



American Public Transportation Association

2017 APTA Annual Conference & EXPO

Hyatt Regency Atlanta
265 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA 30303

Streetcar Subcommittee

Sunday October 8, 2017
11:30 am – 1:00 pm

<i>Timothy R. Borchers</i>	<i>Chair</i>
<i>Eric Sitiko</i>	<i>Vice Chair</i>
<i>James D. Schantz</i>	<i>Secretary</i>

Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions

Tim Borchers

Chair Tim Borchers called the meeting to order at 11:37 am and expressed the Subcommittee's thanks to Norm Jester of Herzog Transit Services for once again sponsoring lunch. A very large number of participants were present, by one count totaling 116.

Paul Grether, as outgoing subcommittee chair, noted in closing comments that one of the key lessons of the streetcar mode is how it brings so many diverse groups from government, transit, business, and citizens together, meaning coordination is essential. He also cited as an important development the close relationship the subcommittee has formed with the Community Streetcar Coalition over the past few years.

The sub committee's extended its thanks to Harry Mathis for his many years of participation and support. Harry is retiring as chairman of the Metropolitan Transit System of San Diego at the end of the year.

2. Meeting minutes from Baltimore, MD meeting - June 11, 2017

Jim Schantz

Secretary Jim Schantz reviewed the highlights of the Baltimore meeting as reported in the minutes for that meeting. There being no objection, the minutes were considered to be accepted.

3. Updates

- **Light Rail Technical Forum**

Tom Furmaniak

The Forum met earlier in the morning, seeing presentations on, MARTA's massive transit expansion plans; the Hampton Roads (Norfolk, VA) study to connect light rail to the Navy base; and the Durham-Orange light rail project in North Carolina. The forum's work plan includes updating the light rail vs. streetcar explanatory document published several years ago, They would also like to organize a group to focus on state of good repair, and are looking for volunteers.

- **Light Rail and Streetcar Conference – October 21-23, 2018 in Jersey City**

Tom Furmaniak

The date for the conference is tentatively set for October 21-23, however they have just learned that Railvolution has scheduled their conference for the same weekend. Scheduling options to avoid this are currently being evaluated. The conference will include both Planning and Technical tracks, with five sessions in each. Abstracts of proposed topics are due in December 2017. Formal papers are not required, but abstracts and draft presentations will be reviewed.

- **Community Streetcar Coalition – next meeting April 16/17, 2018 New Orleans**

Jeff Boothe

Registration is now open for the annual streetcar summit, to be held in New Orleans on April 16 and 17, followed by an APTA Streetcar Subcommittee meeting the next day on the 18th. The CSC will poll its members to determine topics to be covered, which could include capital and operating expense comparisons, whether to collect fares or not, and many others.

- **Work Program Update**

John Smatlak

Safety – A paper covering state of the art in safety features unique to streetcars will be published in 2018. The paper will describe a baseline of safety that all operators should observe. State of the art in tramway safety technologies for vehicles and infrastructure and also areas for innovation, such as evolving driver assist systems, based on automobile collision avoidance technology. European manufacturers are making significant progress in this area, so there are being watched closely.

Modern Streetcar Guidelines – Five years have passed since this guideline document was developed and published by the subcommittee. A small working group will be formed to undertake a review given the number of new operators and the rapid advance in technology. The guideline document is intended to be used to assist in the modern streetcar procurements by covering all major decisions that need to be made in vehicle design and the consequences of each.

4. Presentations

- **Atlanta Streetcar**

Marwan Al-Mukhtar
Executive Director, Atlanta Streetcar

The line runs on an east/west alignment and covers 2.7 miles, offering 10 to 15 minute headways on a full day schedule seven days a week. The system has four Siemens S70 cars, which the management considers to be an excellent product. Major accomplishments over the past year with a new management team in place includes providing all governing documents to GDOT, closure of all 66 corrective action plan items identified by GDOT several years earlier, and substantial improvements in performance. Further service improvements are planned for 2018. Voters approved a \$2.6 billion transit expansion package including 50 miles of new streetcar routes, with five crosstown streetcar alignments plus the Beltline, connecting to the existing route. Parts of this planned network are now in NEPA. On the current route, Saturday and Sunday ridership is heavier than weekdays, and ridership has resumed an upward trend since fares were introduced. There is \$2.8 billion in 75 new development projects along the route. Recently the City of Atlanta began the process to transfer the streetcar line to MARTA.

- **Streetcar operations and maintenance**

Eric Sitiko
Operations Manager (RATPDev), Tucson Sun Link Streetcar, Tucson, AZ

The presentation posed the question “What happens after the honeymoon for new small systems as they mature.” A further discussion of this topic will be scheduled for the New Orleans meeting, and should lead to a work program focusing in this area and developing all best practices. Operators, planners, and equipment suppliers will all be encouraged to play a role. When a new line opens, everything seems wonderful as cars are under warranty and all infrastructure is in top condition. Then as warranties expire, the reality of maintaining a small fleet hits home when technology has changed and suppliers may no longer be around or producing parts. Software and hardware may only be compatible with obsolescent computers. Customer needs and expectations may change as well, with new fare collection technologies and passenger information systems. Streetcar management then needs to plan ahead to work around or change old technology. Operators need to avoid the temptation to push off capital budgets which will be needed to update technology. Also, systems with common equipment can work together, as Tucson, Portland, and Washington DC are now doing to share parts and address obsolescence and changing technology.

- **PCC Overhaul Project- SFMTA**

Lee Summerlot
Deputy Director, Rail Maintenance, SFMTA

Muni (SFMTA) has an active PCC overhaul program with 16 cars in the current contract with Brookville. The objective is to improve vehicle reliability and lengthen mean-time-between-failure. In this program the cars are fully gutted, seats are removed, wiring is pulled out, and the trucks are taken out. The pedal compartment is renewed with the important benefit of shorter rods. Contactor panels are replaced, the accelerator drums are renewed, and a new radio and camera system is installed. The steel underframes are repaired as needed and much of the upper body framing and sheeting is replaced. Cars go through an intensive set of acceptance tests when return to San Francisco. Operators are finding the rebuilt cars much improved. The project will wrap up by the end of 2018. Following that Muni is developing a plan to put more modern, reliable

propulsion systems in the pre-PCC historic fleet.

5. Suggested topics for 2018 APTA Rail Conference Streetcar Sessions

An attendee suggested an update on off-wire technology, given that real operational experience is now being recorded in the U.S. It was agreed that this is a timely topic.

6. Old Business – nothing to report

7. System Updates (planned, construction, existing)

- **Brooklyn-Queens (BQX)** – A construction start in 2019 is now the current deadline. It is expected that Mayor DeBlasio will be playing a more active role after the upcoming election.
- **Detroit** – Service began on May 12, with free fares until Labor Day. Fares have been charged since then, leading to a drop in ridership from around 5,000 per day to around 3,500. Project sponsors are pleased with that level

8. Other Business/Q&A

- 5:00 pm Sunday October 8, 2017 Tour of Atlanta Streetcar Facility

Tim Borchers

Marwan Al-Mukhtar
Executive Director, Atlanta Streetcar

9. Next meeting:

- Joint Streetcar Subcommittee and Community Streetcar Coalition, April 18, 2018 in New Orleans
- APTA Rail Conference, June 9, 2018, Denver, CO

10. Adjournment

Chair Tim Borchers declared the meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.

- Minutes prepared by Jim Schantz

Lunch sponsored by

