

Portland Streetcar Loop Project Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, July 15, 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; Patrick LaCrosse; Sarah Masterson; Owen Ronchelli; Chris Smith

Others: Lee Perlman

Staff Attendance: Kay Dannen, Julie Gustafson

1. Meeting to Order:

Meeting was called to Order by Rick Gustafson.

2. FTA Grant Status:

The FTA is scheduled to notify Congress by July 29, 2009 of their intent to provide \$75 million to the Portland Streetcar Loop Project. We have been providing enormous amounts of documentation to the FTA in preparation for their notification to Congress. We have five bid packages associated with this project. The package for the electrical work is held up until we receive the Construction Grant Agreement. Daniel Deutsch asked if the electrical package is on the critical path. Rick Gustafson responded that construction is not on the critical path, but that we want to lock down the prices so we know where we are. The critical path item is the vehicle order. City Council has approved the contract with United Streetcar, LLC. The intergovernmental agreement for the \$20 million from the state has been signed by the city and we are awaiting signatures from the state. We need to get the Notice to Proceed to United Streetcar, LLC by the end of July 2009 to receive the vehicles in time for revenue service to open on schedule in spring 2012.

Owen Ronchelli asked if we might benefit from the price reduction on materials. Gustafson responded that it is possible that we have already benefited from a favorable environment in the bids we have received. Once the FTA sends notice to Congress we will receive the money at the end of the 60 day Congressional review process. Gustafson added that the FTA has notified us that they won't issue the Construction Grant Agreement until we have a formal agreement with Union Pacific Railroad for the air rights for the overpass to OMSI over the train tracks. Union Pacific has responded to our request stating that they do not have a problem with our plans at this time but will not sign an agreement until they have 100% drawings. Chris Smith asked why the County and ODOT signed off on less than 100% drawings and UP won't. Gustafson responded that it's because ODOT and the County are closer to us.

The draft transportation bill from Congressmen Oberstar and DeFazio has been released. Though there is not much direct discussion about streetcars, there are several promising passages that will be beneficial for streetcar projects.

3. Portland City Council Meeting June 10:

The Portland City Council approved the contract with Stacy and Witbeck for water utility relocation on Grand Avenue (\$7.1 million).

4. Portland City Council Meeting July 8:

The Portland City Council approved the contract to purchase 6 vehicles from Oregon Iron Works/United Streetcar, LLC. The City Council also approved the contract with Stacy and Witbeck to purchase rail for \$4.5 million.

5. Portland City Council Meeting July 22:

Scheduled for City Council action on July 22 is the formation of the Northrup Loop Local Improvement District and Contract Amendment for Project Management Services.

6. Northrup Loop Local Improvement District:

The Northrup Loop LID is on the agenda for the City Council Wednesday July 22, 2009 to start the process of forming the LID. It extends from Lovejoy to Quimby and from 8th to 14th. The Pearl LID will fund a portion of the additional costs to extend the Loop alignment to Northrup. In this LID the assessment is larger on the square footage than on the assessed value since the greatest benefit will be to properties that have yet to develop. This LID will include residential properties. 15 years ago in the first LID there were 350 owner occupied homes, in the same district there are now 6000 owner occupied homes. There is a minimum assessment of \$100 and 960 of the 1040 units in the Pearl District are assessed under \$300. The proposal still has to go through the City Council process. Wednesday's presentation is simply a resolution to begin the process. Owen Ronchelli asked if there are signatures needed to finalize the LID. Gustafson responded that there are two ways to go about forming an LID, the first is a petition and the second is for the City Council to initiate the process. We have always gone the second route. Chris Smith asked what the tone is from the phone calls Gustafson has received to date. Gustafson responded that the phone calls at this point are more about confusion and a lack of understanding of the process of forming an LID.

7. Maintenance Facility:

We will be adding a new maintenance facility and track under the I-405 overpass adjacent to the current maintenance facility. The new building will have more specialized maintenance purposes such as a wheel truing facility. The new configuration will have storage for 22 vehicles which is the exact number needed to close the Loop. Chris Smith asked if the three blocks shown in the plans are the extent of future development or if there are further plans to extend the maintenance facility. Gustafson responded that he does not foresee any plans beyond the three blocks pictured but that there may be some changes made to increase vehicle storage.

8. Loop Operations:

Gustafson asked the PAC for their input into operations for the Loop. The Loop will play a much larger role in the transit system than most people realize. The current alignment costs \$5.6 million to operate a 7 train operation and for an additional \$4 million we could run the Loop with 5 trains from OMSI to the Pearl and have both lines run at 12 minute frequency. A second option is to run both alignments as 6 train operations with 15 minute frequency everywhere but downtown between PSU and the Pearl which would be 7-8 minute frequency where the two lines would overlap. When we close the Loop we would like to run 7 trains on the Amber line and 10 trains on the Aqua line. Both lines would have 12 minute frequency with a 6 minute frequency from the Pearl to Riverplace where the trains overlap. Chris Smith asked if it was possible that when the Loop opens if we go with option B (6 trains on each alignment) to have one train per hour go from the east side to NW 23rd instead of into downtown. It would still decrease streetcar frequency in the NW but they would gain direct destinations as compensation.

Joe Angel commented that we need a marketing plan for whichever plan we use. He believes that frequency is what makes people chose this mode of transit over getting in their car. Pat LaCrosse asked what will happen when Lake Oswego opens. Gustafson responded that it will be an extension of the Amber line and the frequency will remain the same just with added trains to maintain frequency.

Gustafson reminded the committee that there is the outstanding issue of the fare discrepancy between the east side and west side. Chris Smith commented that if we go with option B and introduce a \$1 fare at the same time it would send a positive message to the NW and South Waterfront. Daniel Deutsch commented that from a marketing point it would be good to stress the added connections provided between communities by the Loop. Owen Ronchelli asked if any calculations had been done to determine the benefit of going to a \$1 fare for everyone. Gustafson responded that there hasn't been a study of the \$1 fare at this time.

LaCrosse commented that OMSI will be relying on TriMet and Streetcar to supplement their parking once the bridge opens in 2015 since the supplemental parking they rent currently will be developed and will become unavailable in the future. OMSI will be hoping for a minimum of 30% of their visitors to arrive using public transit and that having a seamless system is critical. Gustafson added that a good long term goal would be to investigate a smart card system that could be a distance based fare for all transit including buses and light rail as well as Streetcar.

Gustafson reminded the committee that we also need to keep the Portland Streetcar System Concept Plan in mind when discussing any fare changes as there are up to 70 miles of track that could be added in the future and could become an integral part of the transit system. The Loop has been a different conversation because it is a line that does not currently exist but it is something we have been working towards. The idea of a central city rather than a downtown has been a goal for Portland since the Central City Plan was adopted 21 years ago.

9. Other Business:

No other business was discussed.

10. Public Comment:

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

Next Streetcar Loop PAC meeting: 2:00 – 3:30pm, Wednesday, August 19, 2009, Lloyd Center Tower, 825 NE Multnomah, 2nd floor conference room.