

**STEP meeting minutes**  
**December 15, 2008**  
**At the Visiting Nurses Association**

In Attendance: Ellin Reisner, Andrea Yakovakis, Naomi Slagowski, Wig Zamore, Steve Mulder, Jim McGinnis, Jim Loutzenhiser, Karen Molloy.

First, there were introductions. There was a small discussion on the letter from the mayor about the maintenance facility and master planning.

Action Items

- Draft letter from STEP to governor
- Modeling of ridership: Use of 2030 predictions (for Urban Ring, etc.) already predicted to exist, which takes ridership away from Green Line. No Massachusetts projects can be done until the state can come up with their money input (because the state took federal money and didn't build the projects). The Green Line Extension might be an exception because it is an environmental project as well.
- Watch for when the Draft Environmental Impact Review (DEIR) comes out.
- Mass Highway bridge project – Ellin will look into it, and Andrea will draft a letter. There are \$23 million for bridge updates. This might be an opportunity to turn McGrath into a boulevard by bringing it back to grade. Is it possible to use this funding to take a current bridge and change the design so that it is no longer a bridge?

Environmental Impact Review

The DEIR does not need to include the Maintenance Facility, but it should have the stations, rights of way and terminus. If there are objections to the environmental review, it could delay the project. It is supposed to be done by the end of 2008, but it will probably be delayed. The type of building also effects schedule. If it is design-build, the implementation will be faster, but the community is then excluded from the process.

Development Planning

- Planning for development of Inner Belt is needed very soon.
- Transportation funding and process might be very different under the new administration.
- North Point Development doesn't appear to have any new progress.
- CBT-Greenberg presentation on Inner Belt Study is available at [http://www.somervillema.gov/cos\\_content/documents/CBT-InnerBelt-BrickbottomReport-FINAL-WebVersion11-25-084.pdf](http://www.somervillema.gov/cos_content/documents/CBT-InnerBelt-BrickbottomReport-FINAL-WebVersion11-25-084.pdf)
- Community Corridor – putting together a work plan, interfacing with recent immigrants, maintain affordable housing, inform everyone and engage young people with Groundworks Somerville.

Smart Growth Conference

This was mostly a conference for state employees, different agencies, but members of the public are also welcome to attend. Wig was there, and went to a session on transit-oriented development (TOD). Some of the highlights from this session were: in TOD, must focus on businesses, not just housing; pedestrian planning around stations is more important than station

design; the scale of planning should be in districts, not on specific projects only; and, if there's not T, there's no TOD. In the Community Health session, the focus was not so much on human behavior in unhealthy or unsafe neighborhoods (as in the past – how do people affect a neighborhood), but more on how the neighborhood affects the people. There was a lunch time speech about the AFL-CIO donating one billion dollars to New Orleans for trade skill education for young people. Also, it will be important to invest in education for “green jobs” training, as there will be a lot of labor involved. Somerville teachers (vo-tech, science, math) are interested in this type of work. The final take away message is that young people can't be removed from transportation planning, as they will be the ones using it.

### Urban Ring

There is a hearing on the Urban Ring on January 9<sup>th</sup>. It will be good to get feedback from the community on this for public comments. It is much easier and cheaper if all of the pieces of the ring can be planned at once.

### Next meeting:

January 21st from 7-9pm at the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) at 259 Lowell Street, in the Community Room.