

Portland Streetcar Eastside Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 8, 2004, Shiels Oblatz Johnsen, 520 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 400, Portland, OR 97204, 2:00pm

Members in Attendance: Mike Bolliger, Rex Burkholder, Dick Cooley, Wayne Kingsley, Tom Markgraf, Bill Medak, Susan Pearce, Brad Perkins, Michael Powell, Dee Walsh

Others: Chris Smith, Lee Perlman, Joe Angel, Vern Rifer

Staff Attendance: Kay Dannen, Rick Gustafson, Carter MacNichol, Phil Sellinger, Denyse McGriff, Ross Roberts, Richard Brandman, Owen Ronchelli, Dave Unsworth, Sloan Schang

1. Meeting called to order.

Rick Gustafson called the meeting to order in absence of our chair, Hank Ashforth and Vice Chair, Rick Parker. Michael Powell arrived and chaired the remainder of the meeting.

2. RFP for Conceptual Planning Consultant:

Carter MacNichol from Shiels Oblatz Johnsen reviewed the conceptual planning work scope. A selection committee is being formed to include the Steering Committee, PDC, PDOT, Metro and PSI. The selection committee is comprised of Denyse McGriff, PDC; Dave Unsworth, Metro; Phil Selinger, TriMet; Chris Smith, CAC; and Rick Parker, PSI and Steering Committee. Selection is anticipated to be completed by the end of October 2004. A budget of \$50,000 has been identified in order to proceed with this work. An RFP will be published the 1st week of November in the Daily Journal of Commerce.

Rex explained that the conceptual planning work differs from an alternative analysis study and will compliment that work. Conceptual planning will identify what side of the street to operate the streetcar, potential cost impacts to the bridge and railroad crossing. Rex requested that bicycle movements be considered in the planning process.

A letter from Neil McFarlane, executive director, Capital Project and Facilities, TriMet was distributed to steering group members and others for review. Neil suggested the Eastside Streetcar project, if the conceptual planning work is to best inform the Alternative Analysis, language under Task A.1.1. of the draft scope of work should be expanded to include in consideration the nature and scope of the alternatives to be carried into the Alternative Analysis. This should include alternative modes, alignment and right-of-way treatment, and not be focused solely on the MLK and Grand couplet. Other reasonable alignments should be explored. The letter should be taken to express caution on methods of studying the eastside alignment to make sure conceptual planning and AA compliment each other.

Joe Angel questioned whether once we study the preferred alignment recommended by this committee, and if another alignment option was chosen, would some of the conceptual planning work transfer? Carter indicated it would depend on the specific alignment change.

Rick Gustafson indicated that the federal process would require that we look at all alternatives and to evaluate what are our chances of getting money from FTA.

Streetcar RiverPlace and Gibbs Extensions both attempted to get FTA funding allocated but failed. Little Rock gave up on the federal process within six months and brought in a project under the \$25 million cap and now have a new line operating.

There was some concern by committee members that we are wasting money by pushing forward without any guarantees from FTA for funding sources. Chris Smith recommended that there will always be uncertainty, but we need to move forward. Markgraf concurred and said TriMet's letter was meant as a heads-up, not a project buster.

Joe asked if this project could be done without federal funding. Mike Bollinger indicated the committee had chosen a preferred alignment, DEA has said from a traffic standpoint, the preferred alignment has no fatal flaw and that we should move on. Rex believes the conceptual planning report will support and be helpful for the AA study. The cost of a full AA study is about \$800,000. Federal support for the Eastside alignment phase 1 to OMSI could be as much as \$45 million.

3. Metro Alternatives Analysis:

The eastside streetcar project is scheduled to begin Alternatives Analysis (AA) in fall of 2004. The AA is required in order to be eligible for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding. The project must also meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The AA would be completed in two phases:

Phase I would consist of defining the scope of the AA and laying out federal funding strategies for either the existing FTA New Starts or proposed Small Starts programs.

Phase II would consist of performing the AA and initiating the environmental review. A Locally Preferred Alternative would be selected at the completion of the AA and environmental process.

The alternative analysis startup being done by Metro will commence approximately 9/1/04 and complete 1/31/05. Scope of work will be purpose/needs statement, base line, alternatives, methodology and economic development.

Some discussion was held on possible alternative routes, which would entail rezoning in the Central Eastside, which all agreed was a much bigger issue and process and needs to be taken up at other venues.

4. MTIP Funding Request:

PDOT has requested MTIP funds from Metro. The \$1 million request has been recommended to be included in the first cut of funding which is 150% of the available. The next step of the process involves public comment. The request is for construction funds to be available in FY 07-08. Metro has received 73 applications for transportation priorities 2006-09 funding by the June 30, 04 deadline. Applications requested funding for projects totaling \$141 million for an estimated \$60.5 million available. This begins the "narrowing" process to identify which projects in the 2004 interim Federal Regional Transportation Plan will receive regional flexible funds, which come from two different federal grant programs; the surface transportation program and the congestion mitigation/air quality program. Projects have been ranked based on technical criteria and will be

released in October for review and narrowing. Public comments will be taken between October 15 and December 6, 2004. We can expect a decision in Spring 2005. It has been recommended that members of this committee support this project by participating in one of the public listening posts, where testimony is taken in support of projects. It is also important the City of Portland stays supportive of the project.

5. Streetcar Extensions and Additional Cars:

The City of Portland is authorizing the acquisition of three streetcars as part of the extension to SW Gibbs. A delegation from Portland will visit Inekon in Czech Republic to select the cars and commence the formal contract negotiations for the additional vehicles. Currently, two manufacturers in the Czech Republic are producing streetcars and have offered PSI two different bids. The RiverPlace extension will open in March 05 and Gibbs will open in summer of '06. We will see an improvement in headway with the opening of the RiverPlace Extension.

6. Federal Legislation:

Richard Brandman, Metro indicated that no progress has been made with the federal authorization for transportation. There was some rumor of a lame duck session soon, but it cannot be confirmed. In six months we will know more about the bill so that we can better prepare our process for application.

7. Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Steering Committee is to be held on Wednesday, October 13, 2004, at 2:00p.m. at Lloyd Center Tower, 825 NE Multnomah, 2nd Floor conference room.