

## **Portland Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday, November 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; Arlene Kimura; Janet McGarrigle; Sue Pearce; Cora Potter; Zoe Presson; Bob Richardson; Vern Rifer; Scott Seibert; Ian Stude**

**Staff Attendance: Kay Dannen, Julie Gustafson, Rick Gustafson, Shoshanah Oppenheim**

**Guests: Pete Collins, Lee Perlman, Ian Trout**

### **1. Meeting to Order:**

Owen Ronchelli, chair, called the meeting to Order. The minutes from the October 3, 2012 meeting were approved.

### **2. Public Comment**

No public comment was made.

### **3. Operations Update**

Rick Gustafson reported on the performance of streetcar operations. At the last meeting the committee had discussed how streetcar responds to the situation of being down one vehicle. They tried for a week to implement the "shortline" response on the CL Line and found that this caused other issues, including higher passenger loads on the NS Line trains on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> making it difficult for streetcar to serve the demand. Streetcar is now trying the second option of continuing to run the CL Line streetcars along 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> and extending the frequency to approximately 24 minutes between trains from the typical 18 minutes. This is not an acceptable situation, but we are picking from the choices available. We are training everyone that handles our service to respond to these situations quickly and consistently. There are 45 hours a week that we need to run all 11 trains we have in our system. On Saturdays we run 10 trains with 18 minute service on both lines. The early counts show that we have 11,000 riders a day on the NS Line and 2,700 riders a day on the CL Line.

Gustafson stated that the biggest cause of our inability to dispatch all 11 streetcars is the Prototype vehicle or Car 015. This last week was the first week that it ran 100% of the time it was scheduled to run. Bob Richardson asked if it was scheduled as much as the other 10 vehicles are scheduled. Gustafson responded that it is scheduled nearly as much as the other 10 vehicles, but not on Sundays as a United Streetcar representative is required to be on the streetcar when it is in operation to be able to respond immediately to any fault or situation that arises. Sue Pearce asked how long Car 015 has been in operation. Gustafson responded that it was certified for operations on September 20<sup>th</sup> and ran in revenue service beginning September 22<sup>nd</sup> with the opening of the Loop. There have been issues, but none have been safety related. Carolyn Brock asked what the issues with Car 015 mean in relation to the production vehicles from United Streetcar. Gustafson responded that the prototype is a unique vehicle as the propulsion system, or the brains of the car, is also a prototype from Rockwell while the production vehicles will have the Elin propulsion system like the Inekon vehicles on our system. Many of the issues with the prototype are related to a new product from a new manufacturer which will not occur with an experienced manufacturer.

We have met the 45 hours of 11 train service 70% of the time since September 22. Gustafson expected to meet the service 95% of the time. If you take the prototype out of consideration we make 90% and if you take the unique occurrence of the derailment of the car in the yard the first week of service we would meet 96% of the 45 hours of service. Those two unique situations have seriously hurt our service reliability. We did better the

week of October 28<sup>th</sup> and are fine so far the week of November 4<sup>th</sup>. We are expecting to have this issue of no spares through December. The lack of spares has a big impact on our organization as we both have to keep all of the streetcars running and available daily as well as needing to respond when we can't run the 11 trains. Carolyn Brock asked what the target date for having maximum capacity and the proper number of back up vehicles. Gustafson responded that the operation of 11 trains is all the budget will allow and that we need 14 trains available to ensure that we can dispatch enough trains on a regular basis. The target to have 14 trains is in mid-February.

Ian Stude asked how the current operations are impacting the budget. Gustafson responded that first we are not fully staffed up for Loop operations so there is a cost savings there that we actually do not want as it adds additional stress to the existing employees. There has been an additional cost to the program in the overtime required of our existing employees. This is the most pressure streetcar has felt since the original opening of streetcar.

Lee Perlman asked about the possibility of increasing the number of trains in service once there are enough spares based on fare box revenue. He asked what kind of ridership would be needed to justify more than an 11 train operation. Gustafson responded that the plan was to add 2 operators at a cost of approximately \$250,000 allowing streetcar to run a 12 train operation, or 15-minute service on both lines. We had hoped that we could do that in March, the light bulb on that idea got a little dimmer in the last few weeks with the announcements about the city budget prospects. The option isn't off the table, just dimmer. The Portland Streetcar, Inc. Board heard about this issue this morning and seemed quite motivated to try to find a source for \$250,000 that would allow for the 12-train operation. The highest priority for service expansion on streetcar is to go to the 12-train operation. We expect the ridership to grow over time as more people learn the route. There is evidence that when frequency improves, you experience a ridership bump on the system.

Richardson praised streetcar for maintaining the fare machines onboard the trains. However, recently he had the necessity of purchasing a TriMet fare and used the streetcar platform TVM at Grand & Mill and found it very difficult to use and that the instructions were not clear. Julie Gustafson asked if there was a sticker on one of the buttons that had the number 1 and an image of a finger pushing a button. Richardson responded that there was no such sticker on that machine.

Sue Pearce commented that she has had the pleasure of meeting and greeting at the Oregon Rail Heritage Center and several of their visitors are arriving or departing via streetcar. Owen Ronchelli added that it is worth noting what happens each year with ridership and helping to foster the additional ridership with more consistent frequency and reliability. Rick Gustafson responded that this line is quite different than the NS Line which started with 4,200 riders a day but experienced anywhere from 200 to 1,000 residential units a year opening up along the line. There was a much higher level of residential development on the west side than what is projected on the east side which is more focused on employment. Opening the full Loop may increase ridership by 2,000 to 3,000 as it will open up new connections to people. The CL Line will take a different level of marketing than the NS Line did. The Streetcar Mobile Music Fest on October 5, 2012 was a prime example of an event that helped people get acquainted with the service and with the businesses along the line. There will be more work on marketing and promotions than streetcar has done in the past. Sue Pearce added that the developers in the Central Eastside already recognize the opening of the full Loop as a plus. Vern Rifer asked how many people currently use the

streetcar to get to the tram. Gustafson responded that in September the biggest complaint was that everyone who got off the streetcar couldn't fit on the tram. He added that the highest producing TVM is located at the OHSU Commons stop. Ian Stude added that PSU had done their own counts of passenger boardings at the OHSU Commons stop heading northbound in preparation for the opening of the Collaborative Life Sciences Building.

Vern Rifer asked what the coverage of fare inspectors is on the streetcar. Gustafson responded that we have two Streetcar Officers and two part-time Fare Surveyors and our coverage is around 4-5% of the operation hours each week. We are working with different combinations and different times of day trying to find the most effective way to handle inspection. We currently have a fare evasion rate of around 6.7%, of that 6.7%, only 14 people got off the train rather than purchase their fare.

#### **4. Vehicle Update**

Lee Perlman asked when the production vehicles are expected to arrive. Rick Gustafson responded that the vehicles will start showing up on Portland Streetcar's tracks in December. Car 021 is scheduled to be trucked over to our tracks in late November/early December. Typically testing and certification can be completed in two weeks. The prototype took four months to test and certify, but most of that was the time to tweak the programming of the car. We will not operate any vehicle in revenue service that has not been certified. Scott Seibert asked if Car 015 will be taken out of service and retrofitted once other vehicles have been delivered. Gustafson responded that once three streetcars have been certified the prototype will be taken out of service for some additional adjustments and changes. There are a couple of issues including the speed certification. Currently Car 015 is certified up to 25 miles per hour and our desire is to get it certified to 42 miles per hour. United Streetcar and Rockwell are set to make a proposal on the changes by the end of November. Sue Pearce asked if Car 015 will continue to operate as a Rockwell product. Gustafson responded that the Rockwell propulsion will remain in the vehicle.

Sue Pearce asked what will potentially happen with Rockwell moving forward. Gustafson responded that he believes that Rockwell may choose not to continue in the business as the programmers but rather as an off the shelf parts manufacturer moving forward. One unforeseen benefit of the federal grant to Rockwell (via TriMet) to produce an American propulsion system is that the two major propulsion manufacturers, ABB Veritron and Elin, have both established assembly plants in the United States so that they can meet Buy America. Bob Richardson asked what United Streetcar's path forward may be with this change, are they still hot on Rockwell. Gustafson responded that their business has shaped up in a very different fashion than they would have imagined it three years ago and all of that is reflected in the learning curve and experience that they now have with the vehicles. Richardson asked who the primary vendor will be for other cities with United Streetcar. Gustafson responded that Tucson and Washington DC will use the Elin propulsion system.

#### **5. Close the Loop**

Rick Gustafson reported that there is a very important action in front of the City Council on December 5, 2012 to approve the funding of Close the Loop. The Transit System Development Charge overlay, which will fund the project, has already been approved. The Close the Loop project has been segmented into three projects based mainly on schedule. The first phase is to build the Stephens Turn Around which will allow us to maintain operations for the 6-8 weeks when phase two is under construction at the OMSI platform connecting our tracks to the bridge on the east side. The third part of the project is adding

the Automatic Trip Stop system onto all of our vehicles. The irony is that the required safety device which is required for us to be on the bridge is not Buy America compliant and cannot be a part of the federal project. Sue Pearce asked for clarification on what prohibits the vintage trolleys from running on the Loop. Gustafson responded that the grade on the flyover is too great for the breaks on the vintage trolleys. We have gotten special dispensation to run the trolleys, which are not ADA compliant, because we run accessible service and the vintage trolleys are fill in vehicles. The action before City Council will be at 4:00pm on December 5, 2012 which is during the already scheduled CAC meeting time. Julie Gustafson asked the CAC if they would be willing to have a short update in the Pettygrove room at 3:30pm and then move over to Council Chambers to show support and testify in favor of the Close the Loop project. Ian Stude asked for clarification of what is going to City Council. Shoshanah Oppenheim stated that it is the funding package for Close the Loop. Oppenheim will work with City staff to develop bullet points to circulate to the CAC about the key areas of the action.

David Brandt asked about the double track on the Jasmine Block. Oppenheim responded that she has a meeting with ODOT on Thursday and that she will be happy to send out an update after that meeting. Ronchelli stated that the importance is to retain the grant that has been awarded to construct the double track segment as it is needed for operations of the full Loop. Julie Gustafson reiterated the request for potential testimony from CAC members in support of the Close the Loop package. Richardson responded that he doesn't know how much help his testimony would be as he is uneasy using SDCs as the mechanism in the area, however, whatever mechanism is used, now is the time. Oppenheim responded that the Innovation Quadrant TSDC overlay has already been allocated. Richardson reconfirmed that the primary need in the testimony is that if this is going to happen it needs to happen now. Oppenheim confirmed this need.

## **6. Ridership Promotion Events**

Julie Gustafson asked the CAC for ideas of other promotional events that can be used, like the Mobile Music Fest, to help raise the awareness of the CL Line as well as increasing awareness of the NS Line. While there is a desire to have more music fests in the future, not everyone is drawn in by a music fest and that other events could help spread the awareness without overusing one source. Some ideas that have been bounced around are a story teller on the streetcar travelling from the library to OMSI, or some sort of scavenger hunt on the streetcar that gets people into the businesses. This is not just about promoting the Loop, but also about promoting the connections, NW, South Waterfront, the businesses, the communities. Sue Pearce suggested coordinating with the Oregon Rail Heritage Center for an event. Michael Dennis suggested working with the breweries and distilleries along the line for an event, especially as July is Portland Beer Month. Richardson seconded that idea as it would also encourage people to take transit rather than drinking and driving beyond the event.

David Brandt stated that a real key to increasing ridership is making people aware of what is along the line. Though the passport program didn't work for the opening, but maybe being able to do something similar in a more focused way could really work out. Zoe Presson suggested having people at the platforms as well as on the streetcars at the next music fest. Gustafson responded that there are 76 platforms, so keeping that focused could be a possibility. Richardson added that one way we could have things at the stops is to keep the bands on the streetcars, but invite an organization's vendors to be at the stops, such as the Saturday Market vendors. David Brandt stated that there are a lot of interior design and architectural shops on the eastside and that maybe we could do a "pop up park" at one of

the stops or even decorate the interior of a streetcar to draw people in. Cora Potter suggested coordinating with "Parking Day" when people take back parking spots and have a park for the day.

#### **7. Other Business**

Julie Gustafson reported that the 8 retail outlets are now listed on the main page of the Streetcar website to help spread the word as ridership increases.

The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, December 5, 2012, 3:30pm-5:00pm at City Hall, Pettygrove Room and Council Chambers. Please call Julie Gustafson at 503/242-0084 or email at [julie@sojpdx.com](mailto:julie@sojpdx.com) if you have any questions regarding this committee.

The CAC meetings are open to the public.