



WalkBoston

August 17, 2010

Secretary Ray LaHood
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Support for TIGER II Application, The Somerville Community Path Extension Along MBTA Green Line Extension

Dear Secretary LaHood:

On behalf of WalkBoston, I am writing to express wholehearted support for the City of Somerville's TIGER II grant application to help fund the extension of the Community Path from Somerville to Cambridge and the Charles River. WalkBoston has been working for many years with Somerville which has been actively pursuing more and better non-motorized transportation choices.

There are numerous important reasons why the construction of this crucial project should be funded at this time.

- The coming Green Line extension does not include parking structures and the Community Path will provide necessary and pleasant bicycle and pedestrian access from the neighborhoods to 4 of the 7 new light-rail stations. The Path is therefore integral to the Green Line extension and will provide the most environmentally sound and cost-effective way to increase transit ridership.
- The Green Line light rail extension is being designed now and will begin construction next year for its 2015 opening deadline. Because it shares the same corridor and much infrastructure, the Community Path extension must be designed and built with the Green Line Extension (GLX). However, sufficient funding has not been identified to construct the Community Path to create this multi-modal transit corridor.
- The Somerville Community Path extension is a critical element of the off-street network of bicycle and pedestrian greenways in the Boston metropolitan area. Without this 2.5-mile link, the spectacularly popular 13-mile Minuteman Bikeway, which connects with dozens of additional miles of other multi-use trails to the west and northwest of Boston, bicycling and walking commuters cannot safely reach downtown Boston.
- The Community Path is the eastern end of the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT), the 104 mile proposed (and partially built) bicycle and pedestrian east-west corridor between Boston and Northampton. This will dramatically increase opportunities for bicycle tourism through all of these cities and towns.
- This proposed Path meets the objectives so clearly laid out by Secretary LaHood of promoting clean energy, curbing greenhouse gas emissions, and cutting energy costs, helping with ADA compliance and accessibility, boosting area business and tourist

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economies, and providing desirable walking and bicycle access to the Green Line and the region from Somerville's Environmental Justice neighborhoods.

- The extension of the Community Path is very widely supported by the residents and businesses of Somerville. If funded, it will be built.
- The Community Path enjoys a very high probability of success based on existing experience in Somerville. The Davis Square Red Line stop in Somerville is served by an existing portion of the path and 60% of area residents use public transportation with thousands walking and biking to the station each day along the Community Path.
- The Community Path and Green Line extensions will pass near 6 Somerville public schools and two Somerville public libraries. The Path will create safe, active routes to schools with good air quality, helping to fight the epidemics of childhood obesity and asthma.
- The Path is consistent with DOT's new Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations which emphasize multi-model transportation systems and with the interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities policy to "develop safe, reliable and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote public health."

Thank you for considering this important project for funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Landman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wendy Landman
Executive Director

cc: Secretary Jeffery B. Mullan, Massachusetts DOT