

## **Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership**

Regular Meeting of the Steering Committee and Members

**Date:** December 20, 2010 at the VNA Community Room, 259 Lowell Ave.

**Attendees:** Ellin Reisner, Wig Zamore, Steve Mulder, Karen Molloy, Andrea Yakovakis, Heather Van Aelst, Galia Shokry, Kristi Chase, Jim McGinnis, Tanya Paglia. (Meeting notes taken by Karen Molloy.)

**Quorum Present?** Yes.

**VOTES:** None.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- GLX Station walks: January 8 for Lowell St. and Gilman Sq. Meet at 10 AM at VNA parking lot and at 11:15 at the Homans Building. Bring your camera!
- The Friends of the Community Path was granted Powder House Award by Chamber of Commerce. Congratulations! (STEP won this award a couple of years ago.)
- Next Friends of Community Path meeting, 13 January 2011, VNA Community Room, 259 Lowell Ave.
- The next GLX Design Working Group meeting will be held in early January.

### **PROCEEDINGS:**

#### *Updates*

- James Madden has drafted Station Design Elements document from the GLX Station Design sub-committee. The document contains the work the committee has been working on regarding principles, and recommended materials, interior spaces, passenger circulation, station approach. Margie Lackner from the MBTA has focused on wayfinding/signage.
- CCP community meeting was held in early December at the Capuano School. CCP subgroups presented progress/status of their focus (Housing, green space, economic development and job creation, etc.) The Housing group has focused on renters; but many attendees who are homeowners are worried about rising property taxes. There needs to be some way to help homeowners stay in their homes. There was a lot of energy and enthusiasm and recognition that a large amount of life in Somerville will be affected by the GLX.
- CCP station walks that have occurred: Gilman Sq., Ball Sq. and College Ave., Washington St. / Brickbottom, and Union Sq. (See announcement above about the upcoming Lowell and Gilman walks.) The walks have been well-attended. By necessity the walks have had to be scheduled on Saturday mornings, which are generally quiet traffic-wise. Thus the walks have not encountered the kind of commuter traffic that would ensue at the stations during rush hours. For some stations it would be good to return during morning or evening commuter peak times to get a better sense of the traffic conditions of an area. The GLX Design Working Group has asked ECPT about having a walk of the future Lechmere station.

- Assembly Sq. DIF. Wig provided some background on this means for obtaining funding for a district, as the project is \$50 million short.
- Community Path – the State will start discussion about offset projects in January. (There is however, no money to fund an offset project.) The chosen project must reside in the same district (the project cannot be in another city). At the Planning Board public hearing on about the changes in the MaxPak project, the developers (KSS and a 2<sup>nd</sup> developer) stated that they plan to use the undeveloped section of the path at Cedar St. as primary access for bringing in construction equipment until the ramp up to Lowell St is built. Then they will use both the path and the ramp (presumably until construction of the path starts). The neighborhood is very concerned about construction traffic through the residential streets. Construction of the access ramp to Lowell St is scheduled to start 11 Jan. (Building construction is scheduled to start 11 May. Projected completion is projected to be completed in 24 months.)
- No update on Great Neighborhoods Initiative. There will be meeting the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of January. This initiative is the Smart Growth Alliance, MAPC, and Barr Foundation process for getting technical assistance for planning economic development. STEP applied with CCP; we are finalists.
- Brickbottom – Brickbottom is still deciding on whether to sue MassDOT over planning to build track right up against Brickbottom property and removing their fire lane. MassDOT's recent public meeting about using the Grand Junction track for its proposed Worcester – North Station route drew a huge turnout. Grand Junction is currently used for freight and for getting trains in need of repair over to the BET. (MassDOT recently acquired the ROW.) There was little enthusiasm for the plan; no one is interested in having more diesel train pollution in the neighborhoods, with no obvious benefits to the community. (Perhaps someday Grand Junction could be part of the light-rail Urban Ring track with a Path!)
- It was agreed that STEP would send a thank you letter to Secretary Mullan for his support for the Community Path and the DOT support for the Federal effort to improve funding for active transportation. Secretary Mullan's letter to STEP, and STEP's follow-up thank-you letter to him. Andrea will scan the letter, and we will post it on the STEP website.

**Next Meeting:** Monday 31 January 2011, at the VNA Community Room