

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

**Wednesday, September 4, 2013, 3:30-5:00 p.m., City Hall, Pettygrove Room**

**Members in Attendance: Owen Ronchelli, Chair; Carolyn Brock; Bill Danneman; Michael Dennis; Arlene Kimura; Janet McGarrigle; Sue Pearce; Zoe Presson; Bob Richardson; Richard Ross; Ian Stude**

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

**Guests: Reza Farhoodi, Brian Ruder**

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

Owen Ronchelli, chair, called the meeting to Order. The minutes from the August 7, 2013 meeting were approved.

### **2. Public Comment**

No public comment was made.

### **3. Travel Times**

Rick Gustafson presented to the committee the work that is being done on the advance work on travel times and scheduling leading up to the full Loop operations in 2015. This is round 1 in strategy planning with round 2 following next year based on the conclusions from round 1. Beginning in September 2015 the Loop will be running its full intended operations around the Central City. The plan is to run both lines, CL and NS, on the same frequency with high frequency, evenly spaced service from the Pearl to the new Collaborative Life Sciences building on SW Moody. We are estimating 60 minute travel times on the CL Line which would result in 15 minute frequency with 4 trains running. The challenge is that the 15 minute frequency does not match up with the current 14 minute frequency on the NS Line. The choice is to either run at different frequencies, which is not advisable as you will have bunched up trains whenever the frequencies are different, or to match up the frequencies. With no changes made to route/cycle times that would involve reducing frequency on the NS Line to 15 minutes. Gustafson is working with staff to take the suggestions from the CAC subcommittee as well as suggestions from staff for potential time saving changes along the line that could reduce the cycle time on the CL Line to 56 minutes allowing for a 14 minute frequency on the CL Line and even, 7 minute frequency in the downtown core. The plan is also to run a "fall back" operation on the Loop where operators will take their breaks in a break room rather than the train to allow the Loop to run continuously with little interruption for the riders.

The route with the most time to be saved is the counterclockwise movement of the completed CL Line as it takes 3-4 minutes longer to complete the full route than the clockwise movement of the completed CL Line. Gustafson will bring the findings to the October meeting for discussion and input by the CAC. An example of the findings is that the biggest time savings is believed to be possible by adding a signal to NW 11<sup>th</sup> & Couch which could save 2 minutes in the route time. Gustafson shared a map of the CL Line stops and their revenue categories for the fare machines. There was not one stop that makes \$0 a month. Reza Farhoodi asked if matching the stop spacing on the west side with the spacing on the east side had been considered. Gustafson responded that some of the suggestions the subcommittee made are leading in that direction. Bob Richardson pointed out that it may be possible to eliminate the stop at NW 10<sup>th</sup> & Northrup as there are stops very near to it in both directions. Farhoodi responded that he has seen high usage at the 10<sup>th</sup> & Northrup stop and that the 12<sup>th</sup> & Northrup stop may be a better candidate. Julie Gustafson added that the NW 10<sup>th</sup> & Northrup stop is the transfer point from the CL Line to the NS heading into NW. Richardson followed up by suggesting the removal of the NW 11<sup>th</sup> & Marshall stop location as it is

just one block from the previous stop on the CL Line. Rick Gustafson added that doing this work now has been a positive step as it allows for full conversations about the process. The hope is to increase efficiency to allow for more frequent service without increasing the operating costs. Farhoodi asked why this was not done prior to opening the CL Line in 2012. Gustafson responded that a lot of work was done prior to September 2012 and about 6 minutes have already been saved through that work but that we are going back to the table to make further improvements.

#### **4. Operations & Vehicle Update**

Rick Gustafson reported to the committee that there are 3 production vehicles from United Streetcar in revenue service. Car 021 operated at 97% reliability in August, Car 023 operated at 100% and Car 022 operated at about 50% of the scheduled time. There have been issues with the air conditioning and VCom System (the announcements are part of this system) issues with the new cars. United Streetcar is troubleshooting the programming issues to improve them moving forward. We are closely tracking the reliability of the new vehicles as there is a service interruption associated with having to take a streetcar offline. We have not lost any service hours since early August which should continue moving forward. Richard Ross asked if there are places to park streetcars on the system for temporary periods. Gustafson responded that the only place is at OMSI where there is a tail track for now. That tail track will go away with the "Close the Loop" construction.

#### **5. Portland Streetcar Mobile Tickets App & Mobile Music Fest**

Julie Gustafson reported that the Portland Streetcar Mobile Tickets app will be launched September 10, 2013. TriMet's app was launched this morning and the event was a big success. Gustafson also reported that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Streetcar Mobile Music Fest will be held Saturday, October 12, 2013 from 6-9:30pm on the CL Line.

#### **6. Construction Update**

Julie Gustafson reported on upcoming construction and service interruptions. The first is the construction of the turn onto the new transit bridge as well as the MAX crossing on SW Moody. This work will completely close SW Moody to all roadway traffic including Streetcar. There will be a bus bridge from the RiverPlace stop location to the South Waterfront from September 12 – 30. A map and detour information are available on the construction page of the Streetcar website as well as links to the TriMet construction updates.

The second major interruption will be the construction of the bridge connections on the east side. This work will include the expansion of the OMSI streetcar platform to a two way platform as well as the extension of the tracks toward the new transit bridge. There will be a bus replacement shuttle on the entire CL Line at the beginning and end of that construction work from September 9-11 and October 21-23 with a short bus bridge from SE MLK & Mill to SE Water with two stops on Water so riders do not need to walk through the construction zone. That short bus bridge will run from September 12-October 20. During this time the streetcar will operate on the CL Line using the newly constructed Stephens Turnback. Maps for all detours and bus bridges will be posted on the Portland Streetcar website.

Ian Stude asked if there is an update on the Jasmine Block double track work. Gustafson responded that she does not have an update but will ask the City to provide an update at the next meeting. Michael Dennis asked how much time it would save to have the double track section. Gustafson responded that she is not sure of any time saving but that the operations of the full CL Line will not

be possible without this work as there would be too many trains attempting to get through the same single track section.

## **7. Fare Discussion**

Owen Ronchelli summarized the past two months of discussions on the fare discussion for the members in attendance. Streetcar is looking at operational deficits moving forward and there are costs associated with the service improvements that we want to make. Portland Streetcar, Inc. is looking at ways to increase revenue including the sponsorship program and the fares. A sheet was included in the CAC packet that broke down the different types of fares found on the streetcar system with the approximate percentage of riders who use that fare. 52% of the riders board with either a TriMet pass or ticket, 24% of the riders have the Employer ID program, 10% have a Streetcar Annual Pass, 9% use the Streetcar Only \$1 fare and 5% are not paying their fare. Ronchelli added that eventually some sort of fare increase is likely and that he would like the CAC to be able to weigh in on that decision. He stated that he would like to see estimated numbers for the increased revenue that could be expected with each of the proposed fare change options.

Richard Ross asked which of the fares brings revenue to the streetcar. Ronchelli responded that all fares sold from Streetcar ticket vending machines is revenue to the streetcar as well as all Streetcar Only tickets. Julie Gustafson added that all of the Employer ID program revenue goes to Streetcar as well. Carolyn Brock asked if the numbers provided are percentages of fares sold or percentages of ridership. Gustafson responded the numbers are percentages of the ridership from our fare surveys which is a spastically significant sampling. Kay Dannen responded that they surveys have been conducted for years and the numbers are fairly consistent. Brock asked who comprises the 9%. Ronchelli responded that we don't have that data and that it is difficult to gather that information as you can ask the information but it is optional to respond and thus makes it not statistically significant. Richardson reminded the CAC that the onboard ticket vending machines only have 3 buttons and that any change to the fare levels will alter which fares we can offer. Richardson also asked the committee to consider a \$2.50 all day fare which could share a button with the TriMet 2-hour fare. This would be a fare increase but would still come with added benefit to riders.

Ian Stude asked if the Employer ID percentage included the TriMet Employer ID program. Gustafson responded that those are included in the TriMet passes and the 24% of riders with the Employer ID program are the Streetcar sponsors. Stude added that the \$1 fare is roughly equivalent to a \$300 annual pass. He asked if given that Annual passes are a slightly larger share of the ridership if anyone had looked at raising the annual pass further in order to bring it up to a rate on par with the single ride fare. Ronchelli responded that the annual pass is incrementally increasing to \$250 and that as the sponsorship contracts are renewed their contribution will increase as well.

Michael Dennis stated that the hand out was a nice, short piece that clearly communicates the riders. He suggested communicating what the riders will get from the various increases as part of the sheet. Dennis added that his recommendation will be based on what the funding gap is for the Streetcar moving forward and what income is needed for operations. Ronchelli added that one of his concerns and one that he hadn't heard voiced by the CAC as of yet was that the perception is the fare change is inevitable and he asked the CAC if anyone else was concerned about losing the \$1 fare. Several committee members agreed that they would like to keep the \$1 fare on the table as an option as well as look at delaying the increase to time it with a service increase.

Richard Ross suggested looking at TriMet's experience with recreational destinations along the line as the Streetcar serves some of the same recreational destinations as some of the riders that are occasional or recreational may be deterred by a high fare. Richardson added that the benefit to riders of the Streetcar will grow greatly after the Loop is closed and that a higher fare would be more acceptable to the ridership. Farhoodi suggested tying the fare increase into the service efficiencies and improvements as that would demonstrate benefits to riders. Pearce advocated not increasing the fares until service improvements can be made and if possible to hold off until the full Loop opens in 2015. Ronchelli agreed and stated that he would like to see streetcar have more consistent service before attempting to increase the fare and then pair the increase with increased service would be a more palatable approach. Brian Ruder added that there is a need for public education on the streetcar system as to what the costs are and what they are going to be as people are not aware of all of the details. Stude agreed with tying the fare increase with increased service.

#### **8. Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, October 2, 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.