

24 June 2008

Secretary of Transportation Bernard Cohen <bernard.cohen@eot.state.ma.us>

The Somerville delegation:

- Sen. Pat Jehlen <patricia.jehlen@state.ma.us>
- Rep. Denise Provost <rep.deniseprovost@hou.state.ma.us>
- Rep. Carl Sciortino <rep.carlsciortino@hou.state.ma.us>
- Rep. Tim Toomey <rep.timothytoomey@hou.state.ma.us>

The Medford delegation:

- Sen. Sean Garballey <sean.garballey@state.ma.us>
- Rep. Paul Donato <rep.pauldonato@hou.state.ma.us>

Mayor Joseph Curtatone, Somerville <mayor@somervillema.gov>

Mayor Michael J. McGlynn, Medford <mayor@medford.org>

#### **RE: Green Line Extension Planning**

Dear Secretary Cohen, Senators Jehlen and Garballey, Representatives Provost, Sciortino, Toomey, and Donato, Mayor Curtatone, and Mayor McGlynn,

LivableStreets Alliance would like to take this opportunity to present some comments and suggestions regarding the design of the Green Line Extension through Somerville and Medford. We have been following the design process as it is currently progressing, and we feel that there are some very important items that must be addressed.

In case you are not familiar with us, LivableStreets is a non-profit organization that advocates for better transportation for the Boston area, with a focus on improving our cities for walking, bicycling, and transit. We work with other advocacy groups as well as state and local governments to promote sustainable transportation and quality public spaces.

We are very excited that the Green Line extension project is progressing, as it will undoubtedly improve transit service through areas that are currently underserved by high-quality transit. Because this project has the potential to bring rapid transit to thousands of residents, we feel that **it is essential that the Green Line Extension extend to at minimum to Route 16 (Mystic Valley Parkway)**. Though we strongly advocate that it be extended further, for example to West Medford as was once proposed, we are aware that this option has since been eliminated. We urge you to ensure that the design of the

Sec. Cohen, Sens. Jehlen and Garballey, Reps. Provost, Sciortino, Toomey, and Donato, Mayor Curtatone, and Mayor McGlynn  
Re: Green Line Extension Planning  
24 June 2008  
Page 2

terminus will be such that it will not preclude or make difficult extending the line in the future when support for extending will undoubtedly occur.

Furthermore, we feel that it is crucial that the number and locations of stations serve the largest number of people. The latest recommended design eliminates a station at Winthrop St, to the detriment of potential riders in that area. We feel that **it is a mistake to eliminate the Winthrop St. station**. Any elimination of station stops or reducing the length will likely decrease the project's competitiveness for Federal funding under the New Starts program.

Thirdly, we feel that **it is essential that the Community Path extension be fully integrated into the design** of the light rail line and the stations. The path should be designed to minimize at-grade crossings, for maximum safety and convenience of the path users. Because the path will serve as an essential connection to many of the stations, it has the potential to increase connectivity between stations and neighborhoods for many riders. It is our understanding that the Community Path design is forthcoming as the design process continues.

We realize that a certain amount of neighborhood opposition and concerns are impacting many of the decisions that have or will yet be made, and understand that some neighbors may be concerned about noise and potential increased automobile traffic and parking issues near the stations. These concerns can and should be addressed without needing to eliminate stops along the line or shorten it. For example, much of the traffic and parking concerns can be addressed by limiting public parking and drop-off zones near the stations. The MBTA, EOT, and the consultants along with the cities of Somerville and Medford should be working collaboratively to find solutions to these types of concerns, such as adding residential parking permit programs to surrounding neighborhoods, limiting commuter parking, adding bicycle parking, and ensuring that bus service feeds into the new stations. **The goal should be to provide as many ways as possible for people to get to the stations without using a car.**

In addition, the MBTA, EOT, and the consultants should help to educate concerned residents as to the social and economic benefits a new light rail line through their neighborhood will really have. There are already many examples along other parts of the Green Line, for example in Brookline and Newton, where neighborhoods have overwhelmingly benefited from the presence of a light rail line. Property values near the line are actually higher than other areas, and stations have helped bring customers to the local businesses in the area. While it is to be expected that some neighbors will have concerns, or may even see the Green Line as a negative addition to their community, it is essential that those leading the process explain the positive effects that it will have, even for them personally, and show how other communities near light rail lines have dealt with potential negative impacts.

Sec. Cohen, Sens. Jehlen and Garballey, Reps. Provost, Sciortino, Toomey, and Donato, Mayor Curtatone,  
and Mayor McGlynn  
Re: Green Line Extension Planning  
24 June 2008  
Page 3

With gas prices now above \$4 a gallon, an urgent call to reduce CO2 emissions, and an increasing desire to reduce automobile congestion while allowing our cities to grow economically, it is imperative that mass transit expand to help solve this issues. World class cities have world-class transit. The Green Line Extension has great potential to improve the quality of life for our citizens through increased mobility. **It is therefore essential that it be built to maximize its positive impact on the communities that it will serve.**

Thank you for considering our suggestions. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments. My e-mail address is [charlie@livablestreets.info](mailto:charlie@livablestreets.info) and my cell phone number is 413-478-9058.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlie Denison". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Charlie Denison  
Board of Directors  
LivableStreets Alliance