

Green Line Extension. With a new project team led by HDR/Gilbane, MassDOT and the MBTA held seven Green Line Extension station design workshops in the community in June 2011. The team will work further on the station designs based on community input from the workshops and present them in the fall. The Preliminary Engineering phase is underway, which will bring the project to 30% design. The search for a firm for the Design/Build phase will also begin this fall, with the contract to be awarded in summer 2012. MassDOT and the MBTA are committed to an ongoing public process that includes community briefings, design workshops, outreach to environmental justice populations, and frequent updates to the project website. The Green Line Extension is projected to start construction sometime after the awarding of the Design/Build contract in summer 2012, and to be operational by October 2015.

Community Path. Funding for the 2.3-mile extension of the Community Path from Cedar St. to Lechmere is uncertain at this time (only 15-20% of the needed monies have been identified). Construction of the first segment from Cedar St. to Lowell St. (a City of Somerville project) could begin in 2012 with existing funding. But the rest of the Path, which would ideally be constructed with the Green Line Extension to Lechmere, is not included in the Green Line Extension budget at this time, according to MassDOT. STEP is working with community groups (such as Friends of the Community Path) and the City of Somerville to pursue construction funds so that the Path extension will be built with the Green Line Extension all the way to Lechmere.

Orange Line. Development planned for Assembly Square will be served by a T station with two headhouses to be located on Foley St. and near the proposed IKEA. Efforts to promote good pedestrian and bicycle access have been successful; there will be a shared-use path adjacent to the Orange Line that will connect to Lombardi Way, run along the Orange Line tracks and end near the Sullivan Sq. station. At present, construction of the new Assembly Square Drive is almost complete. The MBTA is soliciting construction bids for the new T station. This T station project is a public/private partnership between Federal Transit Administration,

Federal Realty Investment Trust, and MassDOT. This new Assembly Square station is projected to be operational by 2014.

Study of Health Benefits of In-Home Air Filtration on Residents Living Near Highways. In 2010, the City of Somerville was awarded a Healthy Homes Technical Study Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The City is working with STEP, the Somerville Housing Authority, and Tufts University, to study the feasibility and viability of using HEPA filters in the homes of residents of the Mystic Housing Development to reduce indoor exposure to ultrafine particle (UFP) pollution from traffic on Interstate-93. Findings so far indicate that HEPA filters do reduce the exposure to ultrafine particles, as does central air conditioning. This study builds on recent studies by public health researchers which show that people living near highways, such as residents living near I-93, are exposed to high levels of UFP pollution that infiltrates their homes, and increases risk of cardiovascular disease.

Vision for Future Transit Linkage. The Union Square branch of the Green Line Extension will run along the right-of-way of the Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line, which runs to Porter Square.

STEP recommends:

- As a future project, extending the Green Line from Union Square to Porter Square, and adding a couple of low-cost T stops along the way. Doing so would greatly increase ridership, and give Fitchburg Line commuters better access to North Station and Government Center. The MBTA has promised that its design for the Union Square station will not preclude any future project for extending the Green Line to Porter Square.
- Restoring Route 28 (McGrath Highway) to a street-level boulevard. Removing the overpass would link Union Square with East Somerville and Inner Belt, and would make the route more accessible for pedestrians and cyclists. A de-elevation study by MassDOT is underway, and a coalition of community groups is being created this summer to build a consensus vision of the corridor.

Copyright © 2011, Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership.



Current News About Transportation Projects in Somerville

SOMERVILLE
TRANSPORTATION EQUITY
PARTNERSHIP

www.somervillestep.org

