

APTA Streetcar Subcommittee Meeting

**Hosted by: APTA
Dallas, TX
June 3, 2012**

*Chair: Jim Graebner
Vice-Chair: Tom Hickey
Secretary: Tim Borchers*

Attendees: 52 attendees (Believe the number of attendees were nearer 64 based on a random headcount of those standing by the door and just outside that did not get an opportunity to sign in.
See attached for committee membership roster

Opening Remarks

- Introductory remarks and welcome from the Chair Jim Graebner. Chair thanked APTA for planning and hosting this meeting and he also thanked Steve Bonina of Stadler Rail US Inc. for providing the lunch enjoyed by participants.
- Jim Graebner reported that the APTA CEO Michael Melaniphy and APTA Chair Gary Thomas attended the Working Group on Modern Streetcar Guidelines. This is major initiative of the Streetcar Subcommittee. In addressing this working group, expressed their great interest in the guidelines document and encouraged committee to publish it as soon as possible (ideally before the end of 2012).
- The chair invited those present to introduce themselves.

Toronto Subcommittee Meeting

John Smatlak reported on plans for the Toronto special meeting to be held on August 13-14, 2012 followed by an optional trip to Thunder Bay on August 15 (note that the Thunder Bay trip is not available to employees of other carbuilders). Many changes are being made to Toronto's extensive streetcar system in preparation for the arrival of the Bombardier Flexity 100 percent low floor cars. Changes are being made to track, car stops, and current collection (from trolley pole to pantograph). As well a new maintenance facility is being built. All of this will be subject of presentations by TTC staff and technical tours. The Thunder Bay trip will allow participants to see the Flexity cars under construction at Bombardier's factory. Refer to www.heritagetrolley.org/NextMeeting6.htm for a link to the agenda for this meeting.

Modern Streetcar Procurement Guideline

Project manager John Smatlak reported on progress in development of the standard including the lengthy discussion in a well-attended meeting held that morning. The document now is being limited to four topic areas, each covered in a separate chapter (1 - Vehicle configuration, 2 - Vehicle/platform interface, 3 -

Vehicle/track interface, 4 – Power supply). The planned 5th chapter, Standards, is being removed at this stage as it is such a major area which will take considerable time to develop. The first four chapters (plus the glossary that has also been drafted) should be a very useful document without the standards chapter. The glossary has been formatted and circulated. Chapters 1 and 2 have also been formatted and circulated. Chapter 4 is now being circulated. Chapter 3 is to be redrafted based on the two subcommittee meetings on this date.

The guideline is not yet published but already is forming the basis of discussion for topics such as the ongoing level boarding discussion. In this area a timeline of the streetcar accessibility topic has been constructed showing how U. S. use of low floor technology comes years after adoption of ADA legislation. The issues of placement of track and configuration and height of passenger platforms have been strongly influenced by accessibility requirements and use of low floor designs. Different platform options for low floor/accessibility are defined and illustrated in the guidelines document with advantages/disadvantages of various approaches illustrated.

Paul Grether described Atlanta's experience. The use of mini high blocks with bridge plates for accessible entry into high floor vehicles is source of original FTA concepts for accessibility. Much of these concepts do not apply to boarding low floor vehicles. Regulations are dated and need revision. Atlanta has met its needs for the under-construction streetcar line by incorporating a number of different approaches from the list of varied approaches described above. Jeff Boothe stated that the TIGER program is first time FTA has had to address urban circulator needs in the area of accessibility. There will be a meeting on June 12th with FTA to begin discussion of this issue, highlighting the difference between light rail and streetcars. A significant issue is inclusion of side barriers on streetcar ramps. These are not appropriate for most streetcar use. The matter is complicated by the fact that compliance is enforced by the Department of Justice, not FTA, as ADA accessibility is a civil rights issue.

US DOT Street design document

The US DOT has recently released Sole Source Procurement for National Urban Street Design Guide. This document addresses new street design guidelines for cycling, pedestrians, and traffic but does not mention transit. The subcommittee leadership has suggested to APTA management that the association seek involvement in development of this guide to make certain streetcar needs are addressed.

Streetcar White Paper

Tom Hickey and Tom Furmaniak are drafting a document to describe the continuum of urban transit technology, and where streetcars fit on that scale. They plan to define the characteristics that make streetcars an appropriate choice. They are planning to draw from the 12 year old TRB/APTA light rail document and broaden it to include streetcars. A vocabulary of streetcar related terms will be included. The project is just getting started and the team is looking for volunteers to help. They hope to publish it in hard copy and also electronically so users may easily access parts of it for use in presentations.

12th National LRT & Streetcar Conference

- APTA provided an update as follows:
 - Conference will include LRT and Streetcars
 - Date: November 11 – 13, 2012

- Location – Salt Lake City
- There will be 5 planning sessions and 5 technical sessions
- TRB reported that they have received all the abstracts and are now in the process of requesting papers for the sessions. There will also a plenary session and several tours of the UTA system.

Applicability of fire codes to streetcar applications

Steve Bonina and Rich Krisak will be taking the lead in organizing an APTA approach to customizing standards to streetcar needs. They are considering including multiple classifications so properties could determine in which one they fall. This would be a desirable alternative to forcing streetcar operations to comply with NFPA 130. The subcommittee endorsed this effort.

Web site update

Jim Schantz reported on the current status of the subcommittee's web site, www.heritagetrolley.org, jointly sponsored with the Seashore Trolley Museum. The site is intended to provide background for planners, many from outside the transit field, who are considering heritage trolley or modern streetcar systems. News updates pertaining to existing and planned systems are posted regularly. A noteworthy recent development is the growing list of projects now moving to "Under Construction" status.

Streetcar Project Survey

Paul Grether reported on progress on this project which is supported by a full-time intern in Atlanta. Preliminary results have shown great diversity of project structures and sponsorship. The team is planning to present findings at the Salt Lake City conference. Survey results collected by a web-based system are enhanced by detailed follow-up phone interviews.

Committee Succession Planning

Jim Graebner stated that he will be stepping down as chair during the next mid-year meeting. He appointed a nominating committee of Tom Hickey, John Smatlak, Tim Borchers, and Jim Schantz to pick new chairman according to bylaws. The new chair will take over during the midyear meeting.

Next Meetings

Possible sites for a next meeting to be held in December 2012 or January 2013 have been reviewed by subcommittee leadership. The list has been narrowed to two sites: San Diego or a combination of Memphis and Little Rock. San Diego's heritage trolley operation on a downtown loop on the light rail system has started operation recently. Both Memphis and Little Rock have seen developments since prior committee meetings including new extensions and planning for further expansion. The selected site will be announced in coming months.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30.
Submitted by: Jim Schantz