

## What needs to happen next

- The GLX construction is underway with work to widen the Medford St. (Somerville) and Harvard St. (Medford) rail bridges, and demolition of an MBTA tire repair facility at 21 Water St. near Lechmere. The project is expected to reach 60% design by September. Announcement of the MBTA's construction management/general contractor (CM/GC) for the GLX will take place this summer. In 2014 we should see the final design of the project and the start of reconstructing the bridges and retaining walls.
- The GLX is in the federal "New Starts funding" pipeline – a master list of transportation projects across the country under consideration for funding by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). There is no guarantee the project will get federal assistance. As the FTA has voiced concern about the MBTA's fiscal health, the State must commit to a realistic plan for funding MBTA operations for further consideration of federal funding for the GLX. The State must also secure financing for the project and is legally obligated to build the GLX even without federal funding.
- The GLX project has committed to designing the Community Path extension. Construction funding for the Path extension must be secured to ensure the Path is built with the GLX from Lowell St. to Lechmere.
- Facing a court order to mitigate vehicle emissions by 2014, the MBTA is considering interim solutions as it works toward completion of the GLX.
- Somerville residents should continue to participate in land-use planning and station design for the new Green Line stations to increase future transit access, preserve affordable housing, and encourage appropriate commercial development.
- An economic development strategy must be developed for Inner Belt/Brickbottom and Boynton Yards.



*The North Somerville railway station (at Ball Square) circa 1958. Photo courtesy of John A. Roderick.*

## What you can do

Become involved in STEP's efforts to secure better public transit for all residents and advocate for a more walkable and bikeable Somerville.

Stay informed about actions you can take by attending meetings or writing public officials by checking our website at [www.somervillestep.org](http://www.somervillestep.org) or signing up for the STEP listserv on our website. These resources also post information about upcoming meetings.

Participate in community, city, and MBTA/MassDOT public meetings and hearings related to transportation planning and advocacy in Somerville. You can find out about such events from the STEP listserv, the City of Somerville website, or local news media. Follow transportation issues in the news. Check the MassDOT website about the Green Line project at [www.greenlineextension.org](http://www.greenlineextension.org), the MBTA website at [www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com), and the Boston MPO website at [www.ctps.org/bostonmpo](http://www.ctps.org/bostonmpo) for their latest news.

Make sure your local aldermen and state representatives know that you want better public transportation and cleaner air for Somerville. (To find out who represents you, see the City of Somerville website at [www.somervillema.gov](http://www.somervillema.gov) or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts website at [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov).)

*Did you know that Somerville once had eight passenger train stops? The stops were on the Fitchburg and Lowell Lines, and the former Lexington Branch.*



**SOMERVILLE**  
**TRANSPORTATION EQUITY**  
**PARTNERSHIP**

## What is STEP?

Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership (STEP) is a group of concerned residents advocating for greatly needed transportation improvements for Somerville. Our mission is to secure transportation that will increase social equity, environmental health, and economic opportunity. STEP started working on these issues ten years ago. We welcome our neighbors, non-profits, businesses, and government to join in this work.

## What STEP does

STEP advocates for public transportation improvements that will promote the best land uses and will reduce traffic in Somerville, such as:

- Extending two branches of the Green Line: one to travel to Union Square to revitalize it and relieve traffic on the Route 28 corridor, the other to travel along the Lowell Commuter Rail Line. (The State plans to temporarily terminate the line at College Ave. with a promise to build the terminus at Route 16 at a later time.)
- Building an Orange Line station at Assembly Square to serve economic and mixed-use development, and to relieve traffic in the area.
- Raising awareness of the need to construct the 2.3 mile extension of the Community Path to Lechmere with the Green Line Extension (GLX). The Path will provide safe ped/bike access to the new stations; it will also link neighborhoods that have been long separated by railbeds and highways. In addition, the Path will benefit regional commuters and residents by connecting the MinuteMan Bikeway to Boston and connecting with other regional bike paths.
- Removing the McCarthy Overpass on Route 28 (McGrath Highway) and turning it into a street level boulevard. Doing so would connect Union Square with East Somerville and Inner Belt, and would make the route safer and more accessible for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.
- Raising awareness of the need to reduce mobile sources of pollution caused by heavy traffic on major highways and diesel trains, both of which pass through Somerville.
- Conducting research with Tufts University School of Medicine and community partners on the effects of mobile sources of pollution on the health of people living near highways.

We actively participate in MBTA Rider Oversight Committee, MassDOT, and Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization meetings, bringing attention to Somerville's transportation needs.

During the past year STEP has:

- Participated in MBTA public meetings held in June 2013 by the GLX design team led by HDR/Gilbane and AECOM. Such meetings presented GLX station design refinements based on previous community feedback, including Community Path extension design, and noise mitigation.
- Successfully advocated for inclusion of the design of the Community Path extension with the GLX. Also continued working with community groups and the City of Somerville to find funds to enable the extension of the Community Path to be constructed.
- Continued to advocate for Route 16 as the best terminus for the GLX because it would serve Somerville, Medford, and East Arlington residents. It would promote economic development, reduce vehicular traffic, and provide convenient multi-modal accessibility.
- Along with several other community groups, advocated successfully to block Global Partners' plan to transport freight trains filled with ethanol to their storage facility in Revere on commuter rail lines through several of the densest urban communities in eastern MA, including Somerville. (In early July, Global Partners withdrew its plan after the legislature voted against issuing Global a new permit for this plan following public outcry against the plan.)
- Worked with several community groups in advocating successfully for the removal of the McCarthy Overpass on Route 28 (McGrath Highway) and turning it into a street level boulevard. (In May, MassDOT presented to the public its recommendation to de-elevate the overpass, though there is not yet a project plan, design, or timetable.)
- Continued to work with the City, the Somerville Housing Authority, and Tufts University on reducing indoor exposure to ultrafine particle (UFP) pollution from traffic on I-93 at Mystic Housing Development.

## About the Green Line extension

The Green Line Extension (GLX) consists of two branches:

- The Medford branch will travel along the Lowell Commuter Rail Line with stops at Washington St., Gilman Square, Lowell St., Ball Square, and College Ave. The State plans to temporarily terminate the line at College Ave. The Route 16 terminus will be constructed later, according to the State's Regional Transportation Plan.
- The Union Square branch will travel along the Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line with a single stop at Prospect St.

In Cambridge, the Lechmere station will be moved to the north side of McGrath/O'Brien Highway, near the NorthPoint development.

The location of a proposed Green Line storage and maintenance facility, another component of this project, will be in Inner Belt, adjacent to the Boston Engine Terminal.

Having station access from the proposed Community Path extension is an important goal of the community. The GLX design team is designing connections to the stations from the Path on the Medford branch starting at the Lowell St. station. (The City of Somerville is constructing the Path section from Cedar St. to Lowell St. which should be completed by November 2013.) Retaining walls along the GLX will be designed and constructed to accommodate Community Path construction.

The GLX stations are scheduled to open in phases, with Union Square and Washington St. stations projected to open in 2017 and the other stations up to College Ave. by July 2019. The "D" line will run on the Medford Branch to College Ave. and the "E" line will run to Union Square. The "D" and "E" line trains run every 6 minutes at rush hour, and less often at other times.

