

**Portland Streetcar Loop Project Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, January 16, 2008, 2:00-3:30 p.m., Lloyd Tower, 825 NE Multnomah, 2nd floor conference room**

***Members in Attendance: Joe Angel, Hank Ashforth, Chair, Daniel Deutsch, Rick Gustafson, Wayne Kingsley, Sarah Masterson, Rod McDowell, Ann Niles, Susan Pearce, Brad Perkins, Chris Smith
Others: Kristin Belz, Nancy Chase, Irvington NA; Eryn Deeming Kehe, JLA; Patrick LaCrosse; Lee Perlman;***

Staff Attendance: Kay Dannen, Julie Gustafson, Keith Liden, Lloyd Lindley, Denyse McGriff, Patrick Sweeney, Mark Turpel, Dave Unsworth

1. Meeting to Order:

Meeting was called to Order by Hank Ashforth, chair. The December 5, 2007 minutes were approved unanimously.

2. FTA Submittal:

Rick Gustafson presented that we are continuing to have a problem with the T-Sub rating with the Federal Transit Authority (FTA). There is a strong bias against Streetcars in the federal office. PSI is working both the technical and political processes. The first effort was to enter in the President's budget (which was the main purpose of submitting to the FTA in September). FTA continues to ask us to do more work, and is unwilling to agree that we are at medium for the T-Sub rating. We are providing information to the FTA weekly. The FTA cost model is highly accurate on predicting light rail and bus ridership, but about 30% low on streetcar ridership. PSI is sending the FTA a book on all ridership reports since 2004. Senator Smith called the FTA administrator on our behalf and is considering more action. DeFazio's committee has also made phone calls. The National Streetcar Coalition is watching intently because we are the only ones to submit to the FTA at this point. We were formally solicited by FTA 14 months ago to apply. We're in this period of teetering, which has been a standard procedure for some time. Commuter rail went through this for 2 years and finally managed to gain approval. We are about 95% of the way to getting the approval. Real damage is time taken to get said approval. This week's action: the law called for the President to appoint a transit commission. The report stated that the commission was criticized for not keeping to the small starts outline. The secretary of transportation moved to strike that from the record. The pile of actions and re-actions continues to grow. We continue to work with TriMet on the technical rating system, but are simultaneously contacting our representatives to help us out. The current strategy is to continue to try and get our Medium rating while also working on appropriations.

Rod McDowell asked about working with TriMet and Metro on this process. Gustafson answered that TriMet and Metro have done a great job working through the skirmishes while still keeping relations good to continue getting funding from the federal government.

Brad Perkins asked if it's better to wait for the rating system to change or to continue trying to get approved in the current system. Gustafson responded that the only current option is to file under the current system because it may be 2 years before the next change. Perkins then asked if something could be done like how California is suing the federal government over new laws about gas mileage regulations. Gustafson replied that it's two different situations. Over 30 years he has never seen things so bad. This level of contention between Congress and the President is unprecedented.

McDowell asked about the final engineering. We are supposed to start in February, but without the rating issue being resolved, we cannot issue notice for final engineering. After March 1st, every month we're delayed adds \$500,000 a month to the budget.

Joe Angel asked about what happens when a new administration is elected. General consensus is that in November whoever is elected; the environment in D.C. will be friendlier.

Perkins asked about the other cities that are interested in Streetcar development and if we're communicating with them to get momentum. Gustafson responded that the momentum is huge. Seattle opened their streetcar in December. Amazon announced 1 million square feet of development along the alignment for their headquarters. Arlington County, Virginia just got \$130 million allocated for their project. DC is issuing their bids for the Anacosta line in the next 30 days. The expectation is the mayor will announce their plans next month. Tucson is applying in April for a Small Starts grant (2nd guinea pig in the federal process). Miami voted 4-1 to adopt Omnibus infrastructure plan including Miami streetcar. Seattle got \$10 million federal funds through the exemption process. DC was funded through Romada. Gustafson met with head of DC DOT and he indicated that they will start to look into Small Start funding. DC has a 100-mile plan, Seattle has a 5-line plan for the future.

3. Development Strategy:

Lloyd Lindley presented their rough draft of the development strategy. This has been an iterative process. There are a number of improvements suggested that are environmental, pedestrian, bike, etc., improvements. They used documents from a number of sources to compile this strategy including The Trip Not Taken, Template 14, eastside reports, and collaboration with OMSI. The report is divided into several sections: Rose Quarter, Lloyd, Burnside Bridgehead, Grand/MLK commercial, and OMSI. Gustafson stated that we're looking for input from the Loop PAC on this strategy.

Some key improvements:

- a) Rose quarter area: 6 acres of undeveloped area. Waterfront area. There is some office development opportunities here. The key path in this area is Clackamas as either a pedestrian/bike only road or a transportation mixed use route to help alleviate the danger on Broadway/Weidler. Chris Smith asked for us to change the way we look at bicycle improvements, the economic benefit of getting them in the neighborhood, not just the ease of getting them through it.
- b) Lloyd District: there is a target for additional housing; a green project market is on the radar screen, but has not evolved yet; they're also looking at the Kaiser buildings for development;
 - This area has become an eastside transportation hub with streetcar, bus, light rail all meeting.
 - Great deal of connectivity possibilities in this district.
 - 7th Avenue Bridge to cross I-84 to allow for increased ease of N/S travel.
- c) Convention Center: 3 major new initiatives in this area. Almost every block has a potential for development. There are only signals at Oregon. There needs to be plans for additional signals to make it more appealing for pedestrian/mixed use. New signals are proposed at Pacific and Irving.

- Headquarter hotel, other buildings going up currently
 - High desire to connect this area further south over I-84 and West over the river.
 - There are a series of green (quiet, storm water infiltration, green strips along the edges, wider sidewalks, narrower streets, etc) and pedestrian streets that run east/west in the area. Pacific has been pedestrianized from 7th to MLK/Grand.
- d) Bridge Head: 7th Avenue crossing of I-84 helps to alleviate traffic on MLK/Grand as well as link Lloyd District to the bridgehead. New signals will be added. There are questions of both Everett and 6th being more bike avenues.
- Smith asks about the Central Eastside being connected to this area and having Ankeny be an entry point to the Central Eastside for bicyclists.
 - Wayne brought up that other problems may be that developers will have issues with whatever fix we come up with. Gustafson responded that the Burnside/Couch project will start in November and that they may have already made infrastructure and changes before we get started. Susan Pearce reminded the PAC that a lot is still undecided in this area and that a lot could change in the next few months. The development is soft at this point, but it's funded and slated to be built.
- e) Grand Avenue commercial area: between Oak and Stark. 3 properties have been identified that have redevelopment possibilities. New signals on Oak, Stark, MLK and Grand. Pedestrian improvements to the bridgehead at Morrison. Also streetscape improvements along MLK and Grand. (This could help the quality of life and business.) PDC has already made improvements on Grand and there may be no further opportunities. Pedestrian improvements along Morrison. 65% of these projects will be stimulated by streetcar. Wayne Kingsley asked about the fly-over ramps on I-5 (East Marquum ramp) and asked if anything like that was included in the development report. Lindley responded that it was not included at this time. Grand Avenue is a commercial district as well as the main freight movement for the central eastside. Gustafson felt that the main goal should be the ability to improve employment opportunities and agreed with Kingsley. Issues about the Morrison bridge ramp were brought up including the volume could be a problem if the ramp is changed to "T up" at MLK at a signal which could cause traffic back-up on the bridge. Pearce liked the safety of the T option, but is concerned about the traffic issues.
- f) Hawthorne bridgehead: A lot of the same strategies as above. Pedestrian development is a priority including sidewalks and stairs as necessary. There is no solution found to one ramp and the weaving problem at this time. There are a smaller number of development opportunities in this area, but they are underway. There is also an issue of connecting the waterfront to MLK/Grand (another route besides Clay). Makes connecting to OMSI easier if there is another route. Patrick Sweeney said that they are in the process of scoping eastside planning projects, but have not gotten into the process yet. Salmon is a pedestrian connection to the east bank esplanade. There is also discussion of improving the roads under the bridges to make them more pedestrian friendly. Joe Angel requested that 6-7 routes to the river are explored and planned for. Kingsley asked about parking reconciliation and Lindley responded that they have not gotten to that step yet, but it will definitely be looked at and addressed. Perkins seconded the need for planning on parking because it makes it easier for businesses to be successful in the area. He also added that he is opposed to trees being planted in front of historical property and Denyse McGriff responded that when PDOT added trees to Grand they discussed all options with the

businesses, building owners, historical society and tenants to find the ideal placement for all trees.

- g) OMSI District: Railroad staging yard will be going in this area. Smith asked about bicycle connectivity in this area. Pearce responded that there is a planned path that is circuitous, and works for bicycles, but not really for pedestrians. Gustafson responded that the issue of bicycle access is more immediate than initially realized. In the discussion with ODOT it is a lot more complicated to get it on the bridge. Phase 2 of the MLK viaduct starts right now which means the window is closing soon in regards to planning the bike lane.

Kingsley suggested that the development committee go to the CEIC land use committee to discuss these options.

4. Contract Schedule:

We have the final design contracts going to city council in late February 2008. We will have the material ready for a construction grant application. This is being reviewed by a 3rd party review. They are doing a risk assessment which will be done April 1, 2008. In order to stay on track the final design needs to be contracted. We need to have reasonable certainty that the project will happen before we proceed with final design contracting. It is not prudent to take this step without further resolution of our T-Sub rating.

5. Other business:

No other business was discussed.

6. Public Comment Opportunity:

There were no comments presented by the public-at-large.

Next Streetcar Loop PAC meeting: 2:00 – 3:30pm, Wednesday, February 20, 2008, Lloyd Center Tower, 825 NE Multnomah, 2nd floor conference room.