

Portland Streetcar Loop Project Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 4, 2011, 8:30-11:00 a.m., Lloyd 700 Building, 700 NE Multnomah, 3rd floor conference room

Members in Attendance: Hank Ashforth, chair; Paul Carlson; Susan Pearce; Brad Perkins; Barbara Spencer; Owen Ronchelli

Others: Bill Crawford

Staff Attendance: Kay Dannen, Julie Gustafson, Rick Gustafson, Patrick Sweeney

1. Meeting Called to Order:

Hank Ashforth, Chair, opened the meeting.

2. Loop Construction Update:

Hank Ashforth and Kay Dannen updated the committee on the Loop Construction. Construction is on time and on budget. Track construction in front of the Convention Center will continue through mid-July 2011. Track construction on the I-84 Overpass will continue through August 2011. Brad Perkins stated that he is really impressed by Stacy and Witbeck and their speed and efficiency.

3. Vehicles

Rick Gustafson reported that the production of the vehicles for the Loop is on schedule. The one component that could impact the schedule is the propulsion system by Elin. Elin is currently on schedule but are working with a new team at United Streetcar. The first car is scheduled to be delivered July 2012. Susan Pearce asked about the American made propulsion system. Gustafson responded that United Streetcar is working with Rockwell Automation out of Wisconsin on a propulsion system for the prototype vehicle. Brad Perkins asked if United Streetcar will be able to produce vehicles at a lower price than overseas manufacturers. Gustafson responded that currently their price is very close to the price of their competitors. Hank Ashforth added that the "Buy America" regulation on Federal grants is their leg up.

4. Opening Date:

The Opening Date for the Loop is September 21, 2012.

5. Operations Funding:

Funding agreements for the Loop have yet to be finalized.

6. Service Allocation:

Rick Gustafson reported to the committee that the recommendation for Opening Loop service is to run from OMSI, through the Pearl, down 10th/11th to 10th & Market where it will make the turn. Streetcar is projecting that travel time for the Loop will be between 86 and 91 minutes during peak travel times for the proposed route. The best service that could be provided on the Loop is 14-16-minute service with a 6-train Loop operation. It is possible that non-peak travel time could be as low as 75 minutes which would allow for a 15-minute service with only 5 trains. Once the line is completed and accepted, streetcar will begin running trains on the system to train operators and then to start working out the bugs in the system to increase efficiency. That is the time when streetcar and PBOT will evaluate how the signal system could be adjusted to increase efficiency of both trains and traffic.

With the existing line, the recommendation is to maintain a 12 to 13-minute service and not be concerned about evenly spaced service on 10th and 11th with the overlap of the two lines. Patrick Sweeney asked how ridership will be calculated. Gustafson responded that as part of the Loop project we are adding automated passenger counters that will help with ridership count accuracy. Brad Perkins asked if the majority of new operators will come from TriMet. Gustafson responded that all of the operators are TriMet employees and that the new operators will all be current light rail operators. TriMet operators are hired first as bus drivers, then they can be trained as light rail operators and then they can become Streetcar Operators.

Perkins asked what the priorities will be if streetcar can locate more operating funds. Gustafson responded that the top priority will be to extend the Loop service to Portland State. Paul Carlson stated that at the CEIC Land Use meeting on Tuesday there was a question about “Close the Loop” and the funding. He asked where the funding might be found and how the costs are broken down. Gustafson responded that the construction on SW Moody that raises the street and puts streetcar double-tracked in the street is the first part of closing the Loop. Beyond that there are three components: 1) \$7.8 million to install all of the pieces on the bridge that would allow streetcar to connect onto the bridge; TriMet differed this track cost from their original budget but have prioritized this piece to be funded from the contingency; 2) \$10.4 million for the track connecting the tracks at OMSI to the bridge and Moody to the bridge as well as the automatic trip stop system that must be installed on all our cars before our cars can run on TriMet’s tracks. The current plan is to fund this portion 50% federal and 50% local. The process of finding the \$5 million from the federal government has begun; the city has already put in place the local funding through the new Transportation System Development Charge Overlay District; 3) the purchase of additional vehicles as well as a turn-around in the Lloyd District.

Perkins asked where the turn-around will be located. Gustafson responded that there have been many discussions about possible locations, but the final decision will be when funding is secured for “Close the Loop”. Perkins followed up with a question about the Broadway Bridge lifts and how that might impact service. Gustafson responded that it will impact service which is why Nextbus is vital, as the passengers can be notified about delays. Gustafson added that there will be more variations in service on the east side.

Hank Ashforth reported on the public art that will be installed along the Loop. There are 3 locations: Left Bank/Rose Quarter; Morrison Bridgehead; Hawthorne Bridgehead. Dannen added that money has been added to the budget to include art etching on all of the Loop stops’ shelters. Perkins asked if there would be any reference of the historical trolley and the historical route along Grand/MLK. Gustafson responded that there will be acknowledgement of the past including an exhibit at the Architectural Heritage Center on the history of streetcar in Portland in coordination with the Loop Opening. Carlson added that OMSI is in discussion with Kay Dannen and TriMet to plan the station areas and make them similar with educational placards. The area will be surrounded by rail with the new Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation Museum, the Light Rail, the Streetcar as well as Amtrak/Union Pacific.

7. Fare Study:

Patrick Sweeney reported on the Fare Study that is being conducted by PBOT, the City and TriMet. If the system were to open today with the current fare policy an inequity would exist between the two lines. The fare study is examining 3 concepts. Concept 1 is a Streetcar-Only Fare that would cover

the entire Streetcar system, which would be a less expensive fare than the Zone 1-2 fare. Owen Ronchelli asked if the Streetcar Only Fare would still work with TriMet's system. Sweeney responded that they are working with TriMet to ensure a seamless system. Concept 2 is a Streetcar and Bus central city fare zone that would allow for riders to pay a lower fare to ride the streetcar or busses within the central city. The boundary line for this fare zone option is under discussion to best serve all entities as well as the riders. Brad Perkins asked who will have the final decision on this. Sweeney responded that the final decision will occur after the fare study is completed. Input will be sought from the PSI Board, the TriMet Board, City Council, the Streetcar CAC and the Loop PAC as well as other groups. Concept 3 is similar to Concept 2 but would include MAX as well as Streetcar and busses and would eliminate the Free Rail Zone.

There are two key dates to consider for these options. The first is September 2012 when the Loop to OMSI opens and the second is 2015 when the full Loop, Milwaukie Light Rail and the Transit Bridge open. Susan Pearce asked what will happen when streetcar starts to extend out of the central city and how that might impact fare zones. Sweeney responded that another component to the study is looking into the fare collection policy that might eventually lead towards a distance-based fare rather than a zone-based fare.

The next step for the Fare Study is to take the options and begin formulating possible fare and revenue numbers to add to the discussion.

The next meeting for the Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee will be Tuesday, June 14, 2011, 2:00PM – 3:30PM, Lloyd Tower, 825 NE Multnomah, 2nd floor conference room next to the Sky Bridge

Please call Kay Dannen at 503/478-6404 or email at dannen@portlandstreetcar.org if you have any questions regarding this committee or have items for the agenda. The CAC meetings are open to the public.