



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

September 12, 2008

Stephen Woelfel
Executive Office of Transportation
10 Park Plaza, Suite 3170
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Re: Public Comment on annual update and status report for transit projects required by 310 CMR 7.36 (2)(f) through (j) – Conceptual designs for Green Line Stations

Dear Mr. Woelfel,

The City of Somerville would like to provide comment on the conceptual designs for the Green Line Extension running through Somerville to Medford. We understand that these designs are subject to change as the design process for the Green Line Extension moves forward and wanted to provide you with comments to contribute to the development of the next iteration of designs. A separate letter from Mayor Curtatone has been sent to you regarding comments relative to the proposed Maintenance Facility.

Overall Comments

1. **Bus Connectivity** – At all stations, adequate bus connections are critical to contribute to ridership and ensure that the disabled community can fully access the benefits of the extension. These routes will obviously affect the entire community in terms of bus service and will more directly impact businesses and residences in the immediate vicinity of the new stations. The City of Somerville would like to work closely with EOT on the development new routes or alternation of existing routes in response to the anticipated Green Line stations.
2. **Bicycle Parking** – As can be seen from Davis Square, many Somerville residents use bicycles to access mass transit. With the impending extension of the Community Path parallel with the Green Line Extension, we can anticipate that demand for bicycle parking will be significant. It is very important that sufficient bicycle parking be built into the design of every station.
3. **Kiss and Rides** – with the exception of the Route 16 / Mystic Valley Parkway station, we strongly believe that Kiss and Rides are not appropriate in an urban area such as Somerville.



It is our anticipation that the vast majority of riders from Somerville will be walking or bicycling to the stations. As an alternative, “bump outs” along the adjacent roadways for quick drop-off/pick-up could be provided, but we do not wish to see the extensive Kiss and Rides shown on the conceptual plans included in the plans.

4. **Parking** – with the potential exception of the Route 16 / Mystic Valley Parkway station, parking for riders is not appropriate in Somerville and should not be planned for.

Route 16 / Mystic Valley Parkway

1. **Terminus** – although the terminus of the Green Line Extension has not yet been determined, it should be recognized that the proposed station location is within Somerville and that a station in this location would provide service to many residents of West Somerville that presently do not have access to rapid transit. In particular, it would provide access to the future residents of the approximately 200 unit Capen-Conwell assisted living / senior affordable housing development.
2. **Pedestrian and bicycle connections** – accessibility in the vicinity of the station for cyclists and pedestrians is presently inadequate. We suggest that considerable attention be paid to this issue to ensure safe access to the station.
3. **Mystic River Plan** – the ongoing MAPC and DCR planning efforts should be consulted in relation to station planning in this area.
4. **Gateway to Mystic Valley** – the station will serve as a gateway to the recreational opportunities along the Mystic River and we recommend that space be set aside for an interpretive center that would include historic information and a map of paths, etc.
5. **Kiss and Ride** – this would be the single location in Somerville where a Kiss and Ride might be appropriate. However, we suggest that the proposed configuration should be modified to allow the entrance to the site at Broadway and exit at Mystic Valley Parkway. This would eliminate left turns from Mystic Valley Parkway and reduce potential pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. At a minimum, the entrance to/exit from the Kiss and Ride needs to be moved further away from the overpass to improve sight lines.

Ball Square

1. **Entrance** - the two-level entrance at this location is much appreciated as it would facilitate pedestrian traffic to the station from all directions.
2. **Kiss and Ride** - No rider parking or Kiss and Ride should be included at this location.
3. **Existing structures** – it is unclear what is intended for the existing structures on this. We believe that transit oriented development would be opportune at this location and, given their historic nature, retaining the existing structures should be strongly considered. We suggest



that the EOT and representatives of the City of Somerville and City of Medford meet to discuss how to facilitate development since city border runs through property.

Lowell Street

1. **Connectivity from Community Path** – we support the request for a lower level entrance directly from Community Path
2. **Platform location** – we would encourage you to place the platform as close to Lowell Street as possible for ease of access to all riders in this area.
3. **Switchback** – we understand that there will likely be a switchback next to VNA property to allow connectivity from the Community Path to Lowell Street. This should be shown on the plans and incorporated as part of the Green Line Extension project.

Gilman Square

1. **Homan's Building** – this building represents a key development site for the City of Somerville and only the absolute minimum area should be taken as part of the Extension project, if anything is needed. The parking lot also needs to be preserved for the building.
2. **Kiss and Ride** - No rider parking or Kiss and Ride should be included at this location.
3. **Size and elevation** - This station seems significantly larger than shown at other locations. The only entrance should be at the upper level off of Medford Street and not from the parking lot for the Homan's Building since this will be a development site.
4. **Connection with High School and Community Path** – We believe that direct access to the platform should be provided from the Community Path and Somerville High School because Medford Street access alone will be not sufficient for the key potential rider groups. High School students will be one of the key user groups for this station and their paths should be carefully considered in the planning effort to make sure they do not develop cut-through paths that are contrary to safety at this location.
5. **School Street** – Allowing direct access from School Street should be considered.

Inner Belt / Brickbottom

1. **Two stations needed** - Under full development scenarios, two stations are needed in the Inner Belt and Brickbottom areas therefore, planning for the Green Line Extension needs to include two stations even if one is not built until a later date when demand increases. Preliminary data shows the potential for 8 to 10 million square feet of development in this area; one station will be insufficient to meet demand.
2. **Kiss and Ride** - No rider parking or Kiss and Ride should be included at this location.

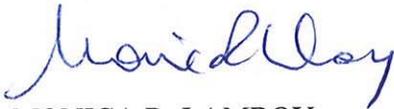


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3. **Access to station** - The planned station near Washington Street must have access from Joy Street and New Washington Street (i.e., east and west sides) due to the numbers of riders who will come from the existing neighborhoods as well as to serve future development.
4. **Washington Street location** - It is strongly recommended that the station be moved to Washington Street. As presently conceived, the station will not be visible from the key access point of Washington Street and is less accessible to existing neighborhoods than it should be. The fact that the parking lot owner on Joy Street has indicated an interest in selling to the EOT is not an adequate rationale for locating the station here.

Thank you for taking these comments into consideration as we move forward on the Green Line Extension project. I can be reached at 617-625-6600 x 2500 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



MONICA R. LAMBOY
Executive Director

