

NOTES FROM STEP MEETING

January 30, 2006, 7-9 PM

VNA Assisted Living Center 259 Lowell St. Somerville

Present: Ellin Reisner, Wig Zamore, Andrea Yakovakis, Karen Molloy, Bob Nesson, Laurie Segal, Joe Lynch, Laurence Paoella, Margaret Sanfilippo, Adi Nochut, Scott Rankin, Jeff Rosenblum [from Living Streets Alliance], and Melissa Bennett and Jared Ingersoll [from Medford Green Line group].

Notes written by: Karen Molloy

- **Update on Medford Green Line Meeting (January 24th) – Melissa Bennett and Jared Ingersoll**

Interested citizens in Medford have been taking the lead in community discourse and advocacy for the Green Line Extension. The location of Green Line stations in Medford has not been determined, of course, but one area of concern and dissent centers on West Medford, where some residents would prefer that a W. Medford Green Line station not cross route 16 and go into West Medford Sq. Those less enthusiastic about the Green Line project live in the West Medford area. Concerns about accessibility and traffic have been raised (instead of researching, informing and pressing for accessibility design considerations to be high priority in Medford). A fear campaign is underway based on lack of information about accessibility design and anxiety about how the Green Line will “change the character of the community”. Supporters from West Medford could contact the MBTA accessibility consultants to get some information accessibility options in station design. As well, there was mention of Adaptive Environments (www.adaptenv.org), a Boston-based non-profit organization which “provides consultation services about accessibility and universal design in a wide range of built environments including but not limited to public buildings, schools, offices, urban design, transportation, healthcare settings, public space, and so on. Adaptive Environments' work balances expertise in legally required accessibility with promotion of best practices in human centered or universal design.” [according to their website-km]

Melissa and Jared are working on forming a Green line group in Medford, which will have the website: www.medfordgreenline.org/. They asked STEP about how we initially got the word out (a lot of flyering around critical meetings that needed public participation, tapping local community listservs, website, ArtBeat, Bob Nesson's film, and so on.), any for some tips/advice on how they could inform the community about their new group. STEP will help Medford Green Line advocates in any way they need.

As well, there are many areas in which advocates in both cities can work together:

- The 4 entitlement steps as detailed by Wig (DEP recommendations, EPA, State House transportation committee – financing, the Boston MPO's long-term plan- funding for

the Ozone SIP commitments). Note: It is not clear whether the State will move on funding until the lawsuits are settled.

- Governor's long-range transportation plan.
- Land use issues.
- Design, using information, resources from BSA, AAI, MAPC, New Urbanism, National Charrette Institute.

In fact, STEP needs to collaborate on some issues not only with Medford, but E. Cambridge, and even Arlington (some residents of Arlington walk over to commuter rail in Medford and Boston Ave to take #94 and #96 buses).

Recently Ellin was elected to the board at SCAT. She proposed that STEP could work with SCAT to do outreach to Haitian and Portuguese communities on a show on SCAT.

- **Discussion: evolving "Off Track" video - Bob Nesson**

Bob Nesson's film ends with Doug Foy's announcement last spring about the State's commitment to the Green Line Extension. The film, currently 12 min long, streams on the STEP website. Bob asked: how can the film be utilized, and how can we move forward with it? Some brainstorming ensued. People suggested that Bob might interview people who were at the December DEP meeting [which was 7 hrs long!], ride the T and ask people's opinions about the stops about which they think are good T stops and why; have footage that explains some air quality issues and what citizens can do to take action, contact John Roderick for some archive info and photos of Somerville's more illustrious transit past, provide info about the 4 upcoming entitlement phases, highlight the point that the battle for the Green Line Extension is far over and recent headlines have hinted at there is no money earmarked for the project and other projects vying for the same funding commitment, and film Green Line Extension design charrettes once they get underway.

- **Review and update on Green Line Tasks for 2006 and meeting with representatives from the city's Planning Department in December**

The meeting between the City OHCD and STEP (notes of which were circulated in Dec) promised more communication from the City OHCD with STEP in transportation matters. The City should be looking at some possible (T) stops and setting aside viable sites. It does not look like this is happening.

Joe Lynch spoke of the Homans Building on Medford St. (which the city owns, is currently vacant. and could potentially be the site of a Gilman Sq stop). The police station might move to Powderhouse School (another potential T stop). Joe mentioned that Partners Health Care is pushing for the Red-blue Connector, which at least is part of the

Ozone SIP commitment, unlike the fast-breaking Harvard-Allston T initiative, which is gathering momentum.

- **Possible air quality and environmental justice research collaboration opportunities – Jeff Rosenblum of LivableStreets Alliance, Ellin**

Jeff Rosenblum spoke about LivableStreets Alliance, which is a new organization that started up last July which sees itself as a connector of siloed bike/ped/transits groups in the Boston area. LivableStreets sees itself as providing linkages to the various advocacy groups and building an umbrella around citizen advocacy bike/ped/transits initiatives, and provide help on some projects. “LivableStreets believes that to remain a competitive, world-class city, Boston needs a world-class transportation network – one that makes the city a better place to live, work, and play.” [according to its website at www.livablestreets.info, which btw has an awesome event/meeting calendar many area advocacy and other related groups -km] Jeff spoke of an upcoming event: “Rethinking Urban Transportation” a forum co-organized by LivableStreets to be held at the Museum of Science 25 February 2006. Jeff also spoke of upcoming grant proposal for New England Grassroots Environment Fund. STEP could use this funding for initiating a pedestrian advocacy project.

Ellin and Wig met with Alex Perry and Doug Brugge at Tufts about a grant to do a study on mobile pollution. Perry and Brugge do community-based air quality studies (such as asthma studies in Chinatown).