

NOTES FROM STEP MEETING 19 November 2007

November 19, 2007, 7-9 PM
Visiting Nurse Assisted Living Center 259 Lowell Street

Attendees: Ellin Reisner, Wig Zamore, Karen Molloy, Steve Mulder, Jim McGinnis, Patti Davis, Jeff Reese, Naomi Slagowski, Lee Auspitz, Allan Moore

Notes by Karen Molloy

1. Green Line Updates

Comments on the SIP are due in to the EPA on 8 Dec. We'll notify the STEP listserv and send in our comments. Wig will draft an Op/Ed piece to put in the Somerville Journal.

The Green Line Advisory Group held its first meeting (October 25, 2007), Ellin, Wig, Jim, and Lee attended. There was discussion at the meeting about Medford's lack of consensus on the terminus location. Most Medford folks would prefer to see the terminus at Rte 16/Wild Oats than extend into Medford. If Medford residents do not want to have the Green Line terminus at West Medford, there might not be a link to the commuter rail. Planning such a link elsewhere on the line before North Station (such as at Tufts or Gilman) risks introducing harmful diesel fumes into a neighborhood in the corridor. Diesel trains expel a lot of diesel fumes during stopping and starting. (Discussion shifted to when the commuter rail might switch to electric or hybrid – conclusion was, not likely anytime soon.)

The route is going to need to be clarified by mid-2008 at the latest, in order for this project to apply to New Starts. The deadline for EOT to submit the New Starts application is August 2008 for inclusion in funding for 2010/2011 when the actual building of the route will begin.

There is talk about the T wanting to put a new maintenance facility (for all the new Green Line light rail cars that will service the extension) at Yard 8. Final siting not determines yet but apart from Yard 8 or the stretch of land next to Boston Engine Terminal, there is not much room elsewhere on the Extension corridor for it.

Governor Patrick's Transportation Bill should be coming out by the end of the year, with Green Line funding in it.

It was mentioned that Kate Fichter recently stated (at some other meeting) that the right of way on the Lowell Line might not have enough room for the Community Path – which sounds as though the plan for the Path to be on the embankment has not yet been considered by EOT. Some bridges along the Lowell Line route, (relatively new ones too!) will need to be widened.

Lee spoke a bit about Davis Square in the early days of the Red Line extension (which opened in 1984). He was on the then newly formed Davis Sq Task Force which formed in 1977 as a citizen's advisory group. Interestingly, Davis Sq was designed as the smallest, least expensive station of the Red Line Extensions stations; its ridership was under-projected at the time. It has since drawn more riders than Alewife or Porter Sq stations.

2. STEP- USMS Plan for Community Meetings on Green Line Station Siting

STEP and USMS and will hold 2 joint community meetings to discuss with interested residents the options and considerations around proposed routes and station siting and land use of Union Sq Green Line station before the Green Line Advisory Board considers Union Sq station siting starting in Feb.

A STEP subgroup will meet soon at Bloc 11 to plan out the details with Mimi Graney and others from USMS.

3. Fundraiser Follow-Up Report

Great fun was had by all! We raised \$1825.00. Karen sent thank you letters to Taza Chocolate and Bloc 11. Ellin will send thank you letters to folks who sent checks but did not attend.

4. Other Green Line Extension-related news

The Lechmere deal is over. Expired. Which means the plan for new Lechmere station is in limbo until the new developer closes on NorthPoint.

Boston is planning to redo Rutherford as a boulevard. We need to stay on top of the implications for Rte 28.

The Rte 28 overpass is structurally unsound and will likely need to be torn down within the next several years. A good idea to consider is to bring it to grade at Somerville Ave. and restore the link to Union Sq. It would be an opportunity to bring the Green Line from Lechmere, in a straight line at grade though to Union Sq, connecting Twin City, Target, etc to Union Sq.

Perhaps someday the Green Line Extension from Union Sq could be extended to Porter Sq.

Wig stated that Innerbelt property is potentially the biggest economic development opportunity in the sphere of the Green Line extension, but it would need transit. The Urban Ring would hook Innerbelt to MIT and Longwood. Multimodal approach should be planned somewhere in this area.

Next STEP meeting: 17 December 7pm location TBA