

THE SOMERVILLE GREEN LINE IS NOT A DONE DEAL YET

IMMEDIATE ACTION IS NEEDED BY SOMERVILLE RESIDENTS TO KEEP THE GREEN LINE EXTENSIONS ON TRACK

Please attend one of the **Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Public Hearings** on Wednesday December 21st and/or send written comments by January 17th to ensure that the Green Line Extensions move forward as soon as possible.

Hearings: Wednesday, December 21st at 10 AM or 6 PM
at the DEP Offices, One Winter Street, 2nd Floor, at Downtown Crossing in Boston.

Easily reached by Red & Orange Lines or a short walk from Green Line at Park.

In May 2005 the state agreed to extend the Green Line along two branches - one to Union Square and another in the Lowell Line right-of-way through Somerville to Medford - as part of its Transit Commitments obligation under the Ozone State Implementation Plan (SIP). But the Ozone SIP must be formally modified by Massachusetts DEP to include these projects and then be accepted by US EPA before they will be on track.

The DEP hearings seek to know if the public supports proposed changes in the regulations.

Written comments will also be accepted at DEP until January 17th, 2006:

Submit via Email to: christine.kirby@state.ma.us

Send via US Mail to: Christine Kirby, Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Waste Prevention, One Winter Street, 10th Floor, Boston, MA 02108.

After the DEP Hearings, what happens next in 2006...

- DEP will prepare a final draft of proposed changes to the State Implementation Plan and submit it to the US Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) for their approval.
- EPA must review and accept the revised SIP regulations. There will be a written public comment period in early 2006 although there may not be a hearing.
- The Green Line Extensions must be included in the next Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) – comments in early Summer 2006.
- A real financing plan must be developed by the Massachusetts Legislature for the SIP Transit Commitments by date of submittal of the MPO RTP to Federal agencies in late Summer 2006.

More Ozone SIP Details and Suggested Speaking Points on the Flip Side →

SOMERVILLE

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY

PARTNERSHIP

MORE DETAILED EXPLANATION OF THE OZONE SIP. The Ozone SIP is a set of state regulations that are also a legal agreement between EPA and Massachusetts resulting from the state's "non-attainment" status under the Clean Air Act. This simply means the state is legally committed to building more public transit to alleviate poor air quality in this region. The Green Line Extensions will help prevent future transportation pollution at a level that satisfies the remaining Transit Commitments. Preventing future air pollution in Somerville that leads to regional ozone formation is especially appropriate because we have long been overrun by commuters, and severely underserved by clean and convenient public transit.

SOMERVILLE'S CONGESTION AND HEALTH BURDENS. With I93, Route 28, Route 38, the five northern commuter rail lines and AMTRAK all passing through Somerville, we are uniquely burdened. Over 90% of the travelers on these highways and trains neither live nor work here. Somerville is the only community in Massachusetts with over 200,000 vehicle miles driven per day per square mile of land area. We are the only community with 15,000 diesel trains per square mile per year. Our high heart attack and lung cancer deaths have been a terrible consequence of the regional commuter burdens imposed on our neighborhoods. From 1996 through 2000, Somerville had 36% higher lung cancer and heart attack mortality rates than the state as a whole even though a 2002 survey showed lower than average smoking rates. Over these five years Somerville had **145 excess deaths** from these two leading causes. During the same period, we had 25 traffic fatalities (total), 25 suicides (total) and only two murders. Air pollution from regional transportation is the most serious public health problem in Somerville.

SOMERVILLE IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY. With the highest ratio of multi-family to single family housing in the state, the second highest concentration of immigrants after Chelsea and roughly 5,000 carless citizens per square mile, healthier transportation would immediately help many of our residents get to their schools and jobs more easily. In the longer term it would become the foundation for new mixed income housing and new economic development opportunities for our diverse population.

NEW SIP PROJECT DETAILS. DEP has proposed new language which would make the two Somerville Green Line branches a top transportation priority and includes both within the regulations. DEP is also proposing, at the same time, to commit the state to additional investments in new stations along the Fairmont Commuter Rail Line in Roxbury, and to build 1000 new parking spaces at MBTA stations (which may be in the suburbs). The proposed Ozone SIP language would drop the restoration of the Arborway Green Line to Jamaica Plain and also the connection of the Red and Blue Lines. We must be very grateful for and support inclusion of both Green Line Extensions in the revised Ozone SIP. But we should not undermine the transit aspirations of any other community.

OTHER NEW SIP DETAILS ARE NOT SO GOOD. The proposed Ozone SIP language also has two provisions which are not helpful, though we may be able to live with them. These draft regulations extend the deadline for completion of the Green Line Extensions from 2011 to 2014 and make it easier for the MBTA to substitute projects for one another in the future. The new deadline may be more realistic but should be justified with a schedule that details the major intermediate steps necessary for project completion. In the past DEP has required additional environmental mitigation when clean air obligations are delayed – for example, cleaner buses or more shuttle vans for seniors. The new substitution provision would allow any transit project meeting the clean air goals in Boston, Cambridge, Medford or Somerville to substitute for the proposed projects, including the Green Line Extensions.

Additional Ozone SIP Transit Commitment details at:
<http://www.mass.gov/dep/air/laws/regulati.htm#catht>

**Visit our web-site at somervillestep.org
for Green Line and Somerville transportation news.**