

NOTES FROM STEP MEETING 20 August 2007

August 20, 2007, 7-9 PM

At Visiting Nurse Assisted Living Center 259 Lowell Street

Attendees: Ellin Reisner, Wig Zamore, Karen Molloy, Steve Mulder, Jim McGinnis, Kristie Chase, David Jordan, Patricia Davis, Susan Bremer, Jeff Reese

Notes by Karen Molloy

1. Green Line Updates

Discussed recent events of Governor Patrick's move toward postponing the extension of the Green Line Extension to 2016 and only planning to fund it via New Starts (but – no guarantee the project will be awarded New Starts funding). Public outcry and calls to the State House followed. Our legislative delegation met with Gov Patrick and Secretary Cohen. The delegation meets with Secretary Cohen again on the 21st with the goal of figuring out how to keep the schedule to 2014. One way to shave off some time would be to do some work in parallel instead of linearly; EOT needs to staff up the project.

Wig reported that the Green Line extension dominated the Boston MPO meeting for 1.5 hrs. Senator Jehlen spoke as did Monica Lamboy (SPCD).

Green Line will have competition for New Starts funding from other projects, such as Urban Ring and Silver Line (but not from Fall River/New Bedford rail – the funding will never go to a project of diesel-fueled trains). The Green Line extension is a smaller project than the Urban Ring and Silver Line.

2. Planning for Upcoming Events

Tabling at Union Sq farmers' market 25 August

Jim is organizing the STEP table at the Union Sq. Farmer's Market, next Saturday, 25 August, from 9am – 1pm. Respond to his email if you can staff the STEP table for a couple of hours.

STEP fall fundraiser

Karen reported that she and Ellin will be meeting with Jen Park of Bloc 11 next week on the 29th to explore the site as possible venue for Taza Chocolate's chocolate-tasting fundraiser for STEP. Bloc 11, located in Union Sq, is scheduled to open the end of September. On 6 August, Karen and Ellin met with Laura Cere of Taza Chocolates at the company's factory on Windsor St. Although the factory was a fun place to visit, there were mutual concerns about whether it would hold enough people (Taza Chocolates has hosted tasting there for a maximum of 40 people), whether it was difficult for people to find, and whether it was appropriately accessible. The Bloc 11 venue seems to hold more possibility.

3. Outreach for 6 Sept meeting at DEP

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) hearings on the State Implementation Plan (SIP) status report submitted by the Executive Office of Transportation on the State Implementation Plan (SIP) transit commitments, including the Green Line extensions. The status report gives progress on projects that in reality have not started.

Thursday, Sept 6, 1 pm or 5 pm
Mass. Dept. of Environmental Protection

Washington Street Conference Center
2nd Floor, Rooms A, B & C
1 Winter Street, Boston

We'll notify the listserv and others about the meeting and where to email/snail mail comments.

Assembly Sq Update

- Thursday, August 23rd, 5 pm Assembly PAC meeting at Federal, 5 Middlesex Avenue (next to the closed theater) at which the pending applications, the long term plan and the sustainable vision will be discussed.
- Tuesday, September 4th, 6 pm City Hall. The Somerville Planning Board hearing on IKEA and Assembly Square Drive.

Wig reported that although he has agreed to support the project in general, he will be pushing for better transit planning and open space. He noted some details in IKEA's plans call for 200 signs (7 giant 20 ft x 60 ft signs). Although there are plans for (T) stop in Assembly Sq right by IKEA, ironically IKEA is not planning an entrance directly from the store to the (T) stop. Discussion ensued about how IKEA in Europe is used to buildings urban stores, IKEA-USA (the company has country franchises) is used to building their trademark sprawling store in US suburbs. Even the architect of the future Somerville store is pretty much using a cookie cutter design and attempting to fit it into Somerville's urban density.

Next STEP meeting: 24 Sept 7pm location TBA