1) Funding

A) The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (at NIH) has funded the Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health (CAFEH) proposal for which TCRC provided seed funding in 2005. This community-based participatory research study is a collaboration of Tufts (TCRC steering committee members Doug Brugge and John Durant) and five community organizations: Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership (Ellin Reisner from the steering committee); Chinese Progressive Association (Lydia Lowe from the steering committee); Latin American Health Institute (Bart Laws from the steering committee); Chinatown Resident Association and Committee for Boston Public Housing. The five year, $2.5 million project will study near highway pollution and its health effects in Somerville, Chinatown and possibly South Boston.

B) The National Institute of Child Health and Development (at NIH) is in the process of funding the Assessing and Prevention Obesity among New Immigrants proposal to which TCRC provided seed funding in 2006. This is also a community-based participatory research study that is a collaboration of Tufts (Chris Economos of the steering committee) and the Brazilian Woman’s Group, Community Action Agency of Somerville (Alex Pirie of the steering committee), Haitian Coalition, and the Welcome Project (Warren Goldstein-Gelb of the steering committee). This five year $2.5 million study immigrants and obesity in Somerville.

C) In fall 2007, TCRC awarded seed funding to Jayanthi Mistry and a coalition of community partners to develop a proposal around education and mental health in Somerville youth. The team submitted their proposal to the National Institute of Mental Health at NIH in June 2008 under the title, Immigrant Youth: Health and Resilience. The community partners are The Welcome Project (Warren Goldstein-Gelb from the steering committee), Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (Carol Wan from the steering committee), Immigrant Service Providers Group/Health (Alex Pirie from the steering committee), and the Somerville Public Schools. Tufts professors Jean Wu and Susan Ostrander (both from the steering committee) are also co-investigators. The proposal is for a 2-year developmental grant.

D) TCRC steering committee members Laurel Leslie, Elmer Freeman and Doug Brugge helped develop and will be part of the leadership core for the community engagement aspect of the new Clinical and Translational Science Initiative grant to Tufts from NIH. This $25 million, five year award will, among other things, provide important opportunities for
community involvement in clinical research at Tufts and Tufts Medical Center.

2) Public Programs

A) We hosted the first ever “speed dating” event at Tufts. The half day program was designed to introduce Tufts researchers and local community members to each other. The event was attended by about 2 dozen community representatives and a similar number of Tufts faculty, students and administrators. There was positive to enthusiastic feedback on the event, although if one problem was evident it might have been that finding the perfect collaboration in one morning was a bit optimistic.

3) Organizational development

A) We developed and approved by laws for TCRC.
B) We successfully brought on new members to the steering committee, both faculty and community to fill a number of seats that became vacant. Importantly, we brought on our first representative from Medford, something we had been seeking to do since founding the center.
C) The steering committee met regularly and seemed to coalesce into a core of people who, while not always agreeing, share a view of the value of TCRC and respect each other. The TCRC steering committee appears to be becoming a valuable focal point for Tufts-community communication.

Steering committee members are:
Doug Brugge, Public Health, Tufts
Warren Goldstein Gelb, Welcome Project, Somervile
Barbara Rubel, Community Relations, Tufts
Elmer Freeman, Center for Community Health, Education, Research and Service, Boston
Susan Ostrander, Sociology, Tufts
Linda Martinez, Community Health, Tufts
Jayanthi Mistri, Child Development, Tufts
Bart Laws, Latin American Health Institute, Boston
Bindu Panikkar, Graduate Student, Engineering, Tufts
Susan Altman, Medford
Jean Wu, American Studies, Tufts
Alex Pirie, Immigrant Service Providers Group, Somerville
John Durant, Engineering, Tufts
Carol Wan, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, Boston Chinatown
Ellin Reisner, Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership, Somerville
Chris Economos, School of Nutrition, Tufts
Lydia Lowe, Chinese Progressive Association, Boston Chinatown
Laurel Leslie, Pediatrics, Tufts-New England Medical Center
Shirley Mark, Tisch College, Tufts
There is an open seat for an undergraduate student for which we need to recruit.

D) Three subcommittees of the steering committee were formed in the spring. These were focused on: 1) community engagement and collaborative capacity building; 2) funding; and 3) communication. Each group met 1-2 times and reported back to the full steering committee, representing an increase in the time and energy that steering committee members committed to directing TCRC. Several ideas/efforts emerged from this process that are under active consideration:

i) Developing a process of structured discussions with community, university and the two together around why and how to do collaborative research.

ii) Hosting an interdisciplinary working session, possibly leading to a conference.

iii) To issue our seed funding RFA this fall with a requirement for proposals with humanities/social science foci.

iv) An idea, yet to be discussed for sponsoring junior faculty with fellowships to engage in mentored community collaborative research.

v) Another idea, also pending future discussion, for presenting an annual community-collaborative research award.

vi) An effort to upgrade the TCRC web site.