

Portland Streetcar Loop Project Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 18, 2009, 2:00-3:30 p.m., Lloyd Tower, 825 NE Multnomah, 2nd floor
conference room

Members in Attendance: Joe Angel, Daniel Deutsch, Rick Gustafson, Deek Heykamp, Wayne Kingsley, Patrick LaCrosse, Susan Lindsay, Susan Pearce, Owen Ronchelli, Chris Smith

Others: Adam Matar, Kaiser; Lee Perlman

Staff Attendance: Kristin Betz, Kay Dannen, Julie Gustafson, Jamie Jeffrey, Denyse McGriff, Shoshanna Oppenheim

1. Meeting to Order:

Meeting was called to Order by Rick Gustafson.

2. FTA Grant Status:

Rick Gustafson reported that a delegation consisting of Oregon Senators and Congressmen had a meeting with the new Secretary of Transportation. They were told to make sure that the Loop project includes the word stimulus to insure that it will be dealt within the next 90 days. There is still the issue of the "Dear Colleague" letter that the Bush administration sent out that stated that the FTA will fund projects based on a project meeting the cost-effectiveness level. This letter will be revoked, but until that occurs it is a road block for the project. Neil McFarlane from TriMet has a meeting scheduled with the FTA Region 10 manager who reaffirmed the need to emphasize the Stimulus aspect of the project in all dealings. 50% of the Stimulus funds must be used for projects that can start in the next 120 days, a criteria which the Loop project meets.

Right behind the Stimulus issue is the Fiscal Year 2009-10 Budget which we are currently in for \$50 million. Congress is on a break this week, but is supposed to be resolving the budget and passing it by the March 6, 2009 deadline. This is a second route we can use to keep our project on their minds. Our Congressmen and Senators have banded together to help keep our project on the list and to get the monies approved. Chris Smith asked if the FY Budget will still be a two year process to get the \$75 million (\$50 million the first year, \$25 million the second). Gustafson responded that yes, that would be the route with the Budget.

Pat LaCrosse asked when we would be ready to start construction. Gustafson responded that we should be at 100% Final Design April, 1 2009 for the Water Line with notice to proceed May 1, 2009. We also have the contract to issue for purchasing the cars which we would like to do May 2009. Also there is the purchase of track which has a lead time of 18 months that should also be placed in May.

Deek Heykamp asked if we package the Loop Project as a Stimulus project, would a different project get bumped off the list that otherwise would not have been funded since we have an appropriation for the project. Gustafson responded that the FTA has \$750 million in funds to spend exclusively on projects through the Stimulus package. Currently in our region there are only two projects that are eligible for the Stimulus funds: the Green Line and the Loop Project. The Green Line has already been fully funded to date. Chris Smith asked how the figure of 600 jobs was generated that has been associated with our project. Gustafson responded that it was an estimate put together based on past experience in construction projects.

Gustafson added that the City and TriMet are doing a great job helping us with this process. Things are heading in the right direction but there is still no person that is stepping up to say that it is time to process our application.

Shoshanna Openheim reported to the committee about a conference she went to last week in New York for the National Organization of Transportation Officials. Other cities around the country are dealing with the same transportation issues we see here in Portland. Congressman Blumenauer was the lunch time keynote speaker. Oppenheim added that several of the cities were asking for more funding for the maintenance of existing systems.

3. Parking Study:

Last month a parking study was presented to the committee. There is a publication available to those who wish to review it. Rick Gustafson asked the committee for any feedback or comments on the material as well as the best way to get the information out to the community so they may review it and get feedback to us.

Joe Angel commented that he has a problem with the criteria used to replace the lost parking. He feels that the distance of 400ft is too far to be of any practical value to the business that has lost the parking in front of the store. Gustafson added that he wouldn't consider the 400ft a criteria but rather a classification. Pat LaCrosse added that with the Primary parking there is a loss of 108 spaces and it's only when the secondary parking is added that there is a gain in parking. Also, some of the secondary parking could be as much as a half mile away from a business that loses parking. Susan Pearce asked if the secondary parking could be used for employees to help ease the parking displacement. Angel stated that employees, especially those that start early in the morning or work late into the night, prefer parking closer in to the business and often it's for safety reasons. Susan Lindsay seconded Angel's concern about the displaced parking.

Daniel Deutsch asked if streetcar will help alleviate some of the problem, allowing for people to park a little further away and ride streetcar to where they need to go. Gustafson responded that the study was done with the intention to review the number of spaces that would be lost due to stations and to see where any possible spaces could be added. This study was not meant to imply that the problem is solved with the secondary parking. For retail to be truly effective they need as much access as possible including transit, parking, and pedestrian access. Chris Smith asked if the Storm Water Quality Replacement requirements were still causing lost parking. Gustafson responded that we changed the criteria for this project. The new system is to maximize the number of parking spots available on the block after the stop is put in, and then to use anything less than a parking spot that is left over to fill in with the storm water mitigation. Brad Perkins added that to help increase the number of spots in the area is to also look at the driveways (how wide they are, are they abandoned), the truck loading zones, and other such parking impediments. Gustafson responded that those issues were not looked at in the parking study. He added that several of the lost spots were along 7th Avenue in the Lloyd District. Those spots were eliminated for the addition of the future Cycle Track.

Joe Angel made a motion that a work group be formed to look at all the tools that a traffic professional has at their disposal (including time limits, mitigation possibilities, etc.) to evaluate the parking supply in the district and help solve the problem of lost parking and parking mitigation. Brad Perkins seconded the motion. Gustafson reminded the committee that there is a difference between pure mitigation and looking into changing the policy used to manage and plan parking. There is a need to evaluate the policy used in parking management and it should be done comprehensively including the businesses and neighborhoods that the parking affects. Deek Heykamp added that having a type of marketing campaign to educate the customers and community on how to best utilize the parking that is available as well as the transportation in the area could help with parking mitigation.

Susan Lindsay commented that there needs to be an overall strategy that includes the neighborhoods out to 14th or 15th that already see encroachment of vehicles parked on their streets by the employees of businesses along the MLK and Grand corridor which would only worsen with the implementation of shorter time limits or meters. Owen Ronchelli added that on street parking has a finite limit that can't be increased so the best plan is to better manage the parking to insure that the parking available is best serving the constituents in the area. Gustafson responded that these are all great ideas and that he would like to invite a couple of people to join the next PAC meeting to help discuss these issues. Susan Pearce added that she would like to include someone from TriMet to help add information about future transportation plans into the parking management discussions. Wayne Kingsley added that the Central Eastside is a regional attractor and that we need to make sure that those people are considered in any planning and/or mitigation in the area.

Joe Angel's motion was revisited and approved unanimously.

4. Schedule for Public Presentations:

Rick Gustafson asked the committee to help us get the word out that we are in a serious stage of this project where we need to make sure that we have thoroughly canvassed the area to make sure that everyone knows about the project and has the opportunity to voice their opinion. Once we finish the design work and have biddable construction drawings it becomes very costly to make changes.

Outreach presentations/meetings with the public are scheduled as follows:

March 3, 2009, 3:30pm: CEIC Meeting

March 5, 2009, 11:45pm: Lloyd District Association Luncheon

March 5, 2009, 3:30pm: TMA Board Meeting

Presentations are also being arranged with other Neighborhood and Business Associations.

5. Other Business:

No other business was discussed.

6. Public Comment:

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

Next Streetcar Loop PAC meeting: 2:00 – 3:30pm, Wednesday, March 18, 2009, Lloyd Center Tower, 825 NE Multnomah, 2nd floor conference room.