

Notes from 6 sub committee meetings:

## **Specific Trails – Somerville Trail, South Bay Harbor Trail, Central Artery**

You'd asked us to list "pet projects" or contributions to our "20 projects". Here are the ones mentioned during our session:

- The Community Path [www.pathfriends.org](http://www.pathfriends.org) and The South Bay Harbor Trail [www.southbaytrail.com](http://www.southbaytrail.com)
- Reconnecting the lost pieces of the Emerald Necklace -- making a Continuous set of paths once again.
- Prepare studies for future adaptation of Commercial Street and Dorchester Avenues in Boston as critical North/South links between Charles River paths and South Bay Harbortrail.
- Allow public access over the top of the two Mystic River Dams which are now closed to the general public. Use the Charles River Dam, which is open, as a model.
- Make the Harvard and Old Northern Avenue Bridges “showcases” for ped/bike accommodation. ONAB needs rehabilitation. ONAB facility could serve as future “bicycle service center” coordinated with regional ferry services.
- Get past the fear of environmental and tort liability that is stalling Massachusetts projects. With 10,000 miles of open rail trail in the USA, the problems can't be that unique or that hard to solve!

A statewide trail map is at:

[http://www.obviously.com/trails/map/trails\\_ma\\_statewide.html](http://www.obviously.com/trails/map/trails_ma_statewide.html)

### Path Breakout

- 1) The group agreed that single path projects are critically important “building blocks” but more formal recognition of the value of path networks by state level transportation planners is needed. Individual path projects are only as good as their ability to link up to a broader network/system of access.
  - 2) Cities and towns plan trails sporadically. Broader planning is needed throughout the state. One suggestion from the group is to consider state district planning (much as the Mass Highway Department is structured) within a statewide master-planning context. Strategy would engage cities and towns to cooperate in making more trails connect better and sooner.
  - 3) Try it out/Get it done. Consider all path and trail system proposals. Don't prioritize one system over another –whatever it is, ranging from dedicated “rail trails” to side paths to “share the road” facilities, try them out to see what works. The system is in its infancy –experimentation (albeit safe) is appropriate at this stage. A state wide, interconnected path/trail system will result sooner if technical considerations are not precluded by planner design bias.
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## Seniors

Is there enough...

Money

Political will

Community support

To do a real model?

One variable at a time, or “holistic” approach?

Environments being built daily – we can’t wait.

Identify current efforts – existing experiments

Use the carrot and the stick (prohibitive cost or car in N.Y.C.)

Developing best practices/guidelines...e.g.sidewalk installations (smoothness) visual contrast; way finding (for full accessibility (all populations)

Explicitly and actively involve the user groups.

Acknowledge non-car using population (e.g. auto oriented transit)

Facilities as destinations: public realm inviting social interaction (e.gl. Tai Chi). Add strolling; interacting. A bench may be important for destination, resting.

Eg. Seniors walking @Castle Island, as they know what to expect

“Reliable” amenities – benches with arms/no arms, height, fountains, restrooms, food)

Notably important for those with arthritis, etc.

Accommodating Range of walks (minutes to hours) – on any scale, maintain user interest

Possible “Existing” experiments –

Boston STEPS

WalkBoston/Safe Routes to School

On-going construction and repair

(e.g.) change policy for opportunistic improvement, sewer, resurface, utilities underground, Need to establish new norms!)

e.g. Maverick Gardens, East Boston.

Centre Street, West Roxbury

Huntington Avenue (New N.U.)

A Street/Hundred Acre (South Boston)

How to encourage activity in an increasingly (and now) historically sedentary group.

Weather – go indoors – museums, malls, colleges, hospitals, (need materials and programming)

Seasonal activities

Snow removal on pedestrian ways

Safety

Comfort – peer modeling

Destinations

Not just physical but mental well-being also!!

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### **Suburban Issues:**

- 1) Look to Streetcar suburbs for designs
- 2) New England
- 3) Need more research
- 4) Interim – now – where do people like to go for vacation?
- 5) Efficacy – does new urbanism succeed?
- 6) Need Post Occupancy Evaluation

Does the city have guidelines and visions – see all of the plans and then reach a consensus

Weave in existing infrastructure.

Who does it? How mobilized?

Mom and Pop stores? Real Estate/large fridge (people buy refrigerators much larger than they need)

Need to change concept of time, safety and fear

What kinds of Social Institutions do we need to assemble this physical infrastructure?

- Need program
- Economic benefits
- Multi-use space – well-used
- New forms of buildings (Mom & Pop)
- Need to do investigation
- Back up transportation systems for inclement weather
- Anti-smoking campaign – continue research
- Push focus away from urban/suburban form
- New state transportation plan
- Need ability to bicycle in the road
- Cost and where money comes from to build these facilities?

Combine Guidelines with other modes

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## **Campus Travel**

A. Get people biking somewhere (safe) “zip-bike” at the Science Museum.

B. Harvard Bridge (MDC)

- Northeastern U.
- New England Conservatory
- Boston Conservatory
- Berklee
- MIT

1) One lane each way at Memorial Drive for 1 more year – construction

2) Bridge asphalt unraveling at “bike lane” and unsafe

3) Conflict between buses/cars/bikes/rollerblades/peds

(Drawing of bridge)

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## **Urban**

1) Density

2) Diversity

- Race/age
- Cultural/economic

3) mixed land use

4) common open space

5) front yards – streets community play spaces

cars – a hindrance

Readiness – social, economic, political

Community assets – mixed bag of needs and assets

Gatekeepers – filters and influencers

Buy in –

Children “Kill two birds with one stone”

East Boston, Dorchester, Southern

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## Safe Routes to Schools

Discussion of SRS measures that might be implemented on a pilot project basis in metro Boston area.  
Goal: to increase walk-to-school and/or bike-to-school in selected schools.

Attendees contact info:

### Built Environment

- Building sidewalks around schools that lack them. E.g. Some Arlington elementary school districts lack sidewalks on key streets near schools.
- “Pop up” Yield-to-Pedestrian signs (Can these be theft and vandal proof?)
- Small, humped roundabouts
- Car-free zones near schools during school hours. Designated drop-offs outside the car-free zone. The car-free zone might be just the one block at the school entrance. (To get community buy-in, this would probably need to be combined with a walking school bus. See “Programs” below.)
- Secure bike storage
- Bike Crossing signs
- Pavement markings, such as crosswalks and no parking zones, that are more permanent and visible, or in some cases, where there are presently none at all.
- Temporary, low-cost traffic calming measures such as raised crosswalks, speed tables, curb extensions (bulb outs), road narrowing, and speed humps.  
(Note: These must be designed and implemented to certain standards or they will fail. A temporary asphalt bulb-out will not be as visible as a permanent concrete, granite-curbed bulb-out, and will actually become a hazard.)

### Programs

- Walking School Bus programs; groups of elementary school children walking with a few adults, picking up more kids along the way, as a school bus does.
- Recruitment of seniors to monitor walking school buses
- Walking and bicycle safety training for school children
- Offer “Livable Cities” workshops to parents through PTOs of selected urban schools.
- Snow removal: establishing a snow removal program to ensure clear sidewalks along designated walk-to-school routes. (The group did not elaborate on this idea. From my own experience I know that a combination of public education, enforcement of local regs, buddy programs for the elderly/handicapped are programs that could be tried.)

Attendees contact info:

[Meg.Robertsen@state.ma.us](mailto:Meg.Robertsen@state.ma.us) 4

[Rurban@gcassoc.com](mailto:Rurban@gcassoc.com) 4

[Miller48@comcast.net](mailto:Miller48@comcast.net) 4

[Justjeffries@earthlink.net](mailto:Justjeffries@earthlink.net)

[Jessica.collins@tufts.edu](mailto:Jessica.collins@tufts.edu)

[Randers@cambridge.gov](mailto:Randers@cambridge.gov)

[Acradock@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:Acradock@hsph.harvard.edu) 4

[Cseiderman@cambridge.gov](mailto:Cseiderman@cambridge.gov)

[Deunson@gis.net](mailto:Deunson@gis.net)

Mass Commission for Blind

Ray, at GoodyClancy

Steve, small, non-profit, school curricula

Marge, bike advocate, Milton

Angie, at Harvard Prevention Research Cntr

4 indicates possible interest in future meetings to discuss SRS projects in Boston area.

Notes by Don Eunson, facilitator, and Assistant Program Manager WalkBoston's Safe Routes to Schools program

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Don Eunson  
WalkBoston's Safe Routes to Schools  
179 Boylston St.  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130-4520 USA  
T: (617) 522-0656