

Portland Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 7, 2015, 3:30-5:00 p.m., City Hall, Pettygrove Room

Members in Attendance: Owen Ronchelli, Chair; Lenny Anderson; David Brandt; Carolyn Brock; Bill Danneman; Reza Farhoodi; Jon Joiner; Arlene Kimura; Janet McGarrigle; Susan Pearce; Cora Potter; Zoe Presson; Bob Richardson; Vern Rifer; Brian Ruder

Staff Attendance: Dan Bower, Kay Dannen, Julie Gustafson

Guest: John Betts

1. Meeting to Order:

Ronchelli called the meeting to Order. The minutes from the December 3, 2014 meeting were approved.

2. Public Comment

No Public Comment was made.

3. Resolve Meeting Schedule for 2015

Ronchelli reminded the committee of the original conversation around possibly moving the monthly CAC meeting to the third week of each month to off-set the meetings from the Portland Streetcar, Inc. Board meetings to allow for more interaction back and forth between the two entities rather than forcing the CAC to always be reactionary as they meet the same day. Brandt stated that he has experienced multiple situations in his tenure on the committee where the CAC would have worked more effectively if there was more space between the two meeting times. Kimura asked if the meeting will still be on Wednesdays or if other days are being considered. Brock stated that the most important part of the discussion is if the meeting should be changed rather than trying to find a time that works for everyone. The committee decided they would like to change the meeting date to increase their effectiveness. They then discussed several meeting options and potential conflicts and decided to conduct a poll via email to determine the new time and date. Staff was asked to create a poll and distribute to the committee members.

4. Committee Reports

a. Branding Committee

Bower reported that Spoke met with the Branding Committee to review preliminary logo concepts and are now working on the second round based on the comments of the committee. The second round will also include tag lines and marketing messages as well as possible color palettes. Spoke will give an updated presentation at the February meeting which will be followed by discussion about how far and fast to roll out the new branding materials.

Brock asked what all is included in the concept of branding. Is it just a logo or are there marketing items included. Bower responded that it all depends on how much you want to pay. Our project will include a logo and colors as well as primary speaking points to provide a more consistent look, feel, and sound whenever Streetcar is discussed.

b. Operations Committee Formation

Bower reported on the draft operations budget for the next fiscal year. The City will be adopting their budget for the next fiscal year in the coming weeks. Meetings are ongoing with the Mayor's Office, the Commissioner's Office, the staff planning group, and the Operations Committee to review all of the options. A large part of the conversation surrounded the frequency of service based on the existing conditions and known factors. Operating a 14 minute headway, while conceivable, will be very difficult on the Central Loop and will most likely result in a decreased reliability of the system. The recommendation that has emerged from all of the

different groups is to operate both lines at 15 minute headways to provide greater reliability as well as maintaining even spacing on the shared segments through the Pearl, Central Business District, PSU and RiverPlace. The recommendation also included an increase in personnel including 12 additional operators and an additional Streetcar Officer. With all of the proposed changes the operating budget will increase from around \$164 per revenue hour to \$168 per hour. Light Rail operates at around \$188 and buses operate at around \$142.

Anderson reminded the committee that there is no transit system in North America that operates a loop which is a difficult thing to do as there is no logical place to build in extra time and layovers which are used to make up time and get back on schedule. He also informed the committee that one of the PSI Board Members is retired from the number two position at the New York MTA and that she is on the Operations Committee and providing her expertise and knowledge.

Pearce asked why there can't be a dwell time at OMSI for example as there is a comfort station there for the operators. Bower responded that the issue of dwell time and layovers have been a large point of the conversation. The biggest driver of the decision is customer experience as there is not a natural end point in a loop operation and therefore is difficult to build in recovery time. Richardson stated that while dropping service from 14-minute to 15-minute frequencies is a negative, it does have the positive effect of having the streetcars arrive at the same point on the clock face each hour. He recommended not putting the entire extra 4 minutes at one point but rather spread it out around the system.

Rifer stated that his preference has always been and continues to be to keep the customer in the front of every decision. The original goal in the 1990s was to have 10 minute headways and that 15-minute service is unacceptable. He also stated that he doesn't understand why both lines need to be at the same headways when the ridership is stronger on the NS Line. Bower responded that both lines will operate together from the Pearl to the west end of the Tilikum Crossing providing 7 ½ minute headways to the majority of the riders. Keeping the two lines on the same headways is necessary to eliminate the bunching of streetcars and maintain a more consistent headway in the core of the Streetcar system. Rifer reiterated that the customer needs to be the priority ahead of any other factor. Ronchelli added that Rifer's point is important to keep in mind as the customer is key. He added that part of keeping the customer in mind is looking at the reliability and that looking at the current reliability you can see that the Central Loop has a regular problem with reliability and that making the schedule tighter will most likely reduce the reliability further. Anderson responded this is a cautious approach but that we need to give ourselves a bit of room as the worst thing that can happen is the trains don't arrive when they are supposed to and riders can't rely on the service.

Richardson reminded the committee that this is a net increase in service as the doubled section is increasing as well as additional connections that are being created. He stated that he comes down on the side of reliability and recommended maybe holding off any expansion until headways can be reduced if that is a priority. Ruder added that how we communicate and market the new service is critical to the public understanding. Farhoodi thanked Rifer for continuing to stick up for the riders. He added that there are other system priorities that we need to be mindful of including more frequent service in the mornings, evenings and weekends as well as a longer span of service and that all of those are priorities when planning the service.

Brandt asked about the status of the service improvements decided upon by the subcommittee. Bower responded that the City is still moving forward on the signal at 11th & Couch. He also has

a request in to the City to evaluate the signal timing at Everett in relation to Glisan to see if the streetcar will be stopped at a red light at Everett which would nullify the benefits if that stop is consolidated with the ones at Glisan and Couch. Farhoodi requested a listing of reliability by stop to help further the conversation.

Potter stated that with the NextBus signs and real time arrivals a 15-minute headway is not so bad as riders always know when the next train is coming and can fit in errands around their commute. Pearson asked how many additional trains would be needed to run 12-minute headways. Bower responded that at least 2 additional trains would be needed as it may be possible to shave enough time off the run time of the North|South Line but the Central Loop would require additional vehicles to reduce the headways. Ronchelli suggested that this be a meeting discussion at a future meeting to delve deeper into the constraints and the data.

5. Staff Updates

Gustafson reported that there will be two bus shuttles the week of January 13-19, 2015. Both shuttles are necessary for the final electrical connections to the Tilikum Crossing. The first shuttle will be from January 13-19 on the east end of the bridge shuttling riders from SE MLK & Mill to OMSI and back. Streetcars will turn back at the Stephens turnback. The second shuttle will operate from January 15-19 on the west side of the bridge. North|South Streetcars will operate between NW 23rd & RiverPlace. Bus shuttles will serve stops between the PSU Urban Center and SW Lowell & Bond. The overlap is in place due to the high volumes of ridership at the Collaborative Life Sciences Building. Both bus shuttles have been posted on the Streetcar website and local neighborhoods and institutions have been notified.

Gustafson reported that the Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs) have been installed and are now operational. The APCs provide regular stop by stop data and a much higher percentage of ridership counts to provide a more accurate ridership estimate. Rifer asked how, in light of the criticism brought forth in the audit, PSI will be releasing the information about the APCs. Bower responded that the audit's findings were interesting as some of the issues, particularly reliability and ridership findings, were brought to the auditor by PSI and not the other way around. He agreed that the messaging is important and that part of the key message is that we are still performing well.

6. 2015 Meeting Topics

Ronchelli asked if there are any areas that the CAC members would like to focus on in the coming year. He noted that Operations and Reliability are already on the list. Richardson suggested equity in future planning. Ruder suggested messaging and communications strategy/planning. Anderson suggested further discussion on the opening of the Loop.

7. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, February 4, 2015, 3:30pm-5:00pm at City Hall, Pettygrove Room. Please call Julie Gustafson at (503) 222-4200 or email at julie.gustafson@portlandstreetcar.org if you have any questions regarding this committee. The CAC meetings are open to the public.