

Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership

Regular Meeting of the Steering Committee and Members

Date: January 16, 2012, 7:00-9 p.m., at the VNA Community Room, 259 Lowell Ave.

Attendees: Ellin Reisner, Wig Zamore, Karen Molloy, Steve Mulder, Kristi Chase, Jim McGuinness, Eric Fields, Kenn Butler, Chaos Golubitsky, Lynn Weissman. (Meeting notes taken by Karen Molloy.)

Quorum Present? Yes.

VOTES: No.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Boston Region MPO TIP Workshops and Open House.
- Wed, Jan 25, at 12:30 PM and 6:00 PM State Transportation Building, MPO Conference Room (Suite 2150) 10 Park Plaza, Boston.
- MBTA + HDR/Gilbane public meeting will be held on Wed., January 25th, 6-8 PM at the Somerville High School Auditorium to present the scope of work for the GLX Phase I Early Bridge & Demolition. The Contract Scope of Work is scheduled to begin Fall 2012 with reconstruction and widening of Harvard St. Rail Bridge in Medford, the Medford St. Rail Bridge in Somerville, and the demolition of MBTA owned property at 21 Water Street, Cambridge.
- Next Community Path meeting will be held Mon, Feb. 6, 7pm, at the VNA.
- Public hearing on MBTA's proposed fare increase and service cuts will be held in Somerville at: Somerville High School Auditorium, Tues., February 28; 6-8 PM. 21 Nov. Public comments accepted until March 1; email fareproposal@mbta.com.

PROCEEDINGS:

- *Discussion about the GLX project build process.* CM/GC (Construction Manager/General Contractor) or Design/Build. Things are proceeding on GLX project as if CM/GC has been approved, but it has not been approved by the legislature yet.

Discussion about the MBTA's proposed fare increase and service cutbacks.

The T needs leaders that care about public transit as it used to have in the past. The T needs support from the Senate president, the legislature, and the Governor. The funding of the T is up to the Governor, the Sec'y of A&F, and the legislature. This problem had been looming for a long time and has been ignored; the can has been kicked down the road each year. The State has no transportation plan. (Remember the State has been out of compliance with the SIP.)

The Big Dig sucked money away from maintenance of transits and roadways. Governor Patrick has moved to put in place a structure for funding roadway repairs but has not done the same for transit.

The MBTA is the only transit system in the US that has to come up with its capital. For other transits systems around the US, the state funds the projects and the transit system takes care of its operations. Many other states raised the

gas tax a few years ago to help fund transit systems. MA has not raised the gas tax since 1990. In addition to gas tax, other financing options include raising fees on tunnels and highways (MA has the lowest fees) or 10% tax on gross parking revenue (San Francisco's MUNI is financed by this 3rd option.)

Occupy the T (a group made up of people from various local Occupy groups including Occupy Boston and Occupy Somerville has organized to get the word out, plans rallies, and encourage people to contact their legislators and the Governor, and otherwise make their message heard against the proposed service cuts and fare increase. (Eric will post Occupy the T info on the STEP listserv.)

We need to advocate for a revenue plan. Of course, we will attend the Somerville hearing and testify. We will interface with other groups on this matter.

Several groups have studied the T's financial problems and made recommendations. We will locate the Stephanie Pollack /Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy paper on transit financing and post it on the listserv/website.

- *Report on Green Line Design Working Group meeting on December 7.* Concerns about the way delays happen on the project. The change from Design/Build to CM/GC was related to the delay over property acquisition and the usually long projected time line. It is puzzling how the emergency exits requirements for station designs are unclear to the people who should know those requirements. New round of station design public workshops will be scheduled soon.
- *Report on 14 December Lechmere Station Design meeting.* HDR/Gilbane did not present the design as a done deal; there were some recommendations they were open to -- especially redesign of entrance nearest to NorthPoint. There was a lot of discussion about buses and the need to ensure that they continue to serve the E. Cambridge neighborhood. MBTA open to community ideas. Unclear how the developer of NorthPoint, HYM, fits into this process.
- *Congressman Capuano's comments to BOA (and earlier letter to Sec'y Davey).* (<http://www.wickedlocal.com/somerville/news/x645110637/Capuano-A-way-forward-on-the-Green-Line-Extension#axzz1gihEIRf0>). The Congressman expresses concern about GLX getting funded/built and suggests partial solution of commuter rail. How is the City reacting to what the Congressman proposes? Capuano will be at the Chamber of Commerce breakfast this week.
- *Path update.* Report on proposed Path design from Cedar St. to Lowell St. Some friction has arisen with ADA advocates over the City having submitted a variance application to the Architectural Access Board for a proposed secondary staircase for the west sidewalks of Lowell St. Bridge to connect to the future Community Path Extension. A public hearing on the matter will be held by the Architectural Access Board in April. The Maxwell Green construction team dumped some sort of soil material on the path, purported to be grading but the material is questionable. Is it contaminated? Is it suitable for drainage, etc?

Next Meeting: Monday 20 February, 2012, at the VNA Community Room