

NOTES FROM STEP MEETING 24 September 2007

September 24, 2007, 7-9 PM

At Visiting Nurse Assisted Living Center 259 Lowell Street

Attendees: Ellin Reisner, Wig Zamore, Karen Molloy, Steve Mulder, Andrea Yakovakis, Rick Burnes

Notes by Karen Molloy

1. **Green Line Updates**

Wig reported that it is unclear whether the SIP is going through the federal register process now or not. The State did submit the 2014 plan. EPA signed off on the technical details. No TIP projects were started during the Romney administration. The federal government has not accepted MA regional transportation plan; does not believe the state can fund it.

It is not clear why the state did not apply for federal funding for the Green Line before now.

The City taped both DEP hearing sessions. Ellin will get copies on DVD so Steve can put them on the website. In the evening session, Fred Salvucci's comments included the project he worked on recently in which a new subway system was built in 4 years without federal process. The sessions were well attended, with many Somervillians voicing comments on the latest proposed delay and the general lack of progress and low priority the Green Line Extension has been given up to now.

Urban Ring planning is moving fast. (Wig has been attended the meetings as STEP alternate in Joe Beckman's absence.) Decisions on routing will be made in 4-6 weeks for Phase 2. Somerville is mostly absent in Phase 2 plans. Connections with Sullivan Sq, Innerbelt and MIT were dropped. It is a \$700 million project (without any tunnels) which is vying for federal New Starts funding. The Silver Line has already field for New Starts funding for its next phase.

Ellin has spoken with Steve Kaiser, transportation engineer in Cambridge who testified at the DEP hearing about North Point litigation and its potential impact on the new Lechmere station.

The Boston MPO will be up for its federal regulatory review soon. The process includes a public comment period. Recall Somerville residents flooded the public meeting 3 years ago with testimony. Its federal certificate was not withdrawn at the time; however the public reaction was noted in the federal report.

2. **Planning for STEP fall fundraiser**

Karen reported that the Taza Chocolate's chocolate-tasting fundraiser for STEP will be held at Bloc 11 on 25 October, 6:30-9pm. Bloc 11 is located in Union Sq, and is scheduled to open in early October. Mark Ostrander is working on the promotional flyer.

We'll get the word out via email, listservs and posting on community bulletin boards. We'll also do a snail mail mailing of the flyer to the 200 + snail mailing list we have.

Other PR tasks identified: Get announcement into Union Sq Main Streets newsletter, D Provost's newsletter, Somerville Journal

Event set-up tasks identified: have aerial shots of the proposed Green Lines, to generate conversation and act as “teaser” to discussions/community meetings STEP will hold next year regarding station siting and design.

We'll need a table to sign in, with: cash box for accepting payment, sign -up for listserv brochures, t-shirts, (buttons?),....

Do we need microphone - get at SCAT?

We need 2 easels for: an enlarged aerial view of where the extensions would be, STEP map of possible locations

Donation – proposed \$25.00 fee. Maybe a raffle as well? For a basket with Taza Chocolate bar, STEP t-shirt, maybe items from Riki's, Capone's?

Should we have a guest speaker? Or music?

Should we give awards to transportation heroes?

We'll follow these tasks up in email. We have one more STEP meeting before the event.

3. East Somerville Initiative: EJ Objective – Possible STEP Involvement?

Ellin reported that the Initiative met last spring, and will meet again on 10 Oct. Its 2 objectives are: to minimize people's exposure to pollutants and mitigate the harmful health effects, and increase the number of people becoming more physically active by improving access to and awareness of safe walking, bike routes, and open green space.,

The Initiative asks whether STEP is interested in taking the lead on the first objective. STEP's core group is stretched these days; not sure we can take on something else. (STEP would be equally suitable for the second objective as well; improving ped/bike safety and routes and open space are part of our mission.)

4. Community Meetings About Land Use

How can we organize some community meetings around pre-construction process to generate solid land use ideas for station siting and urban design? The success of the Green Line extensions depends on a robust and inclusive pre-construction process which focuses upon urban design and the relationship between existing neighborhoods, future stations, and new land uses.

One thing we could do is to outreach to folks on STEP listserv who have urban design, architecture, transportation planning skills and see if we can get some discussion or mini-charettes going centered on station design. Many people cite such skills in they sign-up comments when they join the listserv .[Turns out Jim has kept track of those comments-km]

Another thing we could do is reach out to expertise in neighboring communities: BSA Urban Design Committee, folks like Fred Salvucci and Dennis Frenchman at MIT, and some Loeb Fellows at Harvard. Wig will approach MIT and BSA. Rick mentioned the Harvard GSD landscape architecture class worked on a project to redesign the back of Somerville High School next to the tracks. We would love to see the results! He will follow up and get the details.

Next STEP meeting: 15 October 7pm location TBA