

Portland Streetcar Loop Project Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, June 18, 2008, 2:00-3:30 p.m., Lloyd Tower, 825 NE Multnomah, 2nd floor conference room

Members in Attendance: Hank Ashforth, Chair, Joe Angel, Dick Cooley, Daniel Deutsch, Rick Gustafson, Deek Heykamp, Wayne Kingsley, Tom Markgraf, Ann Niles, Owen Ronchelli, Chris Smith
Others: Patrick LaCrosse, OMSI; Shoshanah Oppenheim; Lee Perlman

Staff Attendance: Richard Brandman, Kay Dannen, Christine Egan, Julie Gustafson, Keith Liden, Lloyd Lindley, Denyse McGriff, Dave Unsworth

1. Meeting to Order:

Meeting was called to Order by Hank Ashforth, chair. Tom Markgraf moved to approve the minutes and Joe Angel seconded the motion. The April 16, 2008 minutes were approved unanimously.

2. FTA Grant Status:

Rick Gustafson presented that there was a meeting last week in Washington, D.C. Dave Unsworth reported that on May 9, 2008, TriMet made a presentation to the FTA in Phoenix, AZ and then returned to Portland and modified the cost effectiveness numbers based on the comments from that meeting. Region 10 of the FTA (in Seattle) has been supportive of the project. The committee took the new report and numbers to D.C. where the FTA made it clear that we would not receive a TSUB rating of Medium. The FTA asked the group to meet with Simpson, the administrator of the FTA, where he stated that he will fund the project because it was the right thing to do and that it supports many initiatives like the Clean Air bill. The group left the meeting on a positive note. Subsequent to that conversation there have been several phone calls from the Region 10 office about project costs which have been explained fully. There has also been discussion regarding clean air and other such environmental issues. At this point the committee believes we are done on the technical work end of the federal application.

Gustafson reported that the news from Congressman Peter Defazio and Congressman Earl Blumenauer was different than what the technical committee heard. They heard from Simpson that the project had left his office and was now in the hands of the Secretary of Transportation, Mary Peters who said she is reviewing the project but made no guarantees. Gustafson stated that this week we are focusing on the House Subcommittee on Appropriations which meets June 21, 2008. The full committee meets on June 26, 2008 and the Senate committee meets July 11, 2008. We are currently trying to understand what the FTA plans on doing at this point. Streetcar represents a change in National policy and thus has caused a split between those who wish that policy remains the same and those who believe streetcars are the future.

Chris Smith asked if by building Streetcar we can prove them wrong. Unsworth responded that the argument that is being presented by the FTA is that there is not significant travel time savings by streetcars over a bus system. Gustafson added that you cannot prove them wrong because they require us to compare streetcar to a bus system that will not be built.

Hank Ashforth asked if we can expect to know anything by mid-July. Gustafson answered that the critical thing for this project is do we go ahead with final design work before getting the formal commitment from the federal government. If the earmark is in an appropriation, the feeling is that the confidence would be high enough for us to proceed. Ashforth added that there are also local monies available to be used at this time so we don't lose too much time. Unsworth added that in March 2007 we were given the go ahead to do both preliminary work as well as the final design contingent on finishing the Environmental Assessment. At this point we are waiting for them to publish the FONSI.

Ashforth opened discussion among the PAC to make a motion to proceed with final design. Joe Angel made the motion to support going ahead with the final design. Tom Markgraf seconded the motion. Chris Smith stated that there is a bit of risk involved for the Local Improvement District (LID) in losing the money they put in if the project does not get approved federally. Gustafson and Ashforth responded that there would not be a draw on the LID at this time. Money would be coming from the River District Development funds.

Unsworth asked if the go ahead would occur after the July 11, 2008 meeting of the Senate. Gustafson responded that there are only two people who can approve the go ahead, Commissioner Sam Adams and Ken Rust at the City. The City will evaluate the probability of getting the federal funds and assess the risk for the city in going ahead. Delaying the entire project one year will cost upwards of \$6 million. Unsworth added that if the money is included in the earmarks and appropriations the probability increases. Region 10 has made requests for quite a bit of information which is typically requested leading up to a construction grant application.

Ashforth asked if any changes need to be made to the motion before voting. Patrick LaCrosse asked if the money budgeted by the River District development area is in the \$100 million that is currently in the bank or part of the \$320 million expected to be added to the pot with the renewal of the River District Urban Renewal. Ashforth responded that it is in the money budgeted for 2008-09. Daniel Deutsch asked if there is a plan in the works in the case we don't receive the federal funding. Gustafson responded that there is no such plan at this time.

Deek Heykamp asked what the savings would be by authorizing the final design now. Gustafson responded that by starting final design we stay on schedule and will prevent excessive inflation costs due to delays.

Joe Angel's motion was brought back to the group and it passed unanimously.

3. Development Strategy:

Lloyd Lindley and Keith Liden presented that there were two significant changes made to the development strategy document as well as several small changes. No changes have been made within the printed version of the document at this time, but they will be added and published for the PAC before any final publications. Patrick LaCrosse added that OMSI has completed planning the first stage of their plan for development which should be published in the next 10-15 days.

Deek Heykamp asked who the intended audience is for the Development Strategy. Rick Gustafson responded that the original audience was the Steering Committee in response to questions they had about the MLK Jr/Grand Ave corridor. Originally there had been thought that the Federal government would be interested in the Development Strategy (which has not occurred to date). The third audience is the PAC. The main focus is to ensure the continued discussion about development as we begin to meet with the Neighborhood Associations. Heykamp stated that we need to be careful because when this document is presented to a mixed group there may be some concern by owners as well as tenants of various buildings designated as potential development. Gustafson responded that this is where the committee is extremely helpful because they can help to review the blocks and check the justification of any designation represented in the document. Richard Brandman suggested that once the document is finalized that we forward it on to the FTA.

Lindley and Liden stated that they will be able to have the document completed in the next two weeks so that the PAC may review it for the next meeting.

4. Pearl District Alignment:

The work session at this meeting is to review the alignment options in the Pearl District and to acquaint the committee with the situation. Rick Gustafson led the PAC through the two options (Option 1 is the Northrup track alignment and Option 2 is the Modified Lovejoy track alignment). The main issue impacting this is the general agreement that we would change the traffic patterns in the Pearl District to a two way couplet on Lovejoy/Northrup from 10th to 16th. In option 1 traffic would be directed north on 10th to Northrup. Option 2 allows auto traffic to continue to 11th where autos would be given the option of turning left or right on 11th.

The second issue is the impact on bicycle traffic. In both options the bike lane on Lovejoy will be removed and moved to Marshall. This has been done to lessen the strain on Lovejoy and to increase safety for the bicyclists. Daniel Deutsch asked if it is at all possible to maintain the bike lane on Lovejoy. Gustafson responded that there is a way to preserve the bike lanes, but that entails removing parking. Ann Niles added that the westbound bike lane will be removed no matter what due to the couplet since we don't want a bike lane that goes against the traffic. Wayne Kinglsey asked if any of the streets in this area have a freight designation. Niles responded that no, there are no freight designations in the Pearl District. Owen Ronchelli asked about the bike box on Lovejoy. Gustafson responded that the box will be on 9th Avenue, not Lovejoy.

Richard Brandman commented on the great work that has been done on the research of the differences of these two options. He also asked about the stop in Option 2 located on Lovejoy between 10th and 11th and if there would be any way to move the stop one block to between 9th and 10th. Dave Unsworth responded that moving the stop would slow the traffic for those turning right at 10th.

Gustafson stated that the Northrup option allows for an alignment from NW to East Portland that is being seriously discussed in the Streetcar System Plan by PDOT. Dick Cooley stated that both options have their benefits.

The original cost estimate was done with the Northrup Option. Since then we have gone back and re-evaluated the Modified Lovejoy option is \$1.7 million less than the Northrup Option. Dave Unsworth asked why that number is lower than original cost differential estimates. Gustafson responded that once all aspects were evaluated (utilities, maintaining parking, etc) the costs for the utilities were much higher than expected for the Lovejoy option.

Ann Niles presented that the planned couplet would follow the existing streetcar alignment from 10th to 16th. The Pearl District Neighborhood and Business Associations support the Northrup Option because of the increased service to the northern area of the District. They also feel that leaving the option open for a future NW to eastside alignment would benefit the area. The Northrup Option would also provide increased access to the Conway Project. Niles stated that the Pearl District believes that it is better to plan for the future and that the difference is already budgeted for in the River District Urban Renewal funds.

Chris Smith added that as a city we have done work for future projects in the past and that he believes we should continue that policy by building the Northrup Option. Dick Cooley added that he is concerned by the two minute travel time loss with the Northrup Option. Unsworth added that we need to focus on this project and that saving money and saving time lead him to support the Lovejoy option. Niles responded that there is the same out of direction travel on the eastside at 7th that was put

in to increase accessibility and development in the Lloyd District which is why the Pearl District would like the same 4 block out of direction travel in their district. Richard Brandman added that he would be in support of the Lovejoy option. Gustafson responded that the Northrup option could lead to more development because of the vacant blocks north of Northrup in the Pearl District. He also added that he was not looking for a final decision at this meeting, but that we need to reach the decision before going into final design. Gustafson stated that the critical agreement is the change in the bicycle routing.

5. Final Design:

Tabled until the next meeting.

6. Environmental Assessment:

Tabled until the next meeting.

7. Other Business:

Rick Gustafson and Hank Ashforth requested authorization from the PAC for Ashforth to send a letter of support for the Milwaukie Light Rail Project. Joe Angel made a motion that the committee authorize Ashforth to send the letter. Tom Markgraf seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Public Comment:

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

Next Streetcar Loop PAC meeting: 2:00 – 3:30pm, Wednesday, July 16, 2008, Lloyd Center Tower, 825 NE Multnomah, 2nd floor conference room.