

NOTES FROM STEP MEETING 24 April 2006

April 24, 2006, 7-9 PM

SCAT, Union Sq. Somerville

Present: Ellin Reisner, Wig Zamore, Andrea Yakovakis, Karen Molloy, Steve Mulder, Laurence Paoella, Chungchi Che, Alan Moore, Frank Gorke (MassPIRG), Jason Letellier (Green Earth MotorSports), Jennifer Chiang (Green Earth MotorSports)

Notes written by: Karen Molloy

1. Important Transportation Events during the week of April 24th

- Tuesday, April 25, 2006, MetroFuture Briefing, 7:00 - 8:30 PM, Sherman Cafe, (Union Sq) 257 Washington Street, Somerville Union Square Main Streets and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council are sponsoring a briefing by MetroFuture on the following five areas studied to understand what the Metro region will look like if we continue our current pattern of growth and development:
 - People and Community services that support communities;
 - Buildings and Landscapes: includes future patterns of development in Metro Boston;
 - Air, Water, and Wildlife: covers the natural resources and sustainability of the region;
 - Transportation : encompasses the ways we travel around the region; and
 - Regional Economy Prosperity: includes the region's businesses and institutions, and the regional economy.
- Executive Office of Environmental Affairs quarterly Environmental Justice meeting for the Greater Boston region is being held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Somerville Central Public library located at 79 Highland Avenue, Somerville.
- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) all day community meeting on the 2006 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Thursday, April 27, 2006 at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston.
- Boston MPO Regional Environmental Justice Forum, Thursday, April 27, 2006, 6-8 PM at the Boston City Hall, Rm. 802 (enter through Congress St. entrance opposite Fanueil Hall). MPO staff will present an overview of the MPO will approach meeting transportation needs of low income and minority communities in its environmental analysis and long term planning for the JOURNEY TO 2030. Attendees can voice their views on the transportation needs and issues of the environmental justice target communities in the region.
- Mystic Watershed Forum, 2006, Friday, April 28th from 2-6 PM, Lincoln Filene Hall, Tufts University, for researchers, Federal, state and municipal government representatives, and watershed advocates to discuss the latest research on the watershed and its implication for action.

2. Planning for ArtBeat Table

STEP plans to be at ArtBeat again this year. ArtBeat will be held on 15 July. STEP may be partnering with Livable Streets this year.

Somerville Arts Council has not yet posted an application for non-craft community participants yet (might not be until early June).

We need to get a count on the t-shirts, bumperstickers, and buttons so we can reorder whatever is necessary.

Karen will coordinate STEP's involvement, update the STEP overview brochure, and create a new brochure containing information about health impacts stemming from particulate pollution about which Wig has researched exhaustively and informed us and others in the past year.

Wig can provide some good nasty photos of traffic jams on I93 for our handouts ☺.

Steve will update the timeline. He will provide the tent again this year but might not be able to attend the event himself/staff the table (or set up the tent) this year.

3. Review draft of STEP bus survey

STEP will conduct a survey to determine the greatest needs among Somervillians (bus riders and potential bus riders) regarding their experience with local bus transportation. With collected data we can go to the T and ask for improvements. Some issues might be negotiated as mitigation until the Green Line is built.

Discussion and feedback ensued. Karen will update the survey text on the meeting feedback and then Steve will start developing the online version of the survey using www.zoomerang.com survey tools. Proposed means of distributing the survey:

- Have people fill out the survey on the STEP website, and post an announcement about the survey on the STEP listserv
- Pass out survey-flyers to riders waiting at bus stops
- Distribute survey-flyers to places we usually flyer: City Hall, libraries, cafes, laundromats, etc.
- Print the survey in the Somerville Journal and Somerville News

The bus survey-flyer will need to be translated. If Livable Streets is interested in co-sponsoring survey, we might be able to use their 501c3 bulk mailing for the return postage.

4. Planning Somerville, Medford, E. Cambridge Green Line Meeting on June 6

Ellin is organizing this meeting, to be held at the VNA, to talk about commonalities and differences of the different communities related to the Green Line Extension needs/impacts. Goals are to understand the above issues and see where we can work together.

Ellin attended the monthly Medford Green Line meeting. Expressed at that meeting was concern that W. Medford might fall off the Green Line Extension radar if the CLF lawsuit is successful (original SIP commitment is to Medford Hillside only). Medford citizens held a small working charrette in April (no attendees was at this STEP meeting).

5. Other Business

- a. MASSPIRG's Diesel Reduction Program, focused on Cambridge-Somerville-Medford (97% pollution percentile) partnering with ACE, ClearWater Action, and Environment Northeast for a statewide campaign educating public officials and the general public about the environmental and health damage caused by diesel pollution with the goal of introducing a bill before the legislature in autumn calling for a statewide diesel reduction plan. The goal of the bill/plan would be to eradicate 75% reduction in diesel pollution. Website: <http://www.masspirg.org>. Somerville obtains most of its diesel pollution from trucks, old buses and commuter rail. Another big problem is that public housing continues to be planned and built within 100 meters of major highways, which is the zone in which fine particulate pollution has the greatest health and mortality impact.
- b. Green Earth MotorSports' mission is to reduce and eradicate the use of fossil fuels by promoting the use of biodiesel and other alternative fuels. Green Earth MotorSports is a Cambridge-based nonprofit, which plans to demonstrate the feasibility and equivalence of alternative fuels by outfitting a rally racing car that runs on these fuels. Website: <http://greeneearthmotorsports.org/>.
- c. Ellin and Karen will take photos of outdoor T stops in Metro Boston on 14 May as a way to start envisioning what Green Line T stops in Somerville might look like. [excursion was rained out, need to reschedule –km]
- d. Statistic: 6% of US residents take public transportation regularly. 40% of US residents have no access to public transportation.