

Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership

Regular Meeting of the Steering Committee and Members

Date: November 11, 2011, 7:30-9 p.m., at the VNA Community Room, 259 Lowell Ave.

Attendees: Ellin Reisner, Wig Zamore, Steve Mulder, Karen Molloy, Naomi Slagowski, Heather Van Aelst, Jonah Petri. (Meeting notes taken by Karen Molloy.)

Quorum Present? Yes.

VOTES: No.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- November 15: MBTA's Assembly Sq. Station Project Meeting will be held Tues. Nov. 15, 7:00 PM at the Capuano School. First new subway stop to be added to the MBTA system in a few decades; also first meeting on the Assembly Sq. Station project since 30% design presentation of January, 2010. The project is now at 100% design with a construction contract awarded by the MBTA board. Purpose of the meeting is to introduce the MBTA project team and discuss construction plans and schedule. Look for connections to IKEA and Draw 7 Park, and bike racks and storage. Looking transportation options of other IKEAs in the Northeast, 40% of Newark, NJ, IKEA shoppers visit the store by bus; Red Hook IKEA has bus and ferry transportation connections.
- Comments on GLX Environmental Assessment due Nov. 18.
- November 21: MassDOT's Public Hearing on proposed Community Path Design from Cedar St. to Lowell St. on Mon. Nov. 21 7:00 – 9:00 PM at the VNA. Written comments accepted until Nov. 31. For more info see: <http://www.somervillema.gov/calendar/community-path-cedar-lowell-extension-design-public-hearing-massdot-project-604331>.

PROCEEDINGS:

- MAPC's final public meeting on Mystic Valley Parkway Planning Process on Nov. 2nd was a well-attended meeting (~100 with more Medford folks than Somevillians), Ellin and Wig attended (as did Ken Krause from MGNA). According to Ken Krause's post on the MGNA Community listserv about MAPC's recommendations: "A Green Line station at Mystic Valley Parkway in Medford could support the creation of 240 jobs, 176 additional housing units, and would likely increase nearby residential property values by about 15 percent, according to a study by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)... MAPC identified the following desired objectives in any development of the area should the Green Line be extended to there:
 - Creation of more open space
 - Strong connectivity, especially for walking and biking
 - Maintain neighborhood character and scale
 - Offer a mixture of uses, including retail
 - Provide more senior and affordable housing
 - Creation of high-quality jobs"

MAPC's draft report & recommendations will be published at

<http://www.mapc.org/green-line-extension>. Public comments will be accepted until December 30. An article about the event in the Boston Globe on November 3, "Medford residents fear impact of Route 16 T stop" oddly mischaracterized the event as having listed support from Medford, ""During about an hour of questioning, only one resident spoke up in praise of the project, calling it a boon to the entire city." In fact attendees were generally in favor of MAPC's recommendations, and several people spoke in favor.

- Update on schedule of the fall public workshops on station designs that HDR+Gilbane were going to hold: likely only one will be held soon. [*Ed note:* Lechmere station design meeting was subsequently held Wed. Dec 14.]
- STEP's position on the GLX Federal Environmental Assessment, due Nov. 18. We will post talking points on the listserv + website (and separate talking points about Interim Offset Projects and Mitigation, which is directed at the State). Main points are that the State makes a full, unconditional, and timely commitment to complete the two Green Line branches: Union Square and Route 16, and to fully design/construct the Community Path extension as a single project with the Green Line. This project will provide a respite for a city overrun with regional highways and the cumulative effects from vehicular pollution from cars and diesel rail. MassDOT should design the Green Line extensions to protect the potential for: a future station between Washington Street and new Lechmere Station, a future Green Line extension with Path to Porter Square, and the future Urban Ring with Light Rail through Brickbottom/Inner Belt. Other detailed points could be made about the synergy of walk-bike-transit, and the legal obligation to build a path of travel to the stations that lowers the cost per trip and that attracts higher ridership (Davis Sq example). In some areas, such as Gilman station, the Path will be critical to reach a station that otherwise will not be easy to get to. A lot of parents drive their kids to school; the GLX would be instrumental in getting many SUVs off the road, which would be great for reducing local traffic.
- GLX Interim Offset Projects and Mitigation input to MassDOT: everything should be in the GLX corridor. GLX should be a unified project with a Route 16 station and the Community Path extension. Other suggestions could be turbines (5 would make a huge impact) and other energy efficiency technologies, and shift transportation paradigm to walking and biking (walk the talk of GreenDOT!). Massachusetts has been struggling with air pollution since the 1970s. The healthiest thing to do, with the longest term benefit, is to complete the entire unified GLX project.

Next Meeting: Monday 16 January. 2012, at the VNA Community Room