

Notes from STEP meeting 24 March 2008

Date: March 24, 2008, 7:00-9:00 PM

Location: VNA, 259 Lowell St.

Attendees: Ellin Reisner, Wig Zamore, Steve Mulder, Karen Molloy, Jim McGinnis, Kristie Chase, Lynn McWhood, Bob Nesson, Naomi Slagowski, Lilly Shoup, Todd Kaplan, Crystal Germand, Jaen Bestor

Notes by Karen Molloy

1. Brief reports on:

- a. **Website** – Steve Mulder presented Google Analytics report of statistics of web traffic over the last 6 months. The site averages about 52 visits per day, with 68% from new visitors. Traffic to the site spikes at predictable times (Gov. Patrick recommitment, EOT station workshops, and so on.) Stats also include originating sites (which in addition to the Google search page, includes various local sites such as Bostonist, Davis Sq lj, Union Sq Main Streets, even Bluemassgroup.com). Most popular pages are the home page, the Green Line pages including the interaction map, and the Orange Line Assembly Sq stop page.
- b. **Grant writing + funding** – Ellin Reisner presented a report she and Naomi Slagowski put together a table of possible grants STEP could apply for. Four of them seem most promising and have fast approaching deadlines. New attorney has assessed our long-standing 501c3 application and says it is fine. We need to fill out a state form for fundraising. Need to follow up with SCAT or Groundwork as possible fiscal agent until we are a 501c3.
- c. **Dan Burden's Street Talk** – Karen Molloy and Lily Shoup reported on the presentation made by Dan Burden, founder of Walkable Communities (<http://www.walkable.org/>), consultant for Glatting Jackson (<http://www.glatting.com/>) that was held at Institute for Human Centered Design at North Station on 10 March (<http://www.adaptiveenvironments.org>). Dan gave an inspiring talk in which he presented before/after slides of many projects that underwent "road diets" to make car-heavy roads more livable, walkable and supportive of community life.

Bob Nesson mentioned he has a copy of sociologist William Holly Whyte's film "City Spaces, People Places" which he could show at a future STEP meeting. (Whyte's writings were based on careful direct observation to describe behavior in urban settings such as jaywalking and other pedestrian patterns, social patterns on the street, the use of urban plazas, etc.) We thought it would be good to show it at Bloc 11 instead, to a wider audience, and in a venue at Union Sq for which many walkability/multimodal issues will need careful design.

- d. **Street measurements** – Wig Zamore, Karen Molloy, Steve Mulder and Jim McGinnis reported on their observations, photos, and street measurements of the current Green Line outside along Huntington and Commonwealth Aves. as well as at proposed new locations for the Lechmere Station and in Union Sq.
- e. **Community Path** – Ellin Reisner reported that on Friday, March 21, at the press conference that Mass PIRG held to announce the publication of their excellent analysis of the USA's transportation issues and the role of public transportation in the 21st century, Secretary of Transportation Bernard Cohen responded to a question

she asked about support from EOT for the construction of the Community Path as part of the Green Line project. Secretary Cohen acknowledged how valuable the community path would be in providing access to pedestrians and bicyclists to the Green Line particularly since there will be no parking facilities at the stations. (While at the MBTA in the 1980s he was involved in the extension of the Community Path from Alewife to Davis and the path alongside the Orange Line from Back Bay to Forest Hills in Jamaica Plain so he fully understands their value in increasing ridership for a minimal investment.) When it was pointed out that there is funding for the path planning in the EIR, but that it did not explicitly appear to be included in the Transportation Bill for the Green Line construction, Secretary Cohen said he would follow up on it at EOT.

- f. **BAC class design project on Green Line in Union Sq** – Wig Zamore was invited to attend the class. He invited the students to present their design results at a future STEP meeting.

2. Presentations:

1. Lily Shoup presented slides on the new Charlotte, NC LYNX light rail system. The system has similar land use conditions to Somerville, and is reusing an old rail ROW. The project brought in Dan Burden (See above) in 2001 to help with their Urban Street Guidelines.
(<http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Transportation/Urban+Street+Design+Guidelines.htm>) The long range plan is the result of visionary city leadership (planning dept and city council) and grassroots citizen efforts.
2. Wig Zamore & Bob Nesson presented some visual images and data on the air quality monitoring that was done along I-93 by Aerodyne one cold morning. The monitoring was commissioned by MVTF. Bob filmed the data collection/reporting done in real time as Aerodyne's mobile lab van traversed, over a several hour period on 16 January, streets around I-93 (Pearl St, Mystic Ave, Temple St, Shore Dr., etc.) A baseline reading was first taken before commuter traffic started. The data collection, synchronized the GPS locations and weather conditions with measurements of gases, particles (and de-icers!).

3. Other business

EOT Meeting – We discussed the agenda and goals for the upcoming meeting.

IKEA Chapter 91 hearing – Public hearing to be held tomorrow night on IKEA's public access to the Mystic River. The community path in the area needs to be restated, as IKEA's designs only have a bike lane in the street and no multi-service path for the community to have access to the riverfront. Also it's good time to restate the need for a 2nd headhouse for the Assembly Sq T stop. Public comments accepted until mid-April.

Next STEP meeting: 21 April 2008 Location: TBA.