

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

**Wednesday, August 7, 2013, 3:30-5:00 p.m., City Hall, Pettygrove Room**

**Members in Attendance: Owen Ronchelli, Chair; Carolyn Brock; Bill Danneman; Janet McGarrigle; Cora Potter; Zoe Presson; Vern Rifer; Ian Stude**

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

**Guests: Kai Bates; Diane Goodwin, TriMet; Rayanna Hankins, TriMet Volunteer**

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

Owen Ronchelli, chair, called the meeting to Order. The minutes from the July 3, 2013 meeting were approved.

### **2. Public Comment**

No public comment was made.

### **3. TriMet's Riders' Club**

Diane Goodwin from TriMet told the group about the new TriMet Riders' Club that was launched in early July. The Riders' Club is a service to their riders to share information about TriMet beyond service alerts. Rayanna Hankins was introduced to the committee as the student intern who had signed up the most members of the Riders' Club. Goodwin expressed TriMet's desire to be able to reach out to Streetcar supporters and riders to include them in the Riders' Club and their excitement to include Streetcar information in the future.

Ronchelli asked what kind of information will be included in this and if it had anything to do with the blog. Goodwin responded that it will be all of the information like the release of the mobile tickets app and the introduction of new buses into the fleet. Riders will still have the option to sign up only for service alert emails, but this allows TriMet to consolidate several individual lists into one. Janet McGarrigle asked if TriMet plans to solicit all of the incoming students at Portland State. Goodwin responded that she is reaching out to local partners to reach out to their populations outside of the sign up window as TriMet's interns will be done by the end of August as they will be returning to school. Ronchelli asked if this is strictly through email or if it will include other ways of reaching out. Goodwin stated that it is currently email and social media but they are hoping to expand to other modes of outreach such as texting.

### **4. Fare Discussion**

Ronchelli reviewed the packet of information that was distributed to the committee which included how many tickets are sold on board the streetcar and how many at the platforms. Only about 257,000 Streetcar Only tickets were sold at the two machines in the 10 month period. Rick Gustafson added that Portland Streetcar, Inc. is retaining Eco Northwest to help compile and analyze the data already collected to better understand the breakdown of ridership. The \$1 fare is used by somewhere between 300,000 and 400,000 riders. Vern Rifer asked for clarification on the annual pass numbers. Gustafson confirmed that there were just over 1000 passes sold but that they are used consistently to total about 10% of our ridership. He added that the Employer ID program, which is about 24% of our ridership, is the program that vehicle sponsors can buy into to allow all of their employee badges to count as a valid Streetcar Pass. Gustafson added that Eco NW will also evaluate the standard elasticity of a fare change to a transit system and equate that to the Portland Streetcar ridership, aka how many riders would stop riding. Rifer recommended that Portland Streetcar find a way to incorporate the other goals that Portland Streetcar strives to achieve and not just the level of ridership (economic development, environmental impact). Gustafson responded

that Rifer made a good point and that the short trip nature of the system is an important aspect of the fare discussion and that we want the streetcar to have the most effect on the places it serves. Gustafson added that ridership is currently up and that the CL Line is running at the levels projected in 2007.

Ian Stude asked about the fare plan approved in 2012 and the scheduled increase in the annual pass rate. He asked if there was a scheduled increase also approved for the Streetcar Only fare. Gustafson responded that there is not a scheduled increase for the Streetcar Only fare. He added that for a \$1 fare, an appropriate monthly rate would be \$25 which would equal \$300 a year and that Streetcar wanted to set the annual pass rate at \$250 but that the community asked for a scaled increase so as not to raise the rate 250% in one year. This September the pass will increase to \$200 and will increase again in September 2014 to \$250. The \$1 rate was a gesture to have not such a shock from free to \$2.50. It was agreed that the fare would be reevaluated moving forward which is the process underway now. Gustafson added that we are addressing the enforcement and cleaning up the data to be able to portray it clearly. The contract with Eco NW is a result of the July CAC meeting to respond to the frustration by the committee that the data was difficult to understand in its current iteration. Rifer stated that he would like to see the report that results from this evaluation.

Kay Dannen reported that she and Julie Gustafson have a number of meetings scheduled with the neighborhood and business associations along the alignment to begin gathering public input into the fare discussion that will be brought back to the CAC and PSI Board at their October and November meetings. Ronchelli added background to the fare discussion. This year's operational budget is pretty close to what was projected in terms of outcome but in terms of anticipated revenue based on the Nelson Nygard report we are about \$400,000 short. We want to put good service out there and make sure that our trains are running on time. There were a lot of setbacks and accidents in this past year which all factor in to the service levels. Gustafson added that the plan is to roll out the new fare in January 2014 following the public outreach and the recommendations by both the PSI Board and the CAC. Rifer asked who approves the fare. Gustafson responded that it can either be approved by the Director of PBOT or, if they choose, it can be passed up to City Council for a vote. Last year it was approved by the Director of PBOT. Gustafson added that the original plan was to increase the fare in September but there are so many planned service interruptions due to construction this fall, that an increase before January is not feasible.

McGarrigle asked how much the crashes cost streetcar. Gustafson responded that they don't cost us much as long as we have spare vehicles. He showed the committee a map of the crashes that have occurred over the past 12 months, all of which were determined to be non-preventable meaning there was nothing the operator could do to avoid the accident. Of the crashes reported, only one was a major accident, the incident in April with the Semi-Truck, the remaining accidents were all minor, primarily fender benders, which were all the fault of the other driver, not our operators. Streetcar tracks the accidents closely and the category of preventable accident is a major issue in relation to the performance of an operator. Rifer asked how much insurance costs Portland Streetcar. Gustafson responded that this past year there was a net of \$25,000 for insurance as the other insurance companies are billed for the time and parts needed to repair the streetcars which are mainly performed during regularly scheduled hours for the mechanics.

Rifer asked if there also maps for pedestrians and bikes that have been hit. Gustafson responded that streetcar should create one. He added that he has not seen a report of a bike being hit by the

streetcar. Typically the bikes go down on the rails and a streetcar vehicle is not involved. This past year there was a significant but fortunate pedestrian accident as the pedestrian walked between two cars and right out in front of the streetcar and could have easily been killed. It was fortunate because the streetcar operator reacted quickly enough to stop the train and not run over or seriously injure the pedestrian.

Zoe Presson asked how we can spread the word to cyclists that it is not a safe idea to ride between the rails or between parked cars and the rails. Julie Gustafson responded that streetcar staff and PBOT have been trying to get the word out. The "When I Ride" safety video addresses this issue. BTA, PBOT and Streetcar have been working to educate people on how to ride safely around rails and to avoid them when possible. Rick Gustafson added that he believes that the public is much more aware of the rails now than 6-8 years ago when a study found that 63% of riders had experienced a crash with rails. He added that work is continuously being done to resolve issues and make things safer but that work done to date in design and education have helped raise the consciousness. A prime example is applying a bit of paint to help demonstrate the safe crossing angle for a bicycle at a rail line. Ronchelli added that he believes the collaboration between the BTA, Portland Streetcar, the City and others has improved the attitude and behaviors of all parties involved. Stude added that one thing that has really helped is the addition of the streetcar tracks to the bike maps produced by PBOT. He went on to report that a 2012 survey of cyclists at PSU showed that the two most common places for accidents on their campus are intersections with curving streetcar tracks which follows along with what has been said that it is the curved tracks that cause more trouble as it is more difficult to cross at a 90 degree angle. He stated he would share the data with Streetcar. Rick Gustafson responded that he would appreciate the data and that there are discussions in the design phase of work to incorporate markings and signage with new construction such as the Jasmine block double track work.

Ronchelli asked the committee to evaluate the data given to them over the next month and to come back to the next meeting with questions, gut reactions and opinions to really start to form the recommendation of the committee. Carolyn Brock said she would like to see the service sorted out prior to any fare change as this week the CL Line is again replaced by a bus shuttle due to construction. Cora Potter added that she would like to see more information about the 10% of the riders who purchase the Streetcar Only fare. If it is predominately tourists that is one thing but if it is people with limited incomes and this is all they can afford, than it really makes for a different conversation. Rifer reminded the committee that we need to go back to the original reasons streetcar was brought to Portland as it is too easy to get caught up in numbers. He hopes that any recommendation and report would address the original motivations. Stude added that the tolerance for a fare increase may be greatest if it is matched up with the next service increase, such as the planned increase in the fall of 2014 to 15 minute service on the CL Line or fall 2015 with the opening of the full CL Line.

##### **5. Discussion on Reduction of Travel Times for CL Line**

Rick Gustafson stated that he wants to incorporate some of the suggestions from the subcommittee to reduce travel times. He wants to come back to the committee in the coming months with a description of the expected travel times for the different routes and start to feature and highlight those areas where operations could save time and then describe what the new service configurations would be after changes were made. Mayor Hales opened the door to this conversation again to allow operations to run both the CL and NS Lines at the same frequency to

allow for reliable, high frequency along 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> and down to SW Moody once the full Loop opens in 2015.

## **6. Operations Update**

Julie Gustafson reported that the Stephens construction is proceeding well and that it is scheduled to be completed on time with streetcars returning to the CL Line Saturday morning. In September to October there will be 6 weeks of a bus bridge from SE MLK & Mill to the ORHF/OMSI area and then back up to SE Grand & Mill to allow for the construction of the rail connections to the new bridge. In September SW Moody will be closed with a bus bridge from RiverPlace to the South Waterfront to allow for the west side connections to the bridge and the crossing of the PMLR and Streetcar tracks.

Rick Gustafson reported that streetcar has gotten to the point where we can meet service requirements just as we are facing all of these interruptions. Ridership counts are really good considering how many interruptions have already been faced. There were problems in June dispatching vehicles that couldn't go very far. There were different problems with the United Streetcar production vehicles than with the prototype. The heat did not help the problems with the air conditioner units. The problems appear to have settled down. The 3<sup>rd</sup> production vehicle will enter into service in the coming weeks. The prototype is currently out of service for about 30 days so that United Streetcar and Rockwell could perform some work to remove the conditions on the car such as the reduced speed. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> streetcars will be delayed, but that is not impacting service. Gustafson added that he wanted to turn more attention to the fare inspection but that has been crippled by the fact that the person who was in charge of fare inspection has resigned and it takes a while to fill the position. With all the testing we are doing with cars we are already overworking our personnel with the unique demands of commissioning new vehicles as it requires one supervisor and one operator at all times to commission a vehicle. We are doing better and our service reliability is up, but it is still very challenging to maintain service levels within the personnel we currently have. They are doing a great job, but it is a lot of hard work for them. Ronchelli stated that it would be nice to see some positive media about streetcar service.

## **7. Other Business**

Julie Gustafson reported that the beta test of the mobile ticketing app went well and that the launch date is still under discussion but will occur between now and early September as the apple developer site was hacked and has been down and under a complete reconstruction which has caused delays. The issues brought up at the last CAC meeting have been addressed and will be incorporated into the full complete version of the app.

The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, September 4, 2013, 3:30pm-5:00pm at City Hall, Pettygrove Room.

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.