

Friends of Portland Streetcar

Thursday, 13 July 2023

Capital One Café Portland

Members present:

- Stephen Weber, Chair
- Lenny Anderson
- David Brandt
- Carolyn Brock

Guests:

- Dan Bower, Executive Director of Portland Streetcar, Inc.

Mid-Year Streetcar Update From Dan

- Grand and Davis Queue Jump
 - Stephen has heard from Streetcar and TriMet Bus operators the queue jump at Grand and Davis on the Eastside is not working as well as it could.
 - Busses have to wait for a light cycle to get the queue jump.
 - Streetcar can call the signal ahead of time, busses cannot.
 - Bus operators are unable to see the signal for the lane ahead of time because it has louvers on it.
 - Dan noted TriMet was asked if they would like any special priority for busses when the signal was rebuilt, and TriMet did not. He will bring the feedback to TriMet for them to reconsider.
- Status of Car 008
 - Stephen remarked car 008 appears to have been out of service for an extended period of time.
 - Car 008 is currently undergoing routine maintenance and is expected to return to service in the coming weeks.
- Update on Car 031
 - It was hoped to have car 031 in service prior to Fall signups so the Eastside could have 15 -minute headways restored.
 - A mechanical issue has prevented it from going in to revenue service in time.
 - Brookville has completed a fix, and it is hoped to have the car enter service next month.
 - Only three operators have been certified on the car so far.
 - Car 032 is built and undergoing testing at Brookville.
- Cars 001 and 002 have ongoing HVAC issues
 - Car 001 frequently only has HVAC at one end of the car (usually the non-operating end); has been an issue since the start of the year.
 - Car 002 is only recirculating the air and does not have working AC.
 - Both cars are waiting on support and parts from ThermoKing.
- Update on retrofitting original fleet with cameras and new displays
 - All cars will be moving to the new digital signage and announcements.
 - Announcements will now be done using text to speech, similar to the change recently made by TriMet on the MAX.
 - Dan mentioned PSI is considering using a different voice on each line in hopes it will make it easier to identify what line is being ridden. The group agreed this is a good idea to pursue.
 - Retrofitting the cars with the new equipment will take place starting in January, and it is expected each car will be out of service for about a week to complete the work.

- PSU Urban Center platform rebuild
 - A contract to rebuild the platform has been awarded. It was hoped work would start this summer, but there have been delays in procuring the materials.
 - PSU would become the first - and only - platform where doors would open on both sides.
 - This is being done to address safety concerns with passengers transferring to TriMet on the other side of the car running in front of a car getting ready to depart the platform.
- Upcoming Broadway Bridge closure
 - The bridge will be closed July 15th and 16th to complete inspections.
 - The entire bridge will be closed for five months next year to complete a total replacement of the bridge surface.
 - A and B-Loop trains will run, but will only be crossing via the Tilikum Crossing.
 - TriMet will also be impacted, and there will be no bus bridge to replace service across the Broadway Bridge.
- Ridership flat for three months
 - Software issue with the passenger counters is fixed, numbers are believed to be correct and typical for this time of year
- Umo (formerly NextBus) display replacements
 - The majority of ticket machines and Umo displays no longer work.
 - Dan confirmed PSI will be phasing out usage of Umo.
 - PSI will be moving to the same systems used by TriMet (InIt for vehicle tracking and ConnectPoint for displays).
 - 25 screens and TTS buttons have been purchased from ConnectPoint. These are the same displayed used at FX platforms and some MAX platforms.
 - The displays and buttons require separate SIM cards, which is going to result in a larger cellular bill for PSI. This limited the number that could be purchased to start.
 - PSI is prioritizing the busiest platforms and those with multiple connections first.
 - 50 more will need to be purchased to fully transition to the new platforms.
 - Installation is planned to start in two weeks. The hope is to fully complete the transition by next summer.
- Platform ticket machines
 - Ticket machines that are out of service are now having stickers applied directing passengers to use Hop instead.
 - PSI is evaluating removing the machines and fully transitioning to payment via Hop only (including contactless credit/debit, Apple Pay, and Google Pay).
 - The city fully transitioned support of the machines from PBOT's parking division to PSI. In doing so, the city ended their agreement to maintain them.
 - Trying to train Streetcar maintenance staff on the machines and procuring replacement parts is proving to be too expensive to make a return on investment.
- Streetcar fares with TriMet increase next year
 - TriMet fares will increase by 30 cents in January.
 - C-Tran is also restoring some fares back to pre-COVID charges.
 - Streetcar will not be increasing fares.
 - Fare-free is still being considered, but this would be in far future as funding needs to be secured.
- Relationship with Intersection
 - The relationship between PSI and Intersection is very healthy.
 - Advertising revenue has exceed expectations and will greatly increase the number of capital projects PSI is able to complete.
- Fourth-generation fleet
 - RFP going out in roughly October.
 - Will replace cars 001-010 and 015.
 - Several potential bidders already identified (CAF, Stadler, Škoda, and Brookville).

- Battery-electric vehicles will be required to support extending the NS-Line to Montgomery Park and John's Landing. These extensions will not have overhead catenary.
- 100% low-floor cars are also desired.
- MP2H Project Update
 - Looking to complete land use decisions in the next few weeks.
 - Metro, TriMet, and the city are all onboard with the plan.
 - First housing built on the former ESCO site will have to be affordable housing.
 - A park will also be required, which Streetcar may run either through or around, depending on the shape of the park.
 - A Locally Preferred Alternative is estimated to be ready in September.
 - Still looking at 2025/2026 to break ground on the project.
 - Raising construction costs are a concern, but not expected to stop the project.
 - PSI may try to pitch the extension to Montgomery Park in conjunction with an extension to John's Landing as this is expected to be awarded a larger grant from the FTA.
 - The southern end of the NS would move from S Lowell and Bond to Hamilton Court, where the River's Edge hotel is located.
 - Streetcar would utilize the existing Willamette Shore Trolley tracks, with a new end of line terminus built for both at Hamilton Court.
 - The city has not decided yet if the tracks will become part of a paved extension to S Moody Ave (S Moody currently runs as a stub from Macadam at the Tesla facility down to Hamilton).

Next Meeting: Thursday, 17 August at 3:30pm. Location: Capital One Café Portland.