

Portland Streetcar Loop Project Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 20, 2008, 2:00-3:30 p.m., Lloyd Tower, 825 NE Multnomah, 2nd floor
conference room

Members in Attendance: Joe Angel, Hank Ashforth, Chair, Mike Bolliger, Daniel Deutsch, Rick Gustafson, Sarah Masterson, Ann Niles, Susan Pearce, Brad Perkins, Owen Ronchelli, Chris Smith
Others: Congressman Earl Blumenauer; William Crawford; Lee Perlman; Joe Recker, TriMet; David Skillman, Blumenauer's liaison in Washington D.C.; Dan Yates, Portland Spirit
Staff Attendance: Kay Dannen, Mark Dorn, Julie Gustafson, Lloyd Lindley, Denyse McGriff, Ross Roberts

1. Meeting to Order:

Meeting was called to Order by Hank Ashforth, chair. The January 16, 2008 minutes were approved unanimously.

2. President's Budget, Development Strategy and Environmental Assessment:

Rick Gustafson indicated that he would like to tie items 3, 4 and 5 together as they are all steps toward getting the necessary funding. We have been included in the President's budget. They are recommending that in the next fiscal year Portland Streetcar receives \$50 million of the \$200 million available. There is still a contingency of meeting the FTA's T-Sub rating before we are allocated the money. Our plan B would be: if we can't meet the T-Sub rating of "medium" before we would apply for an appropriation which happens in June or July. There is little chance that the President's budget will be approved by September 30, 2008. The chance of any approved budget being vetoed by the President is high, so it may be pushed to February 2009 after the election of the new President and the swearing in of the President. We are still progressing on the T-Sub rating. The FTA is working positively with our representatives on a weekly basis. Last Friday we submitted a large pile of data and information. There are often daily conversations trying to establish that there are actually more riders on the streetcar system than what was projected. If they agree to this, there is a high probability of us meeting the T-Sub requirement. Daniel Deutsch asked about the probability of us getting to the required Medium rating. Gustafson responded that we have to get to that point, so we will do whatever is necessary.

The Environmental Assessment has been issued. FTA has signed off on it being issued but we are in the public comment period. There is an Open House March 6, 2008 from 5pm to 7:30pm in the Multnomah County Boardroom, 501 SE Hawthorne. When this period is completed the FTA can sign off on the EA. We have two signals that the FTA is preparing to have us funded.

3. City Council Action, March 20, 2:00pm:

We are asking the City Council to approve the contract to continue working on the Loop Project. Dan Yates asked about how much we are expecting to touch the City's line of credit while waiting for the federal funding. Gustafson responded that there are 2 pieces of funding that are uncertain. The first is PDC's input and contributions and the second is the federal funds. The major funds we will have to borrow from the city are the LID (\$10 million). We could borrow between \$8-10 million over a period of 18 months. There are two options for proceeding: 1) an aggressive option where the city authorizes URS to start work on final design immediately; and 2) that the contracts be approved but the notice to proceed be withheld until federal funding is available. We are asking the city to approve the second option.

4. Congressman Earl Blumenauer:

Ashforth introduced Congressman Blumenauer to the committee stating that he has been instrumental to this process. Blumenauer said that we should be happy with how far we have gotten at this point for being the model for the streetcar movement and also for being allocated the \$50 million in the

President's budget. He stated that there are people around the country that are transfixed by what we do here in Portland. He was in Tucson recently and the Mayor there said that streetcar is his top priority. We obviously have a short term problem of the Feds not being able to take yes for an answer and not being able to recognize our economic development as a benefit. He is still hopeful that we can fight our way through this and access the money. This is a brutal budget year, to say that there is a gridlock is too kind. There is not an accord on the budget. He confirms what Gustafson said earlier that the budget may not be passed this year due to the battles being fought both in the House and the Senate. He praised the committee stating that they have done everything right and he could not be more excited. He is confident that after the next 334 days (from the date of the meeting) the federal government will be able to work with us to develop more funding opportunities for streetcars. He asked for a little more patience and that if we keep the focus it will pay off. Brad Perkins asked about the funding changes that may occur and how that could help with all of the future plans. Blumenauer responded that the first priority is getting the Small Starts program to really work and to get more money into the program. There is talk about a Fresh Starts program that would build on Small Starts program and would facilitate streetcars. Blumenauer would be interested in a No Starts program where you get a \$10-15 million grant with a clause that you don't go after them for more money. In the long run he is looking for flexibility in the programs to fit more cities' plans. He would also like the government to look into the future when we will be a carbon challenged society and how programs like streetcars can help with that. Chris Smith asked about Small Starts and how the delays are costing us money and if there was any chance to get additional appropriations to help cover the additional costs from the delays. Blumenauer responded that it would be very difficult. Blumenauer is very interested in the Small Starts reauthorization and wants to find a way to simplify it. We are creating "the streetcar capital of the United States". He asked for a rough calculation of how many family wage jobs are involved in streetcar. Keeping track of what this is doing, not just as a source of civic pride, but also because it is a good thing for the community.

The SAFETY-LU committee made a recommendation to make electric rail a priority in the country. Some of the rock hard conservatives are supporters of Small Starts and electric rail transportation. For us to be competitive world-wide we need to be very efficient in our ability to move commerce. The committee thanked Congressman Blumenauer for his support and also his time to appear at the meeting.

5. Pearl District Circulation:

Gustafson asked for the help of the committee in trying to develop a more comprehensive plan for how the streetcar enters the Pearl District off of the Broadway Bridge. The first option is the Northrup extension and the second option is to continue on Lovejoy to 11th and then turn left onto 11th. Two Neighborhood Associations and a Business Association support the first option. There is also a movement to use Lovejoy and Northrup as a couplet from 10th to 16th. 14th/16th is a north/south couplet. As we have started to look at the change of the street operations in relation to streetcar, we have also been looking at the effect on bicycles, pedestrians and busses. Having the streetcar go up to Northrup is problematic for bicycle access. Gustafson stated that we need to be more rigorous in how we evaluate the two options. Lovejoy has become an active retail corridor. How we impact the traffic patterns impacts the retail in the area. The PAC needs to understand all the issues and it will be brought up monthly as more information arises. Ann Niles asked about the stop locations and how they would affect the bicyclists. Susan Pearce and Chris Smith asked about the Northwest to Eastside availability and Gustafson stated that can be a possibility with either option but that it would be easier in the future with the Northrup option. There are several instances of specialized rail which accounts for the increased costs in the Northrup option. The steering committee has asked for the PAC to develop a report to the steering committee on the two options with a recommendation. We have designed and costed the Northrup option because it was the more expensive option. The environmental assessment includes both options so we still have flexibility but we need to get on with

a decision. Gustafson would like us to develop a report by June in regards to which option the PAC feels we should proceed with. Smith asked what the value of the additional access would be and how we would quantify that. Gustafson responded that that is tough. 100% of the cost of the streetcar in the Pearl is being paid for by the development in the district. Mike Bolliger asked if one option would be more of a band-aid solution. Gustafson responded that both options will work with either a short term straight run or with the long-term goal of the full loop. Ross Roberts stated that he liked the approach of taking some time to research and discuss the options before we submit a recommendation. Niles asked how we would agree on the criteria of how to evaluate these two options and how that will evolve. Gustafson suggested that first we pull together a comprehensive view of this area (from Johnson to Savior) so we understand all that is happening transit wise in the area. Then we work with the Transportation committee in the Pearl District to evaluate it. We then would bring the reports back to this group and that the PAC submits the report. Niles continued that she still feels that this plan is unclear to her. Gustafson responded that there was a Matrix that was rejected that was very specific. He proposed that any evaluations be brought back to the PAC on a monthly basis. Pearce stated that we will not be able to set the specific criteria at this meeting. Niles responded that the Pearl Neighborhood and Business Associations prefer the Northrup option and that she would like to come to an agreement of what the criteria would be so that all committees that evaluate the two options are using the same criteria. Gustafson responded that PDOT has been trying to convince PDC to assist with a more enhanced view of the circulation in the area. There have been little pieces done, but not the big picture of circulation in this area. Bolliger stated that for six years we have been concentrating on a complete loop and is worried about the ridership and that we should do what we can to make it work. Joe Angel said that we need to look at these options comprehensively so that five years down the road we don't realize we made mistakes. Dan Yates responded that we need to find better ways of all transportation cohabitating. Angel said that the safety issue needs to be dealt with now rather than later. Niles responded that the difficulty with all this is that Lovejoy connects with the bridge and that is the one place where all modes of transportation come together. Gustafson responded that the couplet is both what caused the whole debate, and an improvement in circulation in the area and an increase in accessibility is the one thing everyone agrees on. There were similar issues with the original alignment and dealing with Portland State University. The process of evaluating the different options is valuable to the complete process and is one of the things that makes Portland unique. Niles asked how this would affect the federal matching. Gustafson responded that it shouldn't affect the federal end. \$17 million dollars has been made available from the river district urban renewal district.

6. Other Business:

No other business was brought up.

7. Public Comment:

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

Next Streetcar Loop PAC meeting: 2:00 – 3:30pm, Wednesday, March 19, 2008, Lloyd Center Tower, 825 NE Multnomah, 2nd floor conference room.