

STEP November monthly meeting

November 23, 2009

Visiting Nurses Association

In attendance: Ellin Reisner, Wig Zamore, Jim McGinnis, Kristi Chase, Ken Krause, Andrea Yakovakis, Naomi Slagowski, Alex Epstien, Heather Van Aust, Mindy D'Ippolito, Steve Mulder, Maaza Mekusig.

Introductions

Updates and Announcements

- Recap of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) hearing:
 - There were roughly 400 people there
 - There was discussion about a Final Environmental Impact Report being re-done, will that delay the project? Perhaps a statement from the Secretary to supplement the DEIR would get the same thing done for changes that are needed. The project is already quite behind schedule.
 - We should all submit written comments to the DEIR, but STEP should also submit a letter. After Thanksgiving, we will issue a reminder to people then. It is fine to send more than one letter, so it is fine to write letters before and after the Scheme L public meeting.
 - Steve will set up a page on the website for comments on the DEIR to help people write letters, and examples of letters and analysis already done on the DEIR.
 - There was some discussion about what "Option L" and "Scheme H" might look like, and it was agreed that the details will only be known when the public meeting presenting these two options is held.
 - There is a good model of open space addition to public infrastructure in New York, where they covered a water treatment system with a green roof, and that might be a form of mitigation for the storage facility.
 - Sunday night there will be a meeting with other interested people in the Green Line Extension Corridor, so that we can draft a letter on issues that we can all agree upon.
 - There was some discussion about what aspects of the DEIR are applicable to Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) regulations.

- Assembly Square T station head house:
 - The Board of Aldermen Land Use committee will meet on December 14th (probably at 6pm) about adding a second headhouse at Assembly Square for better access to IKEA for transit riders. There is support for the second headhouse, but the concern is how much it will cost. There currently isn't a good cost estimated for a second headhouse.

- Letter from the IRS for additional information:
 - The IRS has given us more questions on our application to be a 503(c)(3) application.
 - Our attorney called the IRS representative to ask why there has been so much trouble.
 - The gist of the questions seems to be concern with whether or not we are impartial, and some concern about our bylaws not lining up with our application.

Action Items

- Letter to the IRS for additional information:
 - We need examples of how we just collate information and make it available for people, for example: our web site making it easier to download the DEIR, the map of the Green Line Extension on our web site, helping get information translated to different languages, we attempt to partner with people who don't necessarily agree with completely like the

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Community Corridor Project, upcoming meetings planned with other communities, unbiased scientific studies. We have been asked to support candidates and we have not to avoid a political stance.

- Our new due date is around December 10th.
- To send: brochures, multi-lingual notices, things from the website.

- Community Corridor Planning Meetings:
 - They have reached out to a lot of people that we normally can't reach.
 - Some of the meetings have had a negative focus.
 - Some of the facilitators don't seem to have the background on understanding the Green Line Extension.
 - What are the next steps for the CCP meetings.
 - There are about 450 people that the CCP group can reach, and these people should be engaged in the next steps of Green Line Extension public process.
 - This group can be a good place to identify issues that concern the community, and STEP can offer suggestions to address these concerns.
 - We can't miss this chance to engage the public in station design, instead of focusing on other issues that don't necessarily have to do only with the Green Line Extension.
 - The EPA can train people to lead a charette, or it might be good to reach out to some local design professionals to lead more technical discussions. Somerville has the 2nd highest percentage of design professionals in the northeast.
 - The next CCP steering meeting is at 12:30 on Thursday, December 10th.

- Outreach and relationships with other groups and communities affected by the Green Line Extension and regional thinking about solutions to the maintenance facility :
 - There is a meeting planned on Sunday, November 30th with other communities and groups at "the Bumblebee Building" at the corner of Binney and 6th Street in Cambridge, next to the new Police Station.

Other items

- There are handicap accessibility issues with the Green Line trains meeting the platform. They also do not accommodate bicycles very well. They are now able to pair the old and new train cars, and the new cars are more handicap accessible.
- It is often forgot that improved access to public transportation can reduce some living costs, by making it unnecessary to own a car, which in Boston, costs about \$12,000 a year.