Marshall that was miss-painted and mislabeled as returning to OMSI at that point. Gustafson suggested that people not become cavalier about believing that closing the Loop is a done deal and that if we start creating ways and excuses for people to believe that the Loop will not be built, we will have to work ten times harder to accomplish the goal. We need to make sure that everything we do reinforces our intent to "Close the Loop". Ross added that we need to get the name right the first time so that it can grow to its full extent. He supports the CL designation as it identifies the long term goal. Cora Potter stated that she prefers the CL as it gives us three years of lead time

to get the idea of the Loop in people's minds. It helps to reinforce the idea that it is inevitable that the Loop gets closed.

Ronchelli called for a vote on the motion to approve the NS and CL as line designations. Richardson moved that his recommendation to avoid compass directions when describing the line. Gustafson responded that the designations will be NW 23rd and South Waterfront. Brandt added that we are fine with the designations but that we are looking for the name of the line as CL is Central Loop. Joe Rowe stated that before anything is printed the suggested designations should be tested with people outside of the streetcar world. Ronchelli responded that he has vetted this with others outside of streetcar. Ross added that this is not an original idea, but rather based in the history of streetcars in Portland and is something that distinguishes the streetcar from MAX and bus lines. The CAC voted and approved the recommendation of CL and NS unanimously.

6. Loop

Julie Gustafson reported that 13 shelters are being installed along MLK and Grand at shared bus stops. The remaining shelters will be installed in August. Punch list work is ongoing and will include the movement of the Overhead wire pole on the Broadway Bridge. The first test train on the east side was successful and photos can be found on the Portland Streetcar Website. Ronchelli asked if the etched glass will be installed with the shelters. Dannen responded that the etching will be installed with the shelters.

The Grand Opening event planning is in full swing. David Brandt is the CAC representative on the Steering Committee. There will be events all weekend long with the focus of highlighting the local businesses and to get people on and off the cars throughout the weekend. Rides on Streetcar will be free.

Ronchelli asked where the city is in the process of ordering fare machines. Rick Gustafson responded that the RFP is developed and is in purchasing and has not yet been issued for solicitation. Gustafson believes that there is less than 25% chance of receiving a bid because of a combination of price point and ADA requirements as the fare machines have to be voice activated for the blind. There are machines that meet the price point, but aren't voice activated. We also have an issue with the Buy America requirement as the company that responded to the RFQ does not make their machines in America. Richardson asked if we are discussing fare machines at the stops. Gustafson responded that the issue is the machines on the platforms. We will also have the machines in the cars. He added that he expects to see dramatic changes in the technology over the next three years as it moves more towards a smart phone application. If that happens, all the machines we buy now would be obsolete. A lot of things will follow changing the fare system. Zoe Presson asked about those people that do not have smart phones. Gustafson responded that there will always be a way for people to pay. He added that all of the clunky machines will be gone. TriMet made the decision five years ago to focus their customer service on the Transit Tracker rather than fare collection. Gustafson added that besides the smart phone application, he envisions a smart card that you could use to tap on to the system.

Ross asked about the status of operating funds for the Loop in light of the dire situations that have been reported for both PBOT and TriMet. Gustafson responded that this is the most dire situation he has witnessed since 1973 for both agencies. The choices for TriMet are very difficult, we are looking at close to \$400,000 reduction from TriMet. PBOT is facing similar problems and we are looking at close to \$150,000 reduction from them. Our service is based on the number of operators we have. We currently have 24 operators and at

minimum Gustafson wanted to see 41 for the Loop operations which is a 71% increase. Gustafson stated that there is a problem of streetcar going in the wrong direction as other service is being cut; we are trying to expand service. The budget that has been submitted by the city supports 36 operators rather than the desired 41. The PSI Board has asked the city to consider a one-time contribution to handle the operation the first year with 41 operators. The Board has devised a mechanism for doing that. The city has a large number of Business Energy Tax Credits that they have been unable to sell. The PSI Board has taken on the challenge of selling those credits between now and May. A total of \$1.8 million in credits needs to be sold in order for streetcar to run with 41 operators. In 30 days the PSI Board has sold \$860,000. The other \$1 million needs to be sold in the next 3-6 months. Gustafson is working with TriMet to have 41 operators rather than the currently budgeted 36. It is essential to operate the line properly after spending \$150 million to install the line. We are not seeking publicity as the highest priority for the region should be restoring the bus service. We have taken the cuts from TriMet without objection for the past three years without a loss of service. It is great to have the businesses and transit connected, and it is something fairly unique to our community.

Michael Dennis asked if there has been any research into finding a local person or company that could develop the smart phone application to develop the fare system. Gustafson responded that he believes that a local person is developing an app for TriMet that will move in this direction. He added that there is a very high level of interest in the development of the technology and the extent to which we could find the right combination to start such a business is a possibility. Seibert asked if the fare technology would be integrated between all modes of transportation in Portland. Gustafson responded that yes, streetcar will follow TriMet's lead to ensure a seamless system as streetcar is but a small link in the chain. Part of the logic of a flat fare system is that with a tap on system, you would not need to tap off as well which is difficult to regulate in an honor system rather than a closed off subway style system. It allows Portland to maintain its pedestrian friendly transit system that doesn't close off the platforms from the public with bars and walls.

7. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, April 4, 2012, 3:30pm-5:00pm at City Hall, Pettygrove Room.

Please call Julie Gustafson at 503/242-0084 or email at julie@sojpdx.com if you have any questions regarding this committee.

The CAC meetings are open to the public.