



# Streetcar Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Philadelphia Marriott Downtown Hotel  
1201 Market St, Philadelphia, PA, US, 19107

**Sunday June 2, 2013**  
**11:30 AM – 1:00 PM**  
**Grand Ballroom Salon C, Level 5**

*James Graebner*      *Chair*  
*Tom Hickey*          *Vice Chair*  
*Tim Borchers*       *Secretary*

## MINUTES OF MEETING

1. **Welcome & Introductions** Jim Graebner  
Chairman Jim Graebner called the meeting to order at 11:40 am, welcomed everyone and thanked Siemens Industries, Inc. for sponsoring lunch. Attendees introduced themselves. The turnout was very large, with approximately 90 people in the room as the meeting began.

2. **Previous meeting minutes from Tucson, AZ March 8, 2013** Tim Borchers  
Minutes from the March meeting in Tucson were distributed to those requesting a copy and the minutes were accepted by acclamation.

This midyear meeting consisted of working sessions and a technical tour of the under-construction streetcar line in Tucson on Friday followed by a technical tour of the Phoenix light rail system and the proposed Tempe Streetcar on Saturday.

On March 7, the day prior to the meeting, subcommittee members, at the request of the City of Tucson, participated in a full day workshop to discuss issues surrounding the possible operation of the Old Pueblo volunteer group's streetcars intermixed with modern streetcars on the new line. A series of recommendations were documented for consideration by the Tucson parties.

3. **APTA Updates**
- 12<sup>th</sup> National LRT & Streetcar Conference, Salt Lake City, UT Tom Hickey

Tom Hickey reported that TRB sponsored the 12th National Light Rail Conference, Sustaining the Metropolis: LRT and Streetcars for Super Cities on November 11-13, 2012, in Salt Lake City, Utah. The conference focused on planning and design of light rail transit and streetcars. The conference was designed to add to the body of knowledge and real-world experiences with modern light rail transit and streetcar applications in order to improve new systems being planned, as well as those already in operation.

- APTA/Seashore Streetcar & Heritage Trolley website Jim Schantz

Jim Schantz briefly explained the background of the [www.heritagetrolley.org](http://www.heritagetrolley.org) site which the subcommittee established shortly after its formation and which is jointly hosted by

APTA and the Seashore Trolley Museum. A new web address, [www.streetcarcommittee.org](http://www.streetcarcommittee.org), has been added to reflect the fact that the site is not limited to heritage trolleys. The site was intended as an introductory resource for groups planning modern or heritage streetcar lines and as a means of communicating the subcommittee's activities. Recent changes include a table in the Future Systems section showing status of streetcar projects currently under construction. News notes about streetcar system planning are added to the Future Systems section regularly. Also new in the Planning section is a checklist of topics to consider when planning a streetcar system based on presentations by the Federal Transit Administration at a workshop for the Lowell (MA) streetcar project team in March 2013 (Planning > FTA Checklist).

- Streetcar Institutional Research Study Paul Grether  
Jonathan Weidman

This project is aimed at documenting the varied and often complex organizational structures used by different cities developing streetcar systems. Data gathering is underway under the direction of Jonathan Weidman. More progress will be reported at future meetings.

A related resource that may be useful in this project and for other subcommittee activities is the Urban Circulator section added by APTA to its website. From the home page, the sequence Home > Resource Library > Hot Topics > Urban Circulators leads to this area.

#### **4. Report on the Modern Streetcar Guideline** John Smatlak

John Smatlak reported that the Modern Streetcar Vehicle Guideline document has now been published after years of work in the subcommittee. John, who led the project, thanked all who participated in developing the guideline. The resulting document comprehensively covers issues and tradeoffs that groups planning to procure modern streetcars should consider as they plan vehicle procurement. The document may be found on APTA's standard website or from the subcommittee's site by following the sequence Technical > Modern Streetcar Vehicle Guideline.

#### **5. Work Program Activities**

- Level Boarding Technical Memo John Smatlak

A technical memo explaining the issues surrounding level boarding and accessible facilities for modern streetcars has been circulated for comment. Further developing this topic will be the topic of a dedicated work program. This will describe the decisions planners need to make early in a project's planning stage and will cover options and considerations that apply to different technical approaches.

- Application of NFPA 130 to Low Floor Vehicles John Smatlak

John Smatlak reported on the development of a draft problem statement "Application of NFPA-130 to Low-Floor Vehicles". The problem statement was drafted by an ad hoc working group comprised of individuals from several APTA committees working directly with Martin Schroeder. The draft has been distributed to the carbuilder community for input. Once this input is received the document will be revised, a working group formalized, and discussions will be held directly with the appropriate NFPA committee.

- Portable Wheel Truing Paul Grether

At the March Tucson meeting a presentation was made by Tim Coble of Delta Industries concerning a portable wheel truing system the firm developed for re-profiling freight car wheels. The topic is of great interest as most small streetcar systems cannot afford pit-mounted truing machines, and as disassembly of streetcar trucks to remove wheels for re-profiling off site is time consuming and expensive. Tim Coble attended this meeting and described how Delta tested their product on low floor light rail cars in Minneapolis and learned what changes they will need to make to create a small version which will fit in the tight clearances surrounding modern streetcar trucks. They anticipate having a prototype to demonstrate within the next year. Delta is also working on a very portable version for emergency use. More news will be reported at future meetings.

- Streetcar White Paper Tom Furmaniak &  
Tom Hickey  
Plans continue to write a paper designed as an introduction for people new to the streetcar field. Time constraints have prevented progress on this project to date, but the authors will be prioritizing the project this year.

## 6. Installation of New Officers Charles Joseph

After a dozen years at the helm of the subcommittee, Jim Graebner asked APTA to plan succession of the group's leadership, which APTA also thought would be appropriate. A nominating committee of Tim Borchers, Jim Schantz, and John Smatlak researched candidates and succession planning and Jim Graebner also made recommendations. The result, as decided by APTA was adoption of a succession plan that will for the next year appoint as officers Tom Hickey (Chairman), Paul Grether (Vice Chairman), and Jim Schantz (Secretary). In a year's time it is anticipated that these officers will each move up one step. Jim Graebner is now Chairman Emeritus and will continue to be an active participant.

In honor of Jim Graebner's long service to the committee APTA President and CEO Michael Melaniphy presented a plaque and several commemorative gifts to Jim thanking him for his long and insightful service. He spoke of Jim's 52 years in the transit industry and his rich career managing transit properties and working as a consultant. Jim described being requested by then-President Bill Millar to form the committee on the occasion of the opening of Kenosha's streetcar line. He felt it was now time for the next generation of leadership to keep the subcommittee moving forward.

New Chairman Tom Hickey then chaired the remainder of the meeting.

## 7. New Business All

**Buy America** - Jeff Boothe of Holland and Knight described the latest developments in the Buy America issue as it applies to utility relocation. The FTA says highway regulations are not applicable, but instead they will focus on all aspects of a project with any federal funding, so that even if relocation is paid with local funds, all materials used by the utility must be Buy America compliant. The effect of this is potentially great and Jeff is looking for more specific examples of compliance issues to use with the FTA. The state of California has developed a long list of highway and transit projects stymied by utility company refusal to certify Buy America compliance. He is also working with the FTA's legal counsel to explore the legal risks of transit project leaders who certify Buy America compliance but who learn subsequently that a utility falsified or erred in its compliance certification. Jeff is hoping to create a webinar in which the FTA can communicate their position on this issue. His aim is not to change Buy America, but to

help improve implementation of the regulations. With the new mayor of Charlotte (NC) Jeff is serving on a task force that will advise the FTA on this issue. He also noted that the FTA will not consider waiver applications for Buy America and that even if they did, review would take a minimum of 18 months.

### **Project Updates Cincinnati**

- signed a vehicle contract with CAF
- construction bids came in higher than estimates, so doing an APTA peer review to determine next steps
- City council is working on finding funding to cover the additional construction cost

### **Atlanta**

- City has hired longtime subcommittee member Tim Borchers as the Streetcar Executive Director
- Cars have been built and are at the Siemens plant in Sacramento
- Two substations have been placed
- Steel has been erected for the maintenance facility
- Rail has been laid over about half of the route
- Hope to open in April-May of 2014

### **Columbia Pike – Arlington, VA**

- Streetcar is the locally preferred alternative
- Some anti-government spending groups are trying to promote bus rapid transit as an alternative, but both the press and city leaders quickly denied the feasibility due to lower capacity

### **El Paso**

- 5 mile streetcar loop planned
- Will use 5 original PCC cars still stored in the city
- Line will not cross into Mexico as the prior one did

### **Washington, DC**

- After years in storage, the three Inekon cars are now on DC DOT property for the first time so testing on the Anacostia segment may begin

### **Ft. Lauderdale**

- Hired a project management consultant
- Design process is advancing
- FTA approved moving into the Project Development phase of the Small Starts process

### **Seattle – First Hill Route**

- On target for 2014 start of service
- Half of rail has been laid
- More information can be found at [www.seattle.gov](http://www.seattle.gov)

### **Kansas City**

- Design is 30% complete
- About to issue RFP for a construction manager

### **San Jose**

- Operation of heritage cars on the central portion of the city's light rail has been in mothballs for 10 years
- 9 heritage cars are on hand and had been restored by volunteers at no cost to taxpayers
- Chamber of Commerce is pushing to reintroduce service, and is proposing that the city and VTA each split the \$500,000 annual operating costs

### **Salt Lake City Sugar House Streetcar**

- On track for early December 2013 startup
- Project has excellent relations with the city
- Transit Oriented Development is expected along the route
- Short single track line with one passing siding
- Planning discussions underway for extensions

### **Toronto**

- Bombardier's prototype 100% low floor Flexity car is under test regularly at night
- Revenue service for these cars is anticipated for fall 2014

## **8. Next Meeting**

- Cincinnati, Ohio - Dec 2013 – Jan 2014 Timeframe  
Possible Joint FTA/APTA Meeting

Tom Hickey  
Paul Grether

Chairman Hickey described the plans for a midyear meeting in Cincinnati to be held in the December-January period. It is hoped to announce firm dates by October. Paul Grether discussed the possibilities of incorporating an FTA Streetcar Summit (similar to the workshop held in Lowell) into this meeting. Paul also described his plans to incorporate a visit to Dayton (a trackless trolley operator) into the Cincinnati meeting.

## **9. Adjourn**

Chairman Hickey declared the meeting adjourned at 12:57 pm

*Notes prepared by Jim Schantz – June 4, 2013*