

Portland Streetcar Loop Project Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, October 15, 2008, 2:00-3:30 p.m., Lloyd Tower, 825 NE Multnomah, 2nd floor
conference room

Members in Attendance: Hank Ashforth, chair; Joe Angel; Daniel Deutsch; Rick Gustafson; Gary Hampton; Pat LaCrosse (for Rod McDowell); Ann Niles; Owen Ronchelli; Chris Smith

Others: Kristen Betz, Lee Perlman,

Staff Attendance: Kay Dannen, David Davies, Julie Gustafson, Denyse McGriff, Karen Withrow

1. Meeting to Order:

Meeting was called to Order by Hank Ashforth.

2. FTA Grant Status:

Rick Gustafson presented that Simpson, the Administrator at FTA, will be departing the FTA in November of this year. He called Congressman Blumenauer and reported that he had done everything he could for the Streetcar project. Tucson has had an Environmental Assessment in front of the FTA and has yet to have it signed off on. The FTA signed our FONSI in July 2008 allowing us to go into Final Design. Tucson is tied up before that stage and is not allowed to go into Final Design.

There are three actions next year that are very important. The first is in September 2009 the draft will be re-issued for the transportation authorization bill. Congressman Peter DeFazio is the chair of that committee. If the President's budget is signed off on in February as-is, we will have an earmark for \$50 million. Ann Niles asked where the other \$25 million of Federal funds will be found. Gustafson responded that the FTA is being asked to enter into a contract with us for the full \$75 million and that Congress has appropriated \$50 million for this year and it is expected to have the remaining \$25 million budgeted for next year. Joe Angel asked if there is any question that Congressman DeFazio will continue to support Streetcar. Gustafson responded that there is absolutely no doubt that DeFazio will continue to support this project as well as others around the country.

The pressure around the country to expand streetcar systems has increased. Detroit, Boise, Tucson, Salt Lake City, Tacoma and Seattle are all pushing for their first systems or an extension of their current system. Portland Streetcar is getting weekly visits from delegations supporting streetcars in their own communities. This week Dallas, TX is in town, last week it was Fort Worth.

3. Pearl District Alignment and Circulation:

There are two alignment options in the Pearl District for the Loop Project. The first is to go North on 10th to Northrup, then turning South on 11th back to Lovejoy. The second option is to continue on Lovejoy to 11th, turning South for a few blocks, then turning North on 10th back to Lovejoy. When the two options were first discussed several issues arose. Staff has since been working with the Pearl Neighborhood and Business Associations, PDOT and PDC to work on the Pearl District Circulation Plan. \$1.2 million has been taken out of our budget and put towards circulation improvements in the district. One option is to build the Lovejoy option of the Loop Project (which is \$1.7 million less expensive than the Northrup Option) and dedicating the savings to circulation improvements. However the Lovejoy Option is not supported by the Neighborhood or Business Associations. The Pearl District is considering volunteering up a new LID in the Pearl District.

Ann Niles presented the idea that with the Northrup Option would lead to the possibility of adding a "Downtown Circulator" from PSU to the Pearl to mirror the circulator TriMet will be adding to the new Mall alignment.

Joe Angel made a motion that the PAC vote to support the Northrup Option if the additional funding can be allocated. Chris Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed.

4. Public Involvement Plans:

Kay Dannen presented that we have added 347 blocks of residents and businesses to the database and we recently sent out the Fall 2008 On Track newsletter. We have spoken to over 150 people at the first few tablins (including approximately 60 at Sheridan Market). We are also directing people to the website where people can see a visualization of the route as well as the current Newsletter and any updates as they become available.

Rick Gustafson gave an update on the planned construction schedule. We are planning to start construction May 1, 2009. The biggest lead time for construction orders are the rails which take 8 months to be delivered and the cars which would be a 17-month manufacturing schedule. Chris Smith asked how many cars we will need to complete the loop. Gustafson responded that 12 vehicles are needed to run the entire loop at 12-minute intervals. We will be buying 7 vehicles as well as the prototype vehicle from United Streetcar making 8 for the Loop Project.

5. Station Location and Issues:

Rick Gustafson told the committee that we need to be aware of the difference in stop designs on the east side due to the new city planning that's part of the Green Initiative. Ann Niles asked if there is any way we can ask the City to ease their requirements for this and future Streetcar Projects since Streetcar takes cars off the street and doesn't add to the pollution. Brad Perkins seconded the idea that we try and work through this and avoid impacting parking as much as possible. Joe Angel also added that we need to ensure that retailers have a viable atmosphere to maintain and run a successful business. Chris Smith asked if the number 6 bus from TriMet will stop at our stops and that should open up parking in those areas and lead to a zero net loss of parking. Niles added that on street parking also makes the street safer for pedestrians because it brings the street to life. Daniel Deutsch added that the relationship between parked cars and the streetcar is important.

Gustafson added that our typical stop takes 3 spaces and that with the bioswales the impact will be larger and that we have been looking into alternatives with parking around the corner, swales around the corner, and other options. Angel added that the discussion still needs to be had between Streetcar and the City that the code should be reconsidered. Karen Withrow suggested that we look into the option of combining all of the bioswale improvements in one location to avoid as many parking impacts as possible. Gustafson stated that he agrees the point needs to be made but that he wants to make sure we have complete, accurate information before taking it to the City.

David Davies from SOJ presented the Streetcar Stops – Issue Matrix to the PAC. Some of the issues involve moving stops to alleviate driveway issues. The list also included potential stops that have not been added to the plans at this time but would increase access to the Coliseum and Rose Garden. Gustafson added that we are pressing to have all design issues resolved by the end of Final Design and that we need to identify issues early. Pat LaCrosse asked if each of the stops will be uniform. Gustafson responded that they are all generically the same but that there are custom aspects based on the surrounding sidewalk height and the needs of that specific area. Angel requested that we don't exclude the ability to add potential stops in the future based on development. Gustafson responded that we have the ability to add and/or remove stops based on the needs of a community. Perkins asked about the potential of an island at Larabee on Broadway to allow for a stop there. Gustafson responded that if we allow for room for an island it pushes the lanes out and we would lose the right turn lane from Westbound Broadway onto Larabee.

6. Other Business:

There was no other business discussed.

7. Public Comment:

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

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