

# NOTES FROM STEP MEETING 27 Feb 2006

February 27, 2006, 7-9 PM

VNA Assisted Living Center 259 Lowell St. Somerville

Present: Ellin Reisner, Wig Zamore, Andrea Yakovakis, Karen Molloy, Jim McGinnis, Laurie Segal, Laurence Paoella, Tony LoBianco, Chungchi Che

Notes written by: Karen Molloy

## 1. STEP Governance

### a. Membership update and dues collection for 2006

Membership is \$10.00; payment and attending 2 meetings in a given year enable a member to vote in the annual meeting.

### b. Election of officers

Postponed until the next meeting, the annual meeting.

## 2. Update on current and upcoming transportation issues and activities

### a. Green Line Financing

Our State delegation met with Doug Foy just before he resigned. He'd mentioned that DEP is soon going to recommend SIP commitments (still have not heard the decision). Might be possible to do the Tufts route on time, Union Sq would take longer. Sate would figure out how to finance it.

It was mentioned (here and at other meetings) that the Green Line might replace a NewStarts project.

The Green Line must be listed in the MPO's next long-term plan (which has been postponed 6 months)

Upcoming events/meetings related to STEP matters: 7 March all day Air Quality Symposium at HSPH on air emissions and transportation, 8 March 3 national meetings on particulate matter, 21 March MPO in-depth meeting on EJ in transportation planning.

### b. March 21, Regional Equity – MPO Meeting

21 March MPO open house will be focused on EJ in transportation planning.

### c. Outreach for EPA – Fine Particle Comment Period

8 March Wig is presenting on air quality at Regional Transportation Advisory Council following the EPA presentation on its new recommended guidelines. 17 April is the deadline for particulate guidelines comments to the EPA.

**d. NIH-Tufts Air Quality Proposal**

Tufts Univ School of Medicine and School of Engineering are proposing (to NIH) a community-based participatory research study of cardiopulmonary health impacts of pollution adjacent to freeways in the Boston area. The proposed 4-5 yr project would be a collaboration with STEP, the Committee for Boston Public Housing and the West Broadway Task Force, and others. Proposal is due the end of May; decision will be reached in the fall.

**e. New England Grass Roots Foundation Proposal for grassroots pedestrian advocacy**

Ellin distributed the grant proposal at the meeting (which was submitted in Feb). The proposal, written in collaboration with Livable Streets and the Cambridge Health Alliance is to develop an active educational pedestrian advocacy role/group in Somerville that would liaise with several groups concerned with quality of life/health issues. It is expected that this role would be volunteer-sustaining after its initial start. [Note: Ellin and I met with NE Grassroots on 23 March. –km] We should be notified of the decision in April.

**f. Update on Somerville Bike Path Extension Funding**

The Community Path has survived the latest transportation budget cuts at MPO. The TIP still has \$500K earmarked for the Community Path.

**g. Scheduling community meeting with MPO to discuss Journey to 2030-Long Term Plan, Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

There was a MPO meeting at City Hall last month. Ellin and Jim attended. Ellin invited MPO to come to a STEP meeting in April so people could find out more about the organization. To many people the MPO is a vague idea. Others wonder why the MBTA, the State, and the MPO all have different transportation plans. MPO is attempting to do more outreach; now has a brochure in English and Spanish that covers what the MPO is and current project status.

**3. STEP strategic planning**

**a. Moving forward with transportation/land use community discussion**

Need to engage people who want to get involved in the advocacy but cannot or will not attend meetings.

Need to broaden the membership of STEP.

**b. Conducting a bus survey in Somerville (at bus stops and online)**

Survey will cover service and ridership topics; how people feel about the unpredictability and uncertainty of actual bus schedules, the level of service, the lack of information

**c. Interns, future projects**

**d. Documenting STEP information not currently on website.**

We need some way to capture the wealth of info STEP has, particularly Wig's transportation/air quality/public health research (he says he has about 150K docs). An

archive of such documents would be valuable for grant-writing, advocacy letters, and so on. As well, Somerville citizens really need to be informed of these issues. The City needs the leverage of the astonishing public health stats.

**4. Steve's report on STEP website from Google's analysis tools**

Awesome stats! As of 26 Feb the site has had 1,044 visitors this year, with an average of 20 per day, 137 per week. The stats include search terms visitors used in Google to get to the site, and originating sites visitors were on before landing on STEP's website.

**5. Field trip to Red Line Dorchester/Ashmont and Green Line Riverside**

Some STEP members plan to go out and explore examples (with a camera) of existing outdoor T stops and how they integrate with the neighborhoods.