

Portland Streetcar Eastside Steering Committee Meeting

May 21, 2003, Oregon Convention Center, King Board Room, 2:00PM

Members in attendance: Hank Ashforth, chair; Jeff Blosser; Mike Bolliger, Rex Burkholder, Sue Pearce for Donna Forsberg, Tom Markgraf, Bill Medak, Shelli Romero for Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey, Dee Walsh, Brant Williams, Michael Powell

Staff attendance: Kay Dannen, Rick Gustafson, Alan Lehto, Steve Iwata, Dave Unsworth, Denyse McGriff, Sean McCusker, Sloan Schang

Others: Owen Ronchelli, Wayne Kingsley, Susan Lindsay

1. Meeting called to order

The meeting was called to order by Michael Powell, in the absence of a chair and vice chair. All meetings are open to the public.

2. Review of Recommendations

Rick started the discussion on the draft Eastside Streetcar Alignment Study and the recommendation needed by the Steering Committee. The only body to endorse this study so far has been the Portland Streetcar Board of Directors on June 3, 2003. They encourage the Committee to continue its role in overseeing governmental approvals of the Committee recommendations, an ongoing public process, development of funding strategies, initial steps in implementation of the Eastside Streetcar Phase 1 and further study of alternative alignments of the Eastside Streetcar Phase 2 and 3 south of the Lloyd District through the Central Eastside Industrial Area, to OMSI and across the Willamette River, as recommended in the Eastside Streetcar Alignment Study (ESAS).

Bill referred to page 5 and 10 and that boundaries for Phase I do not match. Phase I should be to Oregon Street not 7th Avenue as stated on page 5.

Mike B. – on page 9 the report should indicate that 6th Avenue currently has no signalization and only one-half of the street is zoned properly for the Streetcar route.

Rick indicated TriMet has a desire to see MLK as well as other streets studied in more detail.

Susan – Does not understand if all eastside districts are in agreement with the MLK/Grand alignment, what is the problem?

Rex – Metro also has indicated a desire to have more work done on MLK in particular.

Phase I they do not have any problem with and would like to see all the ramifications of an MLK/Grand route studied. Rex suggests that a traffic study be done.

Susan – the neighborhoods are excited about redevelopment on MLK/Grand.

Rex – further study on MLK needed to unearth unintended consequences of using this street.

Wayne Kingsley – bottom line someone not happy with the alignment so keep on studying. Is the project not interested in a local improvement district (LID) financing plan as part of project financing? If they are, MLK/Grand are the best options.

Mike Powell – The current project had a component of LID funding.

Wayne – Central Eastside a poor district compared to Lloyd Center.

Denyse – MLK viaduct is scheduled to be narrowed to slow traffic down on MLK and Grand. MLK and Grand are to be made pedestrian streets. Things are already in place to constrain auto traffic on MLK and Grand.

Susan – Understands that Metro and TriMet have some concerns with the alignment on MLK in particular.

Rick – verified with the group that the recommendation to use MLK/Grand is OK to list as the alignment of choice of this steering group. There will be continued study and discussion of MLK/Grand and the timing of construction will be dependent on the success in Phase I. Recommendations need to go to Metro and JPACT and work will need to be done to amend the Regional Transportation Plan to include the proposed Eastside alignment.

David Unsworth – Metro has done a lot of transit planning and will want to make sure that connections are good; how do they work for pedestrians, difficulty of transfers, etc.

Michael – funding strategy easier for Lloyd Center – more major stakeholders.

Rex – Metro is taking no position on the alignment, but rather bringing up issues of concern, which he would like the project to investigate.

Mike B. – happy to see OMSI in phase II.

Rex – correction to page 9. Current connection with TriMet line; need to add streetcar better in center X zone.

Susan – neighborhood supports MLK/Grand pedestrian crossings.

Wayne – East Marquam Bridge phase 4 a key part of the Streetcar project and part of the key strategy for redevelopment.

Rick – Importance for a good bicycle network. Bicycles need to work in mixed traffic. Currently 7th Avenue is a designated bike street. If we go for Federal funding, we will compete intensely for New Starts funding. FTA authorizations has added a ranking system to their process.

Tom Markgraf – moved that the Eastside Streetcar Steering Committee adopt the recommended Eastside Streetcar Alignment Study as drafted. Bill seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed by the steering committee.

Hank – thanked the Steering Committee for all their hard work and dedication to the Eastside Project and would hope to have continued participation from all steering committee members in the future.

3. Presentation Schedule

Rick discussed the current schedule for presentations to Multnomah County and the Portland Development Commission. Multnomah County is scheduled for June 5 and PDC is scheduled for June 11. Other presentations will be made to Portland City Council where we expect an adoption of a resolution recommending the current Eastside recommended alignment as approved by the Steering Committee on May 21, 2003. The Portland Streetcar board passed resolution 03-7 on June 3 endorsing the draft Eastside Streetcar Alignment Study (ESAS) report and the Phase 1 Eastside Streetcar alignment and encourages the Committee to continue its efforts in further studying options for Phase II and III. It is expected that the ESAS will also be presented to JPACT. Hank to work with Rick to determine whom from the Steering Committee should be attending these meetings. More than likely we need representatives from the different districts at these meetings.

4. Status of Study Budget

Once all the above meetings take place, requests will be made to the City for amendments to the City of Portland Transportation System Plan (TSP). Conceptual engineering would also start in several areas:

- Broadway Bridge (determining the cost impact)
- Utility location issues
- Bicycle issues
- Start the Federal process
- Start the Environmental Impact Statement process
- Participate in the FTA ranking system
- More development of MLK and Grand

We expect to have a categorical exception for the MLK/Grand portion of the alignment because we are at least 200 feet from water. Also work on the financing package will begin. City has designated Eastside Streetcar as its number one earmark for HUD money in the amount of \$1 million dollars. We expect to hear on this earmark in July 2003, but will not see the money until next May 2004.

\$1,250,000 is enough to do conceptual engineering only.

Wayne asked whether we would be doing a traffic study on issues on Broadway/Weidler/MLK and Grand. Rick indicated that the project would be doing that.

Brant indicated that Commissioner Francesconi recommended that we provide a tour of the alignment for Congressman Blumenauer and Senator Smith and other appropriate individuals.

Hank and others will work to set this up.

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Steering Committee is to be determined following City Council adoption.