

STEP meeting minutes
January 21, 2009
At the Visiting Nurses Association

In Attendance: Ellin Reisner, Andrea Yakovakis, Naomi Slagowski, Karen Molloy, Wig Zamore, Robin Duckworth, Kristi Chase, Jim McGinnis.

First, there were introductions. There was a discussion about the Metro in DC, there was a 1 minute headway for three days during the inauguration!

Action Items

Boston Architectural College (BAC) had three classes to design stations for Union Square. They focused on two sites: by SCAT and by the power transformer, and then the students got to choose their own sites. Wig mentioned we should provide an opportunity for the public and students to meet informally. Maybe the students could present their designs either in a power point presentation, or an open style meeting where people can meet the students. Possibilities for presentations could be a half day on a Saturday, advertised by putting notices in the paper and people could come and see a poster session. The big room at SCAT might be a good venue, and then it would be easy to film. Or, the students could present at BAC and Somerville people could go there. Ellin is on the board of SCAT, and said that Saturday might be a good time for demos, but the staff is limited on that day for videotaping. Alternatively, there could be an open house on a Saturday, and have people vote on what they like the most. It would be nice to at least have the work on display at SCAT for a period of time. If people vote, we could have postcards so that people can choose their favorites and why. There might be some technical hurdles for presenting the high tech. materials, and we would have to work that out later. This should be done soon, before EOT recommendations if possible. We could have coffee and some snacks for people that stop by. It will be better to do video when there are few people around to reduce noise. Potential schedule: setup from 8-10, then have people come by between 10-1. The goal of this event is to give the public some idea starters for open space planning (especially for people who might not have seen a lot of transit systems), give the students an opportunity to practice presenting their work, and to put a spotlight on the Green Line and Union Square. We will need to find volunteers for taping. We must be sure that people understand that these are ideas, and that people do not get their hopes up that these are actual plans from the MBTA.

CAFEH Study – what effect do air filters have on indoor air quality? The Tufts CAFEH team has been studying a population of people in Boston for a long time, and they might be a good population for applying this research. There is blood work needed for this study, and we need to start doing outreach to people who would be willing to participate in this study. We also need to do more indoor and outdoor air quality comparisons. HEPA filters have been found to be effective at reducing particulates in indoor air, and are fairly inexpensive. As a control, there will be before and after measurements. Wig and Ellin will let everyone know what decisions are made at a meeting with the CAFEH team.

ISEE ISEA – the interviews that were videotaped at the conference have been about half transcribed. There was a discussion about who could help transcribe. There will complete

interviews transcribed first, then they will clean up the video and clip them into clean cuts. More help is needed to finish these interviews.

Transportation/Environment Statement (see the list serve posting by Ellin on January 20th): we decided to endorse this.

Updates

Urban Ring – Wig testified at the DCR about the Urban Ring. DCR roadway meetings are upcoming. Wig and some people from Brickbottom went to the last meeting, but no one else from Somerville spoke. The Urban Ring was conceived as a corridor to connect technology centers in Boston metro, but now it is turning more into a series of segments of bus routes. There won't be single trips with the revised system, but a series of transfers. This project is very important for places like Chelsea, Everett, and parts of Somerville) that have little to no other public transit connections. The percent increase in jobs in Somerville would be spectacular with a functional Urban Ring, especially with good connections to Logan and Longwood. It is unknown if the CT bus routes will continue to operate as they are. The Sierra Club transportation group is against this project, because they would rather see light rail.

In the new stimulus package, there is more money for New Starts for transit projects, which might be good for the Green Line. The new federal transportation secretary has some transit experience, but it was a long time ago. There have been articles about this in the media lately.

Green Line: PAC Plus meetings – it would be helpful if the agendas for those meetings were sent out in advance so that people that have a difficult time getting off work might prioritize which ones they want to go to (since the meetings are during business hours at the end of the day). We should be sure that the intermediate stop (proposed Twin City area) does not fall through the cracks, and there must also be a pedestrian network. We need to work with East Cambridge Planning team to make sure that solutions are acceptable to all parties.

There was a meeting on January 20th about a new biotech development in East Cambridge. There was a small article about it in the January 21st issue of the Globe. There was an issue raised at the meeting about the lack of environmental protection in the project.

Next meeting:

February 23rd from 7-9pm at the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) at 259 Lowell Street, in the Community Room.