

13 March 2008

Senate and House Chairs of the Legislature's Joint Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets

- Sen. Mark Montigny (Mark.Montigny@state.ma.us or 617-722-1440)
- Rep. David Flynn (Rep.DavidFlynn@hou.state.ma.us or 617-722-2017)

The Somerville delegation

- Sen. Pat Jehlen (Patricia.Jehlen@state.ma.us or 617-722-1578)
- Rep. Denise Provost (Rep.DeniseProvost@Hou.State.MA.US or 617-722-2810)
- Rep. Carl Sciortino (Rep.CarlSciortino@Hou.State.MA.US or 617-722-2140)
- Rep. Tim Toomey (Rep.TimothyToomey@Hou.State.MA.US or 617-722-2692)

RE: Senate Bill 2392, Article 97 Land Transfer

Dear Representatives Flynn, Provost, Sciortino and Toomey and Senators Montigny and Jehlen:

LivableStreets would like to take this opportunity to comment on the land transfer taking place at Assembly Square between the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Federal Realty, the developer of the Assembly Square Project.

LivableStreets is an advocacy organization that emphasizes the importance of accommodating all users on our roadways and in our public spaces, particularly pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and those with disabilities. We focus mainly on the Metro Boston area, including Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville, and work with other advocacy organizations such as WalkBoston, MassBike, and Adaptive Environments.

Overall, we think that this land transfer will have a very positive effect by moving the Winter Yacht Club from its current location to one more suitable given the development that is taking place in Assembly Square. However, we feel that there are a few unclear

issues that should be resolved before the land transfer takes place. Most importantly, the "DCR Exchange Plan" does not clearly specify which land the DCR will receive in exchange, and it does not specify how pedestrian and bicycle access between the future MBTA station, Draw 7 Park, and the Mystic River will be maintained.

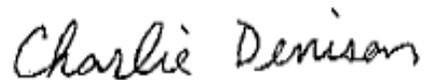
Alan Moore, a resident of Somerville and Chair of the Somerville Bicycle Committee, who has been following this project for many years, has submitted similar comments regarding this issue. He asks that the bill be modified with the following:

1. A permanent easement along the Western side of the Orange Line/Commuter rail tracks to allow for construction of a multi-use (pedestrian and bicycle) path between the existing Mystic River multi-use path, Draw 7 Park, the future MBTA station, and continuing to the I-93 overpass at Lombardi Way. The western portion of this easement is essential to provide connectivity due to the land transfer. The eastern portion would provide a traffic-free way for pedestrians and bicyclists to access the development, MBTA station, and parkland.
2. A description of the land being transferred from the developer to the DCR. (The current bill specified the monetary compensation, but does not specify the land being transferred to the DCR.)

LivableStreets supports both of these modifications to the bill, and urges you to support them as well.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss any of our comments in greater detail. My cell phone number is 413-478-9058 and my e-mail address is charlie@livablestreets.info.

Sincerely,



Charles Denison
Board of Directors
LivableStreets Alliance