Land-Use Planning

along the

Green Line Extension

in Somerville

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2011
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Prepared for: Groundwork Somerville &
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A UEP Field Project, Spring 2011
Abstract

Planning is well underway for the highly anticipated extension of Boston’s subway system (the “Green Line”) to the City of Somerville. Such massive transit development will affect the community in countless ways. Community Corridor Planning (CCP), a resident-agency partnership, is working to ensure Somerville that residents are at the planning table, shaping their community’s future.

This project explores the various ways in which CCP can engage the Somerville community in planning for the Green Line. An overview of relevant literature on participatory planning was completed. A two-session community workshop was conducted that looked at considerations and challenges within a one-half mile radius of one of the proposed transit stations. Based on community input from the workshop, a physical design was proposed for the neighborhood surrounding the station. The lessons learned from this project can improve CCP’s future community engagement efforts.
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Acknowledgements

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Many thanks to the participants in our workshops!
Executive Summary

After nearly a century of promises and delays, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Green Line Subway is being extended into the city of Somerville. Finally, residents will have the option to commute via rapid transit, rather than using their own vehicles or relying on the MBTA’s bus system. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is required to complete phase one of the project (officially dubbed the “Green Line Extension”) by December 31, 2014. Phase one includes the creation of seven new Green Line stations, spanning three cities—one in Cambridge, one in Medford, and five in the city of Somerville.¹

Such expansive transit development will have lasting and far-reaching impacts on Somerville’s economy, environment, and its community. In response to the impending development, a grassroots, non-profit coalition was created to foster “resident participation in planning for a livable, equitable Somerville.”² The coalition, aptly named Community Corridor Planning (CCP), held its first official meeting in the spring of 2009.

This report was prepared for our clients, Groundwork Somerville (GWS) and Somerville Community Corporation (SCC), both members of the agency-resident coalition of CCP. In their work with the coalition, GWS and SCC are seeking ways to further engage residents in meaningful, hands-on, and enjoyable land use projects. In order to assist our clients with resident engagement methods for the Green Line Extension, it was essential to understand both the history of the transit project and the Somerville community.

In the Introduction (Chapter I) we provide a brief overview of the history of the Green Line Extension and describe the key stakeholders involved in the project. We also examine the city of Somerville, first from a land use perspective, and secondly from the viewpoint of a demographer. We end this chapter with a description of CCP, including its membership, leadership structure, accomplishments to date, and the current community engagement project—a land use workshop for the proposed Green Line Extension “T” station at Lowell Street.

GWS and SCC “hired” us to work on four, complementary projects:

» A literature review of “best practices” for participatory planning processes;

» Educational and related materials that can be used by the CCP advisory team and other volunteers to carry out future workshops;

» Preliminary and final design documents and GIS maps based on input from community members and the Field Projects team at the design workshops; and

» A plan that describes how these designs can be linked to the online planning tool, iNferactive Somerville.
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This report responds to these four projects in the order outlined above.

Chapter II contains our literature review, the scope of which evolved over the course of several conversations with our client. GWS and SCC have expressed a strong desire to build leaders within the Somerville community. To do this requires taking participatory planning one step further to leadership development. Thus, our best practices focus on techniques that contribute to a sustainable community-driven effort—the kind of effort that over time can develop leaders from the community. While there are varying opinions within CCP on the degree to which the community should lead or drive the coalition’s work, we hope that this research will better inform their strategic planning meetings regarding the role of the community.

In Chapter III we describe the two-session workshop that we planned and facilitated for the Somerville community. The workshop engaged residents around land use planning challenges and opportunities within a one-half mile radius of the proposed Lowell Street Station (Figure 1). In order to facilitate widespread participation, the attendees were put into small group and guided with open-ended questions. Also included in this chapter is a description of the workshop documents (included in Appendices B, C, and D), which can serve as templates for future workshops.

Figure 1. Half Mile Radius around Lowell Street Station in Somerville

Cartography: Gabriel Holbrow
Data: City of Somerville, MassDOT, ArcGIS Online
Based on community input, we created maps and design plans for the land immediately surrounding the proposed Lowell Street Station. These maps and designs (included in Chapter IV) were created using Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping software and Adobe Illustrator. CCP can present these community-driven design recommendations if and when stakeholders, such as the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), seek community input on the Lowell Street Station neighborhood.

Chapter V provides an overview of web-based planning tools, including inTeractive Somerville. This SCC-initiated tool has been in development for nearly two years, but is not yet ready for public use. Due to this limitation, it was challenging to propose how our designs could be integrated into inTeractive Somerville. Fortunately we were able to interview one of the tool’s contributors, Amanda Gaudet, who provided us with a better sense of inTeractive Somerville’s capabilities.

As our work progressed, we found ourselves guided by one central question: Engaging residents is crucial for so many reasons. Workshops, such as those organized by CCP, provide the community with a much-needed forum to voice and share their opinions. This empowerment of the Somerville community is more important now than ever before. Without it, the Green Line Extension could displace many of its most vulnerable residents.

In Chapter VI, we close the report with several recommendations that respond to our central question. In regard to the workshop we suggest the following:

» Employ a variety of outreach efforts;
» Alternate meeting times and locations;
» Create and share visual aids as much as possible; and
» Foster knowledge sharing

Our other set of recommendations look at the improvements that could be made to CCP from an organizational perspective.

» Create a CCP web site;
» Define CCP’s mission, vision and goals;
» Refine CCP’s organizational structure;
» Clarify the community’s role.

If adopted, these strategies will strengthen and solidify the community’s active participation in planning a livable and equitable Somerville.

Notes
I. Introduction

Historical Background

The Green Line Extension Project was born out of the most complex, expensive construction project in U.S. history—Boston’s Central Artery/Tunnel Project, affectionately known as The Big Dig¹ (Figures 2 and 3). The project’s objective was to improve a section of Boston’s congested and antiquated elevated highway that ran through downtown. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts received substantial federal government funding for the Big Dig’s $14.8 billion price tag, thus giving the federal government significant influence in the project’s process and outcomes.²

Specifically, the federal government mandated the state to undergo several additional projects to mitigate the environmental harms endured by communities surrounding the interstate highway (I-93). In response to this mandate, in 1990 the state agreed to extend the Green Line, part of the Greater Boston subway “T” system, stating that it would “improve mobility and regional access for residents in the communities of Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford,” which suffered some of the worst effects of the polluting highway.³

Figures 2 and 3. The Big Dig
1991 before construction (left) and 2006 after completion (right).
Source: MassDOT
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Stakeholders

The much anticipated Green Line Extension includes a number of stakeholders. The most influential being MassDOT, followed by the MBTA, which, under the administrative authority of MassDOT, operates the “T” system, including the Green Line. The Green Line Extension is considered a joint initiative of MassDOT and the MBTA. As such, final decision-making power lies with these two agencies.

There are several other stakeholders connected to the Green Line Extension, such as the cities of Somerville and Medford, since the proposed “T” line will run through each. As shown in figure 4, the Green Line Extension will include seven to eight stops—one updated stop in Cambridge, five new stops in Somerville and one new stop in Medford, with the potential for a second.4

Another key actor is the regional planning body, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). Both Somerville and Medford are working

Figure 4. Proposed Stations
Source: STEP
http://somervillestep.org/map/
with MAPC on a community visioning process for the most recently proposed station, Mystic Valley Parkway/Route 16 in Medford.  

Equally important are members of the community, who have participated in countless Green Line Extension meetings organized by MassDOT, MAPC, and their local governments. The community has also formed its own groups, most notably, the community-agency partnership known as Community Corridor Planning (CCP). Before providing further background on CCP, it’s important to have an understanding of the community it represents.

### The City of Somerville

From a land use planning perspective, the Somerville is a challenging site. With a population of 75,000 people within four square miles, it is the most densely populated community in New England. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) we have created several maps that provide helpful “bird’s eye view” representations of Somerville, highlighting the city’s challenges.
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As shown in the first map of Somerville’s building footprint (Figure 5, previous page), nearly every parcel of land is fully built out. What little remains of undeveloped or under-developed land is highly coveted. This fact alone makes plans for new development, such as the Green Line Extension, highly contentious.

The land use map (Figure 6) reveals a telling pattern—lots of yellow, representing housing, and very little green, which represents open space. Any and all development is bound to neighbor one or several homes, and could threaten the city’s little remaining open space. Given this spatial reality, developers must tread carefully in Somerville.

Somerville’s existing public transit system is limited to the MBTA bus system and one subway station at Davis Square (Figure 7, facing page). Given the lack of rapid transit, one half of Somerville’s working population commutes by driving, while one-third uses public transit.7 If well planned, the Green Line Extension will attract many commuters to the public transportation. While recruiting new

Figure 6. Somerville Land Use
commuters to public transit would be a great victory, losing existing transit users would be an even greater defeat.

According to the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy, major transit investment puts core transit users at risk of being priced out of their communities. Core transit users are primarily renters and low-income households, both of which are highly represented in Somerville. Simply put, the Green Line Extension could unintentionally cause the gentrification of Somerville, effectively displacing this population.

Following standards set by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 30% of Somerville families are “very low-income”, making them eligible for public assisted housing. To receive this “very low-income” designation families must be at or below 50% of the Area Family Income (AFI). In 2009 50% of AFI for Somerville, Cambridge, Medford, and the whole of Greater Boston calculated to $45,100 per
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Even more striking is the variation in the percentage of renter-occupied households (Chart 2). Somerville tops the list in this category with 66% of households being occupied by renters. While this is just slightly above Cambridge’s figure of 62%, it is double the number of households who rent in neighboring Medford. Somerville is also significantly above the Greater Boston average (40%) and state average (35%).

While concerns about displacement are legitimate, transit development ipso facto does not gentrify a neighborhood. With good community planning, the displacement of low-income residents can be prevented. Fortunately, Somerville residents have been engaged in the community planning process. Much of this engagement is due the dedicated efforts of CCP.

In response to the impending “T” line extension in Somerville, a grassroots non-profit coalition was created to foster “resident participation in planning for a livable, equitable Somerville.” CCP began its work in the spring of 2009 and is comprised of a 16-member Resident Advisory Team and four Somerville-based community organizations:

» Groundwork Somerville (GWS)
» Somerville Community Corporation (SCC)
» Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership (STEP)
» Somerville Community Health Agenda (SCHA)

CCP is structured to be community driven. At the top of the coalition’s organizational structure is the Resident Advisory Team. The Resident Advisory Team is guided by the efforts of three working groups:

Chart 1. Very Low Income Families

Chart 2. Renter Households
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» Affordability & Diversity (known as “Affordable Housing Organizing Committee” or “AHOC”)

» Jobs, Local Businesses, and Economic Development

» Open Space, Green Space, and Sustainability (known as “Green Outlook”)

Each of these working groups is made up of community members, as well as professional staff from GWS, SCC, STEP, and/or SCHA. Importantly, the community at large influences the efforts and direction of the working groups and the Resident Advisory Team.

CCP engages the community in a variety of ways, including community meetings, promotional events, working groups, excursions to the proposed Green Line Extension stations (accompanied by local Alderman), and writing campaigns to local media outlets. To date, over 900 people have taken part in CCP activities, events, and meetings.

CCP has worked with the community on three primary projects. In 2009, CCP brought the residents together to brainstorm and create guiding principles to unify and focus all of CCP’s future efforts. Over the course of four months, CCP engaged more than 300 residents in community meetings. The result was the creation of CCP’s Core Community Principles, ratified in October of 2009. The Core Community Principles are as follows.14

» More local jobs
» Increase commercial and economic development
» Keep and add local businesses
» Keep Somerville affordable
» Maintain our diversity
» Improve the green environment
» Encourage walking and biking
» Create community gathering spaces
» Improve access

» Community involvement

» Connecting buses and trains

(The principles are also included in this report as Appendix A.)

CCP’s aim is for these eleven principles—which represent the community’s values—to be reflected in all decisions related to the planning of the Green Line Extension in Somerville.

CCP’s second project was to create design plans for the seven proposed “T” stations in Somerville and Medford. In the spring of 2010, CCP successfully organized a three-session workshop, which was attended by over 120 residents of Somerville, Medford, and the surrounding communities. Attendees were organized into seven teams, one for each proposed station. The purpose of the workshop was to have the community “evaluate the current MassDOT concept design, articulate the relationship between the station and the surrounding community, and make recommendations to improve both the stations and the surrounding neighborhoods.”15
Residents successfully created design plans for each of the seven stations. Through this process seven common themes emerged that the community would like to be incorporated into the planning of all of the stations:

1) **Community**: Stations must be integrated into the existing communities, not created in isolation.

2) **Connections**: There must be safe, well-lit connections from the stations to the surrounding neighborhoods for walkers, bikers, and transit riders.

3) **Larger Investment in Infrastructure**: Stations must provide opportunity for transit-oriented development, public art, and open-space.

4) **Station as Icon**: Stations should be marked with highly visible symbols to highlight their importance to the community.

5) **Places where People Come Together**: A desire to seize the opportunity to create communal areas to bring the community together, e.g. green spaces, plazas.

6) **Neighborhood Activity & Business**: The increased foot traffic must be leveraged to support existing businesses and support the creation of new commercial activity.

7) **Sustainability**: It is necessary to consider sustainability in regard to station design and construction, and also the larger picture of economic development and community stability.

CCP members, GWS and SCC, are currently engaging the community around a third project—land use planning challenges and opportunities within a one-half mile radius of the seven proposed Green Line Stations. Significant groundwork was laid for this project by the station design workshop, but CCP is encouraging the community to look at one station at a time, in order to develop a more detailed community vision. GWS and SCC chose to start the land use planning meetings with the proposed Lowell Street Station and recruited our Tufts UEP team for assistance. To better understand community engagement techniques, such as those preferred by GWS and SCC, we surveyed the literature on participatory planning.
Chapter I. Introduction

Notes


7. U.S. Census Bureau, “2005-2009 American Communities Survey 5-Year Estimates: Somerville City, Middlesex County, Massachusetts.”


14. ibid.

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Community Participation in the Planning Process

Community participation can be defined as “a process in which individuals take part in decision making in the institutions, programs, and environments that affect them.” More specifically, it can also be described as a process for those who, traditionally, have been excluded from planning processes. Arnstein defines the process of community participation as the redistribution of power. In other words, it is an opportunity for community residents who have not been allowed to articulate and dictate what they would like to see happen in their communities, to do so. However, because community participation varies according to the context, how to successfully engage residents and the degree to which residents should participate is unclear.

Contrary to the perception that community participation is too costly, too time-consuming, or too difficult because of the diverse needs and interest groups, there are ample case studies in which resident-led initiatives have led to better outcomes while also being cost effective and timely. In this chapter we describe some of the “best practices” for community participation in urban planning processes. In our CCP-direct project, the practices referenced below guided our community engagement efforts.

Include Excluded Communities

Plan with communities who have traditionally been excluded from planning processes.

Gentrification is a serious issue for Somerville families who are middle- to low-income. Among this population area many who feel that past development in Union Square and the extension of the Red Line into Davis Square resulted in the disappearance of their neighborhood. This displacement is not unique to Somerville.

Historically, economic development focuses on “downtown development” at the expense of the residents who have limited economic and political power. Many believe that in order for there to be economic growth, governments must solely focus on developing the private sector and on attracting higher income residents to the city. Ignoring the history of racial and economic discrimination, this approach to economic development is apt to only value the input of higher income communities and serves as a justification for displacing communities that are lower income.

It should not be a surprise that given this approach to economic development that “city governments find that it is politically difficult to adopt strategies that balance the needs of community with the demand of the private sector for..."
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Without the input and the participation of all community residents, new policies and developments will only represent the interest of an elite few, thus failing to meet the needs of diverse communities. Changing this necessitates the engagement of residents who have historically been excluded from community planning processes. Such inclusion will increase the political power of low-income residents. Inclusion can also build “a base for progressive planning.”

An essential element of progressive planning is participatory action research. According to Sanoff, the steps to participatory action research is a practice of conducting research through a cycle of action and reflection in planning with rather than for communities.

As described by Sanoff, participatory action research:

- develops the capacity of participants to organize, analyze, and discuss concepts to the level required by the particular issue in which they are involved,
- develops a process to incorporate the participants in the research and decision-making process, which includes the basic assumptions, the research design, and the methods of evaluation, and
- returns the research findings to the participants.

Group Learning & Consensus Building

Set goals with residents that aim to create spaces where group learning and consensus building can take place.

To begin the process of community participation the literature suggests that it is important to both frame the problem and to set an agenda with community residents. The community may already be organized and have an agenda. Especially in this case, it is important to acknowledge the community’s agenda and to assist residents accordingly. Agenda setting defines questions that a participatory planning process hopes to address. This is a process that involves partners, including community-based organizations, representatives of the community, and residents. This process of setting goals and establishing priorities requires consensus building.

Consensus building can create a culture of group learning. It is not about everyone agreeing with each other. Rather, consensus building means that participants with varying interest work towards establishing shared goals by deciding together the answer to important questions, such as:

- “Why is this process needed?"
- What form of resolution is required?
- How will the group work toward a solution?
- How will decisions be made?
- What is the schedule?
- Who will receive and act on the final product?”
Local Knowledge

Treat “local knowledge” as expertise.\(^{19}\)

Although some residents may lack technical planning skills, this is not reason enough to exclude them.\(^{20}\) Community residents should be listened to even if that means the process has to be slowed down in order for residents to be understood.\(^{21}\) Reardon states that sometimes, as professionals, “we expect things to happen overnight and we feel pressure to make them happen, often rushing the process because we don’t think the people we are working with will appreciate the complexity and the difficulty of situation. But to really listen and to take seriously the input of these folks and to really consider what they know about themselves their community and planet requires certain humility.”\(^{22}\)

In addition to humility, listening requires that planners are aware of the role that they play in the planning process and in the larger community. Effective listening also requires that a planner clearly express her motivations and role in the process. Sharing personal stories that reveal your motivations and commitment to working with communities,\(^{23}\) planners and others trying to engage community residents can build the necessary foundations for group learning and conflict resolution. People “need a personal connection they can believe in. Others need to invest themselves in the group… Sharing and learning together the members’ stories—these personal experiences, memories, and motivations—solidifies the group.”\(^{24}\)

Telling your story and allowing others to share their stories is a part of the process of collecting data, problem framing, and community building. In sum, this principle instructs us to do the following.

- Treat resident input as expertise.
- Create a timeline that allots for enough time incorporate and understand “local knowledge.”
- Be aware of your role in the process by listening and participating in sharing of personal stories.

Qualitative Data from Residents

Collect data while doing outreach and during workshops that reflects how residents feel about their community in addition to directly observing the physical environment.\(^{25}\)

Sanoff states that it is important to observe the conditions of the physical environment and to use both qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques.\(^{26}\) By collecting data on “land-use, building condition, site condition, street condition—the physical indicators of social distress,”\(^{27}\) community planners can work with participants to establish concrete objectives for a design that can be both economically and politically feasible. This stage of data collection can be done with the participants.

In order to create designs through participatory processes that are economically and politically feasible, the process must be informed by qualitative data from community residents on how they perceive their environment.
Sanoff suggests that this can be done through interviews, focus groups, and discussions. Complete immersion and when appropriate, participation, in neighborhood meetings, social settings, and community spaces in order to better understand the community is valuable to learning how to engage residents. Another technique is to create an inventory of community assets. “Surveying resources, a community function, identifies local people and places that are important to any proposed program, similar to generating “Yellow Pages.” This technique, also known as community mapping, outlines what residents value in their community.

The infamous public meeting is often boring and inconvenient. Visual aids and technology provide different avenues for self-expression, while improving communication and making the meetings less stale and more enjoyable. Besides fighting the boredom label, visual aids and interactive technology can bridge the language and cultural barriers that often exist between planners and community members. These barriers, including technical jargon and non-interactive presentation style, present a real challenge to civic engagement for those who have time, family, and work constraints.

Youth tend to be sidelined in conversations about future development in forums mostly structured for adult participation. A community planning processes that represent the age diversity of the city is just as important as representing a community’s racial and economic diversity. In order to engage all segments of the population including youth, it may be necessary to offer a planning session or activity that targets one group. This can ensure that the group’s perspective has a chance of being heard. When targeting specific groups, it is important to make sure that the ideas generated are not isolated from the larger discussion. Particular perspectives must be given the same weight in other forums and behind the scenes.

The assumption that a “community” is homogenous is inaccurate. Being aware of gender, race, class, sexual minorities, and other marginalized identities is the key to creating quality planning sessions that emphasize group learning and consensus building. Communities are full of various power dynamics that may not be as obvious as the dynamics displayed though race, class, and gender differences (although it is dangerous to assume that this will be obvious too). In sum, this principle instructs us to do the following.

» Map the social assets of the community and the stakeholders through the collection of quantitative and qualitative data techniques.

» Completely immerse yourself in the community to observe and when appropriate, to participate in social settings and specific communities like schools and neighborhood meetings.

» Create surveys and collecting data from neighborhood residents with youth.

» Create planning workshops specifically for those who may not be heard in forums that treat community residents as homogenous—assuming their interest are the same because they are low-income, represent a
Chapter II. Best Practices

Conflict Resolution

Employ techniques for conflict resolution with workshops and community planning sessions.

Issues such as gentrification are intertwined with the lived experience of many residents and sometimes involve painful conversations around mistreatment in relation to race, class, gender, etc. The use of story-telling in order to broach difficult conversations can prevent the process from imploding. In Somerville, many long-time residents have felt the effects of displacement and at times, express concerns about “yuppies” or young educated professionals moving in to the neighborhoods.37 Young professionals are seen as by some long-time residents as the newcomers that city developers prefer to cater.38 Complicating this situation, newcomers also include immigrants, especially immigrants of color, who are at a disadvantage in economic development and planning schemes.39 How do planners and community change efforts such as CCP’s facilitate an alternative participatory planning process that confronts these issues?

Although confrontation seems scary, evading conflict can lead to the perpetuation of discrimination and silence those who need to be heard the most.40 Acknowledging conflict, distrust, and anger is one of the purposes of community participation. The value of being able to articulate lived experiences helps planners to create a “sense of place” with participants.41 According to Manzo, much of the literature on participation in community planning “overlooks emotional attachment to place.”42 Considering that one of CCP’s objectives is to prevent displacement of low-income families who have been in the city long enough to see gentrification occur, there is a need to acknowledge and to be aware of the psychological and health effects of the trauma caused by displacement.43 Here are some techniques the literature suggests for conflict resolution.

“Brainstorming is used to allow groups to explore alternative ways of solving problems.

Gaming and role-playing can be used to build awareness of planning procedures, to anticipate potential difficulties, and to allow participants to become sensitive to one another’s needs.

Group work during all stages of planning process helps to build cooperation.”44

Foster a continuous process of problem framing to ensure that there is critical thinking and not just “some kind manipulation and indoctrination by outsiders.” Reardon states: “So you force the dialogue. You bring up
conflicting information, conflicting frameworks, and then they have to revisit what they know about the problems and so do you."45

» Make sure that decisions are not happening at the expense of others by using techniques that ask residents to rank their priorities in terms of what they find to be economically and politically feasible.46

Build Community Capacity

*Plan with the intention to build community capacity.*

Successful and long-term community participation may mean more than just supplying the right techniques to involve residents in a community visioning process. It also entails more than just being able to provide child-care or language interpretation services for those whose first language may not be English (although these services are vital components to participation). These techniques and services alone do not guarantee that there will be a long-term commitment to community participation by either those trying to engage the community or by those who are the most affected by social issues.47 As Reardon states, the “outcomes we’re looking for are not only improved physical conditions, but also an increased ability on the part of the local community-based organization to do planning and programming and an increase in the number and quality of community leaders in a position to facilitate this process.”48

Community building is not just a means to an end but also an end goal. Community building includes the process of supporting individual grassroots leaders and leadership development through partnerships and what some define as collective leadership.50

The process of engaging community members is a desirable outcome as long as there is a transfer of skills and power from planners, professionals, and others providing technical guidance throughout the process. Building community capacity is the necessary ingredient to reaching the goal of community ownership and to ensure the access and the support that full community participation requires.48 “The process is as important as the program outcome produces.”49
In response to the literature and in the process of preparing for our planning workshops, we adopted some of these “best practices” for participatory planning that would help us contribute to an overall goal of building community capacity. In our meetings amongst ourselves and with GWS, we chose to focus on leadership development as a principle to uphold within our workshops because of what came at of our conversations with CCP representatives. Chapter III describes what we did in the workshops and our reflections in relation to our goals—creating a physical design, participatory planning, and leadership development as a principle to keep in mind in helping to increase community capacity. None of these goals are mutually exclusive but nonetheless were very important to explicitly pull out in order to think intentionally about our actions.

Notes


8. ibid.


14. ibid.

15. ibid.

16. ibid. and supra. Reardon, Ken et al. (1993).


18. ibid.


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22. ibid.


24. ibid.

25. supra. Reardon, Ken et al. (1993).


27. supra. Reardon, Ken et al. (1993).


29. ibid.


34. ibid.


41. ibid.

42. ibid.


45. supra. Reardon, Ken et al. (1993).


49. ibid.

We hosted and facilitated two community workshop sessions focusing on land-use planning in the Green Line corridor. As manifestations of our action research, the workshop sessions had a multi-layered plurality of goals. The workshops were simultaneously acts of research into how CCP can strengthen community participation in land use planning as well as acts of practice to identify and advance the community’s vision for their neighborhoods. This chapter takes the perspective of the workshops as research, narrating our implementation of the sessions and analyzing the experience for lessons on community participation. The following chapter takes the perspective of the workshops as practice, using the findings of the sessions to articulate a specific physical design for one location in the corridor.

Goals and Objectives of the Workshops

The CCP coalition entrusted the UEP field projects team with hosting and facilitating the two sessions of community workshops to create a physical plan for one parcel of land within a half mile of the proposed Lowell Street T station. The purpose of the first session was for the community to identify the design priorities for the area and to select the parcel for the physical design. (As discussed below, participants in the first session did not choose one parcel, emphasizing instead the connections between existing and potential sites.) At the second session, participants reviewed and commented on our preliminary designs.

Broadly stated, the goal of the workshops was to engage residents in land-use planning in their city. This goal is expressed in our central guiding question: Which strategies can best engage a community in land use planning that is both meaningful and enjoyable, so as to promote future participation? In consultation with SCC and GWS early in the process, we identified two specific objectives within this goal. The first objective was the design itself. Although any specific development proposal to come out of the workshop is unlikely to be built, the design embodies the ideas and priorities of the neighborhood and serves as a model for future development that will be built. The second objective was to create a template and model for community workshops that can be replicated at other stations along the proposed Green Line extension.

From our analysis of CCP’s community engagement efforts in light of the literature on community participation, we further defined the project goals and refined the nature of the workshop template that we have created for CCP. The coalition is already committed to a participatory planning process and has
established a successful track-record of engaging residents in workshops. In order to take CCP to the next level of effectiveness, workshops must move beyond participation and input toward developing leadership and capacity for community power.

Combining the specific objectives of the project with our refinement of CCP’s purpose for the project, we articulated three outcomes we hoped to pull from the workshops (illustrated in the table below). Each of these is an aspect of our central guiding question on how best to engage the community.

### Workshop Objectives

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design</strong></td>
<td>Create a physical design that embodies the community’s priorities for the area around the station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participatory Planning</strong></td>
<td>Engage community members in a participatory process to address future development and articulate local priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Development</strong></td>
<td>Offer workshops that enhance and use local knowledge and expertise to help increase community capacity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Session 1

**When and Where**

Our first workshop session was held from 6 to 8pm on Tuesday, February 22, 2011 at Teen Empowerment Somerville (165 Broadway in East Somerville). The time and location were chosen to coordinate with the monthly meeting of Green Outlook, the CCP working group for open space, green space and sustainability. The working group had already begun looking at issues of land use in the Green Line corridor. In addition, Green Outlook has strong teen membership, including many who either participate in GWS’s Green Team program, are youth organizers at Teen Empowerment, or are both. Hosting the workshop for Green Outlook and at Teen Empowerment made the most use of prior progress in the community process.

**Outreach**

Our main outreach was through network connections. GWS advertised the workshop to members of their Green Team as well as to the Green Outlook working group.

We designed a flyer (Figure 8) to announce the workshop. The text was in English, but included key information in Portuguese, Spanish and Haitian, which are the most widely spoken languages in Somerville. The flyer was emailed along with an announcement to members of Affordable Housing Organizing Committee (AHOC), CCP’s working group for affordability and diversity, as well as to the STEP email listserv. We also distributed the flyer in person to residents and workers in the immediate vicinity.
Chapter III. Workshops

UEP Field Project 2011

Figure 8. Flyer for Session 1

The Green Line is coming, bringing opportunities for JOBS, BUSINESSES, and more COMMUNITY space. What kind of Green Line neighborhood do you want to see?

Community Design Workshops
Join CCP and Tufts University masters students in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning (UEP) to generate visions and ideas for development around proposed Green Line stations. This time we will take a look at the area around Lowell Street Station.

Lowell Street Station

Teen Empowerment Somerville
165 Broadway (at Cross Street)
East Somerville
Walk from the Orange Line at Sullivan Square or take routes 89, 90, or 101.

6pm to 8pm on Tuesday, February 22, 2011

All ages, all languages, everyone is welcome! Todos são bem-vindos! ¡Todos son bienvenidos! Tou moun akey!

Free food and refreshments.

For more information, talk to Chelsea Clarke at Groundwork Somerville:
(617) 628-9988 chelsea@groundworksomerville.org

Community Corridor Planning (CCP) is a grassroots, non-profit coalition committed to resident participation in planning for a livable, equitable Somerville. CCP is a partnership of Groundwork Somerville, the Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership (STEP), the Somerville Community Corporation (SCC) and the Somerville Community Health Agenda.

More Local Jobs
Keep and Add Local Businesses
Keep Somerville Affordable
Maintain Our Diversity
Improve the Green Environment
Encourage Walking and Biking
Create Community Spaces
Improve Access

Issues that matter to you!

Save the date for a follow-up workshop on Tuesday, March 22, 2011.

Participants

The workshop drew 24 people, roughly in line with our expectations. Despite the small group, participants represented a number of different communities in Somerville, including teens, college students, working adults, elderly, first- and second-generation immigrants, White, Black, Latin American, Asian, men and women. Because of the location and prior connections, teens were particularly well-represented. The large number of teens shaped the discussion to highlight particular issues that affect young Somerville residents.

GWS provided a telephone list of people who had participated in previous CCP activities or had expressed interest in CCP at community events such as the winter farmers’ market. We called people on the telephone list, asking about their concerns for the Lowell Street area and encouraging them to attend the workshop.

Figure 8. Flyer for Session 1
Figure 9. Neighborhood Land Use Map

Neighborhood Land Use
Around the Proposed Lowell Street Station,
Green Line Extension, Somerville

What’s There Now
Land Use by Parcel
- House/Condos
  - Single-Family,
  - Two- and Three-Family
- Apartments
- Mixed Retail/Offices
- Commercial
  - Retail, Food, Services, Office, etc.
- Industry
- Institution
  - Municipal, School, Church, Hospital, Nursing Home, etc.
- Vacant/Parking
- Park

Cartography: Gabriel Holbrow
Data: City of Somerville, MassGIS
Chapter III. Workshops

Format

As participants arrived, they signed in and put on sticker name tags. We provided food from Anna’s Taqueria, a locally owned chain, for a light meal before the workshop began.

The agenda for the workshop (see Appendix B) consisted of five stages: Welcome, Existing Conditions, Future Goals, Choosing a Property, and Evaluation. The overall format of the workshop followed a focus group methodology to gather ideas and knowledge from participants. In order to create a shared experience for all participants while also making space for each person to speak up, the workshop alternated between activities done as one large group and break-out activities in smaller groups.

The Welcome stage included an introduction to CCP and Green Outlook, since this was a shared meeting. Next, going around the room facilitators and participants introduced themselves and reported how they had heard about the meeting. All participants had learned of the meeting through direct contact, either by telephone or in person.

We introduced the existing conditions in the Lowell Street area with a large-format (3’ by 5’) map showing land use within a half mile radius of the proposed station (Figure 9). After the shared introduction, the participants divided into four small groups by counting off. We choose the method of counting off to intentionally break up participants who had come to the meeting together. This created a better diversity of opinions in each small group.

Within the small groups (Figure 10), each facilitated and recorded by one UEP student, we showed maps, satellite images and photographs of the area and prompted discussion with open-ended questions (see Appendices C and D). Participants were encouraged to share their personal connections with the area. A collaborative environment, fostered through the sharing of personal experiences, triggered further discussion. After almost twenty minutes of discussion, each small group reported back to the large group while a facilitator recorded the comments on a flip chart for all to see.

Discussion of future goals and choosing a property proceeded in the same fashion, with a shared introduction, small group discussion around open-ended questions, and reporting back to the large group. For choosing a property, we anticipated that the group might not be able to quickly come to a consensus, so we prepared a voting system using sticky notes to ensure that the workshop would collectively agree on one parcel. In reality, this was not necessary, as all of the participants quickly came to a consensus, although not for one parcel.

The last stage was a short oral evaluation of how the workshop went, conducted as one large group. Written evaluation forms were also available. This was a key opportunity for participants to contribute to the reflective praxis that is essential for action research. The first session ended with an invitation to the next workshop session and ideas for ways to stay involved.
Handouts and Visuals

The workshop made use of a range of handouts and visual tools at each stage of the event. Before the start of the workshop, all participants received a printed sheet with the CCP’s Core Community Principles.

Our central visual tool was a color map showing the existing land use of properties within a half mile of the proposed station (Figure 9, previous page). The map was created using ArcGIS software and public data sets from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (MassGIS), the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), and the City of Somerville. One large-format copy of the map with dimensions measuring 3’ by 5’ was taped to one wall. Our “big map” served as a shared reference and talking point in the workshop. Several smaller-format maps at 11” by 17” provided participants with the opportunity to look closely at the target area.
Within the small groups, satellite images and photographs also provided common reference points for discussion. These images were printed on letter-size sheets of paper and distributed around the room. A small-scale satellite image of the whole area helped orient participants to the location of Lowell Street. Larger-scale satellite images of individual parcels offered a detailed sense of available spaces for development. Photographs of the presents conditions in the neighborhood were a key tool for identifying features, both existing and lacking. Handouts with detailed information were available to each group. These included maps and bar graphs of area housing and employers that had been created by the City of Somerville for a Green Line Extension “Land Use Open House” in summer 2010.

More examples of visual tools are included in Appendix D.

Session 2

Where and When

The project’s second workshop session was held one month after the first session, from 6 to 8pm on Tuesday, March 22, 2011 at the Visiting Nurses Assisted Living Community (259 Lowell Street in Somerville). The third floor activity room of the assisted living community is a local asset less than a block from the proposed station. This location had the dual advantages of being part of the study area and providing a connection to the elderly community.

Outreach

We designed a second multi-lingual flyer (Figure 11, next page) to announce the second session of the workshops. This flyer was emailed out to the same people and lists as for the first session.

In-person outreach in the neighborhood played a much bigger role for the second session of the workshops than it did for the first. GWS organized door-knocking teams, including GWS staff, UEP students, and Green Team participants who had attended the first session. Throughout the month of March, door-knocking teams visited nearly one hundred homes in the area to distribute flyers and talked with several dozen residents about their concerns for the neighborhood.

Participants

The second session drew 16 participants, including three residents of the assisted living facility. Only one of the participants had attended the first session. In contrast to the first session, the great majority of the participants at the second session were residents of the immediate vicinity of Lowell Street. Most of the local residents had learned about the workshops from a visit by one of the door-knocking teams. Even in this smaller group, participants represented the diversity of neighborhood, including teens, working adults, elderly, first- and second-generation immigrants, White, Black, Latin American, Asian, men and women.
We again provided sticker name tags and a light meal before the workshop, this time local barbecue from Red Bones. The agenda for the second session (see Appendix B) was structured to present our design ideas, allow participants to discuss them in small groups, and give feedback.

After a welcome and introduction to CCP and our project, we asked everyone present to introduce themselves to the group and say one thing that they noticed about the Lowell Street area on this visit. This activity helped create a comfortable space for participants to share their views and began the conversation on the relevant issues.

Since almost none of the participants had attended the first session, we took time to present on the first workshop session the previous month. In particular, we highlighted the ideas generated by their neighborhoods in the first session. We presented our design ideas using projected slides in front of the large group.
The greatest share of the workshop time was devoted to small group discussions (Figure 12) on specific themes in the design plan, namely youth opportunities, elderly opportunities, local business, parks, community space, and sidewalks/signage/trails. We designated different tables for different themes, but allowed participants to choose which table they would join. Due to the small number of participants, three small groups formed, each with two facilitators.

Each group spend more than twenty minutes discussion the first theme, then switched to second theme for another twenty minutes. Once a number of different ideas had been put on the table, the groups were given a limited sum of fake money to allocate to the most critical improvements, encouraging the participants to think about priorities and limited budgets.

At the conclusion of the small group discussions, we invited each of the three groups to report back to the large group on their ideas. Participants made connections and comparisons between different ideas in a short discussion as a large group.

For the last stage we again asked for a short oral evaluation of workshop, then closed with ideas for ways to stay involved.
Handouts and Visuals

We reused the “big map” and letter-sized satellite images from the first workshop. The “big map” of land use was taped to the wall at one side of the room. The photographs of existing conditions also made a reappearance, but this time projected on the wall for all to see during the presentation of our design. The last slide in our project presentation was our design map (Figure 22, page 43), which remained visible throughout the workshop.

Each table for the small groups was provided with a copies of the land use map and the design map, both printed on 11” by 17” paper, and a letter-sized copy of the satellite image. In addition to these prepared visuals, participants were encouraged to create their own visuals using provided pens and large-format paper. Participants used the supplies to explain ideas to each other through drawings and to record their discussions (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Session 2 Feedback
Reflecting on the Workshops

Tools such as the maps of the target area and pictures of the existing conditions seemed to be effective in gaining insights from the community. The visual tools enhanced their creative capacity to envision what is possible in the given space. However, the visual tools and design ideas were a gateway to what we were really hoping to achieve: a community dialogue that pulls together various residents into a participatory process around the issues that could directly impact them.

Given our framework of creating a physical design, facilitating a participatory process, and emphasizing activities that built community power and leadership development, we carefully considered what actions we should take both leading up to the workshops and within each workshop that could contribute to these objectives.

Strategies for Community Engagement

Outreach into the community is paramount when engaging in these efforts. Door-knocking and cold-calling, while tedious and time-consuming tasks, are still important forms of community engagement. The conversations may be shorter, but simply talking to a resident will bring the conversation literally to their front porch while increasing the visibility of the issues. Such a dialogue is useful for gathering ideas and benefiting from the local knowledge that is present within communities.

Posting flyers in local businesses and engaging broader institutions is also a good way to make connections which can lead to a greater network within a community. One participant in our second workshop session, a physician at the Somerville Hospital, had seen a flyer for the workshop during a visit to a patient within the community. The possibility for such connections is why we pursued methods such as door-knocking and cold calling. It provided us with a venue in which we could engage community residents in the process and make residents aware of the future developments and their capacity to contribute their knowledge. Door-knocking accounted for many of our participants at the second workshop. With the strong ties that GWS has already established within the community, this practice can only continue to expand their resident network.

Locations for community engagement must also be varied in order to reach different groups within the community. With such a diverse population in Somerville, it is important to consider all of the various stakeholders' interests surrounding land-use planning. Successful engagement needs to balance meeting times narrowly targeted to be the most convenient for specific groups and general times that will draw people from a variety of perspectives. Holding our
first workshop at Teem Empowerment Somerville allowed us to capture the voices of youth and what they hoped to see in the target area. Our thinking behind holding the second workshop at the VNA was to engage the elderly population within the community as well as some of the residents within the immediate Lowell Street area.

Incentives such as food can be enough to draw people together. Meal breaks create time for informal interaction and relationship-building that can cut across stakeholder groups. Incentives such as food can be enough to draw people together. Meal breaks create time for informal interaction and relationship-building that can cut across stakeholder groups.1 We made sure to provide ample food supplies for each workshop so that the aforementioned unstructured social interaction could occur. The food also allowed the facilitating team as well as other residents to interact with each other.

Community-wide engagement can be very effective when there are multiple ways for people to be heard. This includes moving back and forth between large and small groups (Figure 14). People who are too shy to express their opinion before the whole group area able to do so within a smaller, less intimidating setting. The value of small groups is that they allow a space for disagreement and dialogue leading to shared understanding. In the presentations and speeches of a typical public meeting, there is neither the time nor the setting available for the rapid back-and-forth, give-and-take exchange that is dialogue. Small groups can create an environment for people to speak and advocate for their positions and build consensus among different community members. This also leads to leadership development which will be discussed in the next section.

Using certain visual tools both to give participants a better understanding of the issue at question as well as spur interaction across small groups was very effective. Certain visual tools are effective in enhancing participants’ knowledge of the subject. We facilitated knowledge sharing by providing just one or two maps to each small group so that the images would have to be passed back and forth while participants exchanged ideas with each other. The maps became common reference points to spur and sustain discussion about the needs of the neighborhood. The maps also became exercises which equipped participants with the language and categories used by planners (parcel, residential use, commercial use, etc.).

A final component of engagement, which was difficult to facilitate given our time constraints, is connecting participation with power and concrete outcomes. People will participate when these connections and outcomes are evident.2 As the workshops are extended to the other stations, CCP should consider the connections that can be made to concrete outcomes within the community.

**Strategies for Leadership Development**

While outreach was a significant component of community engagement, it can also be an effective tool in leadership development. Providing participants with further exposure to ideas and giving participants the experience of engaging with fellow community members is an important practice to strengthen
leadership development. A few of the teens who attended the first workshop session joined in the door knocking effort to advertise the second workshop. This was an opportunity for them to familiarize themselves with the issues and gain a better sense of the different perspectives by conversing with other people.

The visual tools were also effective in building leadership and equipping residents with the knowledge necessary to be viable participants in future planning efforts. Our aim was to use these tools to complement their local knowledge with professional knowledge, allowing them to better advocate for what they need. Based on oral evaluation at the end of the workshop, as well as informal conversations with participants afterwards, participants left the workshop with a much better understanding of the planning process, of the forces driving change in their neighborhoods, and of the city as a whole.

The oral evaluation also was a space in which participants could create the kind of workshop that they want and need. We made sure to include a time for residents to express what they wanted to see in future meetings.

The workshops were also used as an organizing tool in which participants can consider the trade-offs between different goals and costs to achieve them. This was an important proactive step so that when MassDOT announces a public hearing, the community will be ready to advocate for its own vision. It is important to be proactive in community engagement and ahead of the official process. We encouraged this proactive thinking by engaging in an exercise which gave participants a set amount of play money that they could distribute among proposal ideas as they see fit. This allowed residents to intuitively prioritize proposals and consider the trade-offs that must be made for certain developments to happen.

Leadership development is also important to maintain within the organizations that comprise CCP. While the scope of our project did not call for us to carry out an evaluation of the organizational workings of CCP, we encourage the members of the coalition to constantly refer back to the principles that call them to be leaders within the Somerville community. The Leadership Development Checklist (Appendix E) provides a tool for CCP leaders to refer to as they continue to pursue the agenda set out by the community.

Notes
Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville
IV. Design

Lowell Street Area

The proposed Lowell Street station is located in a mostly residential area roughly at the geographic center of Somerville (Figure 15). The station takes its name from Lowell Street, one of the few through streets running “north-south” (although the actual orientation is slightly northeast-southwest) in Somerville. Of the seven stations proposed for the initial phase of the Green Line Extension, five are named for the square or neighborhood surrounding the station, rather than a cross street. Excluding Lowell Street station, all of the proposed stations have names that reinforce an already existing place-based identity.

The station will be located where Lowell Street crosses the current existing Commuter Rail tracks. One-quarter mile slightly up hill to the north is Magoun Square, a small neighborhood business district at the intersection of Broadway and Medford Street.
Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville

One-quarter mile steeply up hill to the south, Lowell Street intersects with Highland Avenue, a major “east-west” street with concentrations of shops and apartment buildings. The Somerville Hospital, a large nursing home, and the arts center in the Somerville Armory are all located on Highland Avenue near Lowell Street. In between Highland Avenue and Magoun Square, the area around Lowell Street is largely residential, mostly one-, two-, and three-family detached houses (See Figure 9, page 26). The exception is a three-block stretch of Lowell Street, immediately south of the bridge and the commuter rail tracks, lined with small business of light industrial uses, including auto body shops, glass and carpet dealers, and a T-shirt printer (Figures 16 and 17).

A large triangle of land to the west of Lowell Street right where the station will go was, until recently, a large factory known as MaxPak. The factory buildings have been cleared and construction is underway for a 102-unit residential development. Across from the former MaxPak site and half a block south along the street is the Visiting Nurses Assisted Living Community (VNA), which includes 99 units of assisted senior housing (Figure 18). Constructed just two years ago, the VNA is the newest residential development in the area. We held our second workshop session in the VNA’s community room (see Chapter III).

Currently seen as a residential neighborhood, the Lowell Street area will truly be “on the map” in a few short years. In addition to the impending Green Line Extension Station, the Community Path from Davis Square (with connections from Alewife and, via the Minuteman Trail, as far as Lexington and Bedford)
will come through Lowell Street. This will be the spot where the Green Line and the Community Path meet. Bikers, walkers, and other users of the path will be able to conveniently get on the T at Lowell Street. The station has the potential to be an important intermodal connection for alternative transportation.

**Feedback From Workshops**

The ideas and feedback that we received from the two workshop sessions were remarkably different, yet shared some important themes.

The most salient theme was of connections, perceived both as lacking and as precious assets. The first workshop session was not held in the Lowell Street area, thus the majority of attendees, while Somerville residents, were only vaguely familiar with the neighborhood. Given this, the group’s discussion of existing conditions focused on the lack of connections and lack of attractions in the area. One workshop attendee expressed that the area feels “empty and random.” The neighborhood’s existing amenities, such as a few small parks, are underutilized and largely unknown to those from other parts of Somerville. To many of the first-session participants, the area feels unsafe and uninviting.

At the second session, held at the VNA and well attended by residents of the immediate vicinity, participants were very familiar with the Lowell Street neighborhood. Even before we began the meeting, one of the participants noted the connections in the area and expressed his hope that they would not be lost when the Green Line comes. Another participant commented that he was glad to see the completion of the bridge over the Commuter Rail. He explained that the “new” bridge was completed in 2006 after more than six years of construction that had turned the ends of Lowell Street into cul-de-sacs. Several participants commented on the large hill and narrow sidewalks (shown covered in snow in Figure 19), which could impede travel between the proposed station and Somerville Hospital on Highland Avenue.

Participants in both sessions expressed concerns about displacement, a second major theme of the workshops. Some participants were more knowledgeable than others on the topic; however, everyone understood and agreed that any design proposal for the area should accommodate, and not eliminate, the existing businesses and homes. A few teens in the first session even discussed the inherent trade-off in a crowded city between getting what they want and preserving the existing uses, yet still assumed that existing uses had to be preserved.
Another common theme was concern that the Green Line would increase vehicle traffic. Participants noted the frustration of residents in Davis Square and Union Square who must compete for parking spaces with visitors who are drawn to the neighborhoods’ businesses and, in the case of Davis Square, the rapid transit station. Lowell Street Station could indeed cause some traffic and parking challenges. All of the streets surrounding the station are relatively narrow—40 feet at the widest—leaving little room for on-street parking. On Lowell Street parking is restricted to just one side of the street in order to provide enough room for two-way traffic (Figure 20). Like much of Somerville, there is relatively little off-street parking in the neighborhood, none of which is public. Although some groups discussed the idea of adding additional parking, the consensus of participants in both workshops was for increased parking enforcement and better alternatives, including better pedestrian paths, more bicycle parking, and shuttle buses.

A fourth important theme was neighborhood assets and amenities. Workshop participants discussed existing assets in Lowell Street, noting their exclusivity to certain members of the community. For example, one participant mentioned the Community Room at the VNA. This space is a great, free asset for the whole neighborhood that is highly underutilized by the wider community, likely due to its location. Participants in both workshop sessions mentioned the local green spaces and their different uses (Figure 21). The future site of the community path is currently an unplanned “urban wild” used by no one. Albion Park and Hoyt-Sullivan Playground attract only two subsets of the population, very young children and the adults supervising them. There is a small community garden at the VNA that is utilized almost exclusively by one segment of the Lowell Street community—residents of the VNA. Somerville Junction is a de-facto dog park, although this use seems to be slightly controversial among residents because it was never intended to exclusively serve neighborhood dogs. When we called for the first session to select a design parcel, the group emphasized the many scattered amenities and the need for better connections between them, rather than one site in particular.
Many of the workshop’s specific recommendations for the design area were simple yet very important: more lighting, better pedestrian paths, wider sidewalks, guiding signage, more landscaping. Other ideas addressed specific attractions that participants thought are currently lacking in the area, including a Wi-Fi center and/or café catering to bicyclists, pedestrians and commuters alike; a teen activity space such as a bowling alley, pool or skate park; and a community garden. The most prominent ideas from the workshops are listed on this page.

### Most Prominent Design Ideas

- **Keep the existing homes and businesses**
- **More lighting**
- **Better connections**
- **Wider sidewalks**
- **More paths**
- **Attractions for all ages**

### Other Specific Ideas

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<th>Design Ideas</th>
<th>Other Ideas</th>
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<td>Mini-mall, with convenience store, shoe store,</td>
<td>Bicycle parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grocery store</td>
<td>Café for bicyclists and T riders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth-made art on retaining walls and bridge</td>
<td>Priority hiring for local residents</td>
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<td>supports</td>
<td>Discounts for youth and bicyclists</td>
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<td>Indoor teen activity space (bowling, arcade,</td>
<td>On-street parking restricted to neighborhood</td>
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<td>laser tag, pool; no liquor license)</td>
<td>residents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor teen activity space (skate park)</td>
<td>Street lights activated when motion is detected</td>
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<td>Wi-Fi spot</td>
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<td>Sled run</td>
<td>Guiding signs</td>
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<td>North-south shuttle bus connection along Lowell</td>
<td>Fountains</td>
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<td>Street</td>
<td>More trees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gardening beds</td>
<td>More landscaping (lawns, rain gardens,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dog park</td>
<td>community gardens)</td>
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Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville

Figure 21. Existing Conditions

Existing Conditions in the Lowell Street Area

Image: Google Earth  Image Date: June 2010

- Future Site of MaxPak Square
- Albion Playground
- Somerville Junction Park
- Central Street
- Vernon Street
- Lowell Street
- VNA
- Rogers Foam Factory & Vernon Street Studios
- Hoyt-Sullivan Playground

Study Area within Somerville
Figure 22. Design Proposal

Legend:
- Light green: New Park
- Green: Existing Park
- Yellow: Community Space
- Blue: Bike Path
- Green with yellow triangle: Green Line with Station
- Blue line: Bridge
- Red square: Bike Cafe
- Orange circle: Lamp Post
Our Response

To our surprise, participants rejected the idea that a design for one property could meet the needs of the neighborhood. Instead, workshop attendees stressed that it is the inter-connection of the whole neighborhood that must be addressed. In response to this, we eliminated our original plan of re-designing a single parcel, and instead looked at a much larger area of land. Specifically we looked to re-design the space that runs between the Community Path from Davis Square, the MaxPak site, the VNA building, Somerville Junction Park, the Rogers Foam factory, Hoyt-Sullivan Playground, and the future Community Path toward Boston (Figure 21). This chosen design area is divided by the existing railroad tracks and future Green Line tracks, creating an interesting challenge for our connection-focused re-design.

The sections that follow highlight the main features of our design proposal (Figure 22) for the Lowell Street area.

Lowell Street Neighborhood in 2015

Public Parks

The Community Path is now complete, passing under Lowell Street on its way from Davis Square all the way to North Point and the Charles River. Two new access paths connect the Community Path to Lowell Street, which is 30 feet above the path at its highest. On its way toward Boston, the Community Path provides a direct connection between the newly opened public park in the MaxPak development, the VNA community garden and Somerville Junction Park, which was expanded and outfitted with a dog run (Figure 23).

The VNA’s infrequently used side parking lot has become a small park, Lowell Street Plaza, highly visible to all who pass down Lowell Street. The plaza is an informal gathering place, welcoming passersby with its open design and comfortable seating (Figure 25). This community space has helped to generate a more active, friendly atmosphere on Lowell Street. Once hidden behind a screen of trees and a small parking lot, the VNA building is now more integrated with the neighborhood, while still maintaining some privacy for its residents thanks to judicious landscaping.

Across the tracks from Somerville Junction Park and its new dog run, sits a new neighborhood park. A little-used...
section of the Rogers Foam factory's parking lot and the sloping vacant lot behind it have been transformed into Rogers Garden Theater, featuring gardening beds and a landscaped amphitheater (Figure 26). In the winter, when outdoor theater is not an option, neighborhood children enjoy a small sled run that crosses through the park. A new pedestrian and bicycle bridge that crosses over the train tracks connects Rogers Garden Theater to Somerville Junction Park. To maintain adequate parking for the local businesses, including Rogers Foam factory and Vernon Street Studios, a new parking lot was built by leveling out the sloping empty lot that abutted the building's Vernon Street entrance.

With cooperation and support from the City of Somerville, the MBTA, and MassDOT, local youth have decorated the retaining wall and bridge supports along the community path with murals and graffiti-inspired public art (Figure 27). The art provides aesthetic enjoyment for passers-by, empowers local youth, and helps create an enduring sense of place in the Lowell Street area.

Local Business

At the heart of this area of interconnection, directly across from the entrance to the new station, is a small café of 2,500 square feet. This shop's ideal location allows it to serve Green Line

Figure 25. Small Street Plaza
Existing seating area in Davis Square.
Source: CoolTown Studios (cooltownstudios.com)

Figure 26. Landscaped Amphitheater
Existing sloping garden at the Somerville Community Growing Center.
Source: Somerville Community Growing Ctr.

Figure 27. Public Art
Existing mural by local artist Shepard Fairey on the Tufts University campus.
Source: Tufts Daily, photo by Zoe Moore
Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville

Figure 28. Wheels Café
Existing bike café, Ride Studio Café, in Lexington, Massachusetts. Photo by Caitlin Dolan

The café offers a range of attractions, including beverages, food, bicycle supplies, ample seating, and free wireless Internet (“Wi-Fi”). The shop was modeled after the popular Ride Studio Café located along the Minuteman Bikeway in nearby Lexington (Figure 28). Acknowledging the range of potential users, including residents in wheelchairs, kids on skateboards or scooters, bicyclists, and Internet surfers, the storeowner named the shop Wheels Café. As previously mentioned, there is a dramatic height difference between Lowell Street and the community path. Turning this challenge into an asset, Wheels Café has entrances at both levels and provides, during business hours, an alternative connection route between the “T” station and the Community Path.

Lowell Street as Neighborhood Center

The Lowell Street neighborhood was never meant to be a Davis or Union Square. What it did need, and residents supported, was a unifying center and identity. The new parks, improved connections and Wheels Café have provided Lowell Street with the unity it lacked. If and when the market demands it, additional retail development could enter the neighborhood. At that time, the community should once again be engaged in the planning process. It is possible, but unlikely given the neighborhood’s density, that previously suggested ideas, such as a mini mall or a youth bowling alley, will one day be developed.

Shuttle Bus Service

To provide a better connection between the new station and nearby destinations, a shuttle bus runs at every 15 minutes north and south along Lowell Street (Figure 29). Although a standard MBTA bus would fit on Lowell Street, the shuttle is much smaller, which allows for easier travel down the narrow, residential street. For a flat one-dollar fare, the shuttle takes riders to Magoun Square, Highland Avenue, and beyond to the Red Line. Residents of the Lowell Street area, including seniors at the assisted living community, love the convenience the shuttle offers, particularly for travel to appointments up the hill at the Somerville Hospital.

Figure 29. Shuttle Bus
Photo illustration by Gabriel Holbrow
Wider, Lighted Sidewalks

To accommodate the neighborhood’s pedestrians, the sidewalks have been widened from 6.5 feet to 9 feet. The nine feet includes a one-foot curb edge zone, a four-foot furnishings zone and a four-foot throughway zone. While the throughway zone is always kept clear, ensuring passage for wheelchairs, the furnishings zone contains street lamps, benches, bicycle parking, and expanded beds for street sweeps. Utility poles no longer compete with pedestrians for sidewalk space, as all utility lines have been buried in the street. New, motion-activated street lamps line the road, which dim to 15% of the light’s capacity when no motion has been detected for ten minutes. Lights along the community path are equipped with similar motion-detection and timing devices. The new network of lighting provides safety and comfort to the Lowell Street area, while the motion-detection and timing technology reduces energy costs.

Lowell Street has a total width of just 40 feet from property line to property line. Structures are built right up to the property line on both sides. Now that 18 of those 40 feet have been claimed for nine-foot sidewalks on both sides, there remains 22 feet for automobiles. Thanks to expanded alternative transit—the Green Line, the community path, and a shuttle bus—and the emergence of a walkable neighborhood center, the demand for parking has decreased. This has made the elimination of on-street parking from Lowell Street an easier sell than expected. The two 11-foot travel lanes are wide enough to accommodate small and large vehicles. This simultaneous expanding of sidewalks and narrowing of the roadway, has created a safer and more pedestrian-friendly neighborhood. Over time, as parcels on either side of Lowell Street are redeveloped and buildings rebuilt, frontage strips along each parcel can be incorporated into the public right of way.

Signage

Thanks to connections at the new station and the extended Community Path, Lowell Street welcomes more first-time visitors. Clearly labeled signs located where major pedestrian pathways converge guide visitors through the neighborhood. The signs efficiently guide visitors and residents to the various parks including, Albion Park, Hoyt-Sullivan Playground, and Somerville Junction Park and Rogers Garden Theater. Upon exiting the Green Line station, visitors are directed left to Magoun Square, right to Highland Avenue, and right again for connections down to the Community Pat. Likewise, walkers and cyclists on the Community Path find signs directing them up Lowell Street, toward the “T” station, and/or over to Magoun Square.
A Start, Not an End

This is our vision for the Lowell Street area, based on the community’s input from two workshops. Not all of these proposals will become reality. Some may be discarded in favor of better or less costly ideas. Others may be modified because of changing physical conditions and/or neighborhood opinion. We offer these designs not as a finished work, but as an embodiment of the community’s priorities and vision for the neighborhood. This vision deserves to be continuously discussed, modified, and developed by local residents in the years to come.
The Advent of Web-Based Participation

As planning has evolved over the years, so too have the methods in which to engage residents in the actual process. The advent of web technologies has brought planning from town hall meetings to something that can be accessed within one's own home. By facilitating an environment that encourages knowledge sharing, increased understanding, and a more democratic process, internet-based participation tools have marked the next step forward in community engagement.\(^1\)

Given its recent emergence on the planning scene, there is a small, but quickly growing, field of research dedicated to web-based and other interactive participation tools. The numerous benefits that are drawn from this new technology have been laid out in recent publications looking at the implementation of these tools into the participatory process. Much of the literature has focused on the fact that web-based tools extend beyond the time constraints and exclusivity that has so often marred public meetings. Evans-Cowley and Hollander note that traditional public meetings fall short because they limit the extent to which an individual can learn about a potentially complex issue.\(^2\) Furthermore, public meetings rarely run as an open forum for sharing information. More typically, they operate in a hierarchical fashion with a one-way line of communication from those meeting facilitators to meeting participants. Such an environment is not conducive to learning, for it impedes a free flowing exchange of ideas and opinions.

Despite their limitations, public meetings do play a useful role in community participation and are often mandated by law. Instead of replacing public meetings, web-based tools provide an addition outreach means and can help enhance the effectiveness of meetings.

Implementing Interactive Tools

Conroy and Gordon created an experiment to examine if interactive, technology-based approaches to public meetings were an effective tool. Attendees at a public meeting for watershed issues were randomly divided into two groups. Group one, the control group, attended a traditional presentation followed by a question-and-answer period at the conclusion. Group two, the treatment group, was given access to web-based tools such as geographic information systems (GIS), directed to explore at their own pace, and encouraged to ask questions freely at anytime. In comparison to those who participated in the control group, treatment group participants displayed an elevated understanding of the issues, as well as greater satisfaction with the meeting overall. In sum, the study indicates that technology-based tools can enhance the engagement and satisfaction...
of public meeting attendees, hopefully leading to future participation.³

Al-Kodmany examined a series of community workshops in Chicago that utilized GIS tools. These workshops, facilitated by the University of Illinois-Chicago in the Mexican-American neighborhood of Pilsen, sought to enhance the participants’ experience through the use of three different tools: 1) GIS maps to orient attendees with the study area; 2) an artist who used an electronic sketchboard to capture the ideas of the residents; and 3) photo-manipulated images to present design options. Combined, these tools facilitated more interaction and engagement among attendees. Contrary to previous meetings in this neighborhood, residents confidently expressed their opinions to planners and designers. Typically this community feels excluded from the planning process, but the techniques used at this meeting were able to change that. The tools created a shared “language” between the context and proposed design, which allowed participants to engage to the fullest extent possible.⁴

### inTeractive Somerville

Dedicated to reaching groups that are typically excluded from the planning process, the Somerville Community Corporation (SCC) envisioned an interactive tool that could engage all members of the Somerville community. In 2009 SCC began to work on making this vision a reality. The tool, known as inTeractive Somerville (Figure 30), is meant be a proactive tool to reach community residents, particularly those not usually involved in the planning process, by engaging and educating them before they enter public meetings.⁵ Work is still being done to make the tool available for public use.

When launched, the inTeractive Somerville web site will function much like Facebook, but will only include the network of people and places related to Somerville and the Green Line Extension. The site will seek to “hold the dialogue for as many community members as want to get involved.”⁶ The main interface of the site is a map with geotagged markers that will link users to photos, videos, posts, and blogs. Visitors to the site will be able to browse existing posts of each location and, if they so choose, can upload photos or videos of their own and contribute to the blog.

The overarching goal of inTeractive Somerville — community-wide engagement in the planning process — will be achieved in a variety of ways. These various objectives are listed below.

- Facilitate participants’ understanding of the dimensions of place and planning around a community.
- Introduce participants to the inTeractive Somerville site as a way to continue community-wide engagement in planning.
- Engage participants in a visioning process, taking them from accepting a place as it looks today to creating and seeing a virtual representation of the collective vision they design.
- Promote physical, group, and web-based interaction.
Help participants connect their personal interests to the planning process.

Validate diverse forms of knowledge and experience in relation to the planning process.

Connect workshops and participants to the larger vision of community change and the city- and state-wide planning processes.

Recognizing that a web-based tool will primarily attract youth and young adults, there are plans for involving elderly residents as well. One proposal involves matching youth with elderly residents who will work together to create and post an oral history of the sites on the inTeractive Somerville web site.

Figure 30. Screen Shot of inTeractive Somerville
Linking Our Design with inTeractive

When inTeractive Somerville goes live, it will be the central source for community input on the Green Line Extension. For example, the photos and maps used during our two-session workshop for Lowell Street Station can easily be added to the main interface map. This will allow residents who were not able to attend the workshop to be informed and updated. If possible, street views, like those available on Google Earth, will be utilized in order to provide visitors with a better orientation to the area in question.

Likewise, design ideas, such as those proposed at our workshop can be transcribed into a blog entry and geotagged to the corresponding parcel or station. Assuming the web site will have the capacity for numerous images, blogs will include illustrations, such as those sketched done by our workshop participants. Much like the artist’s sketch utilized at the Chicago community meeting in Pilsen, inTeractive Somerville will allow users to post comments and suggestions directly onto the proposed designs.

inTeractive Somerville will include information and diagrams that look beyond the physical design plans. For example, maps depicting a neighborhood’s land use or demographic makeup could also be posted. Community members will be able to learn, view, and consider the full context of each area prior to and after any and all meetings.

Looking Forward with inTeractive

The research has shown that technology-based approaches can enhance a participant’s understanding and satisfaction with the planning process. Visual tools such as GIS and photo manipulation can effectively address the limits of traditional public meetings while providing different avenues for problem solving and community visioning. Despite all of these merits, web-based tools cannot be used to the exclusion of other planning mediums. While online tools are effective in reaching individuals who are historically excluded or overlooked, efforts must be made to weave these tools into the traditional planning framework – public meetings facilitated by city officials and planners. SCC should absolutely continue its work on engaging residents through inTeractive Somerville, but at the same time, must encourage residents to engage still further by attending public meetings. inTeractive Somerville will prove itself to be an indispensable tool for CCP’s vision of a “livable, equitable Somerville.”
Notes


5. Interview with Gaudet 14 February 2011

6. ibid.

Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville
Chapter I introduced both the contentious issues and rewarding opportunities that accompany the arrival of the Green Line to Somerville. With such a dense and diverse population, many conflicting opinions are bound to arise when discussing neighborhood development. Somerville's future is very much in the hands of one primary stakeholder—MassDot. Unfortunately, the opinions of other stakeholders, including residents who will undoubtedly be impacted the most, are often overshadowed by the government's agenda. Community Corridor Planning (CCP) was established out of this reality.

Led by four distinct organizations, CCP is working toward a Somerville that will equitably serve all of its residents. More importantly, CCP is making every effort to foster a community change process that is both equitable and inclusive. As such, CCP’s planning efforts seek to engage every segment of the population including youth, immigrants, and elderly. These inclusionary efforts are the only way to ensure that Somerville serves the needs and desires of the entire community.

In Chapter II we laid out best practices for community participation, based on a review of relevant literature. These practices form a guide for continued involvement with community as well as highlight participation's inherent benefits to the community planning process. By building community power and encouraging the development of leaders, CCP will sustain resident engagement. Such a framework, placing importance upon resident-led organizations and facilitating collaboration and knowledge sharing across diverse sectors of society, holds the promise of an inclusive, equitable, and comprehensive vision for the future of Somerville.

Chapter III described our facilitation of a two-session community workshop. Focusing on a small group, discussion-based format we were able to elicit feedback from each and every workshop participant. Using this feedback we created a design proposal (Chapter IV) that represents the community's vision of the Lowell Street neighborhood in the post-Green Line Extension era. Our final design idea focused on improving the neighborhood’s connections and highlighting its amenities. This design provides the neighborhood with the identity and unity it sorely lacked.

Chapter V discusses the advances in web-based participation tools and how they factor into existing community engagement strategies. Web-based tools can engage community members, particularly youth, who normally do not contribute to land use planning. SCC’s web tool, inTeractive Somerville, holds tremendous potential to engage a greater number of residents. Due to its web-based location, residents will be able to access information and voice their opinions outside of the limiting confines of community meetings.
Given this roadmap, we recommend the following steps that CCP can take as they move forward in this process. These recommendations fall into two categories:
1) workshop-related recommendations;
2) organizational recommendations.

**Workshop Recommendations**

Our recommendations for CCP’s two-session station area workshops focus on four categories: outreach, time and locale, visual aids, and knowledge sharing.

**Outreach**

We recommend that CCP utilize as many forms of outreach as possible including door knocking, phone calls, placing flyers in local businesses and community spaces, web posting, and e-mails to various community listserves. Employing a wide variety of methods will reach the greatest number of residents. In our experience we found door knocking, while time consuming, to be the most effective method. The level of engagement achieved by a face-to-face interaction cannot be overstated.

**Time and Locale**

In order to accommodate and engage as many residents as possible, we recommend that CCP vary the venue and start time of the community workshops. The location and time of our workshop sessions very much affected who attended. Session 1 was held at Teen Empowerment in the early evening, immediately following a youth group, and thus, involved a high number of youth. Session 2 was held at the VNA in the early evening, immediately following dinner, therefore attendance was heavily weighted toward the elderly. Going forward, we recommend that CCP look to engage all populations, including the working class, immigrants, middle-aged persons, and young families. In preparation for these different groups, CCP must line up translation and child care services.

**Visual Aids**

By its very nature, land use planning requires visual tools. Workshops focused on land use planning are no different. In our two-session workshop we used multiple visual aids, including various maps. The maps we served two purposes: 1) they oriented participants with the study area; and 2) they educated residents on land use planning considerations. We strongly recommend that CCP utilize visuals of all types and sizes in future workshops.

**Knowledge Sharing**

At our workshop we did our best to constantly tap the expertise in the room – the community members. No one knows and understands a community better than its residents. Recognizing this, our sessions included small and large group discussions. Organizing the meetings in this manner allowed for open sharing of countless ideas. After the workshops, this sharing can continue on inTeractive Somerville, bringing together even more opinions and insights.
Organizational Recommendations

In order to achieve its mission, CCP needs to strengthen and unify its identity. We have several recommendations for CCP we urge them to consider.

Centralize CCP Information

While the four community-based agencies that makeup CCP each has their own respective web site, there is no central site for the coalition. Creating a CCP web site will strengthen the coalition's community reach and identity. Rather than getting piecemeal information from several web sites, residents will be directed to one source for all of the latest CCP news.

Define the Coalition’s Mission, Vision, and Goals

The process that went into creating CCP’s Core Community Principles must be replicated for the coalition's internal functioning. We recommend that CCP’s Resident Advisory Team and four member agencies come together for a series of strategic planning meetings with the goal of creating a unified mission, vision, and goals. Once defined, the coalition will be much better equipped to organize and lead community-planning efforts.

Define Organizational Structure

To successfully lead the community, CCP needs a well-defined organizational structure and a formalized decision-making process. Technically the Resident Advisory Team sits atop the organizational structure, but due to a large drop in membership (from 16 members down to 9 members), the four community-based agencies have led most of CCP’s efforts. This unforeseen change must be addressed. We recommend that CCP re-examine its internal hierarchy and decision-making process at the above-referenced strategic planning meetings.

Define the Community’s Role

CCP members have come together to serve the Somerville community, yet the role that the community will play within CCP has not been clearly defined.

Is the Somerville community merely a participant in CCP efforts, or is it driving the CCP efforts? Each direction presents a different set of and challenges. Either way, CCP must make a collective decision and clearly communicate the chosen role to the community.

Closing

CCP has proven to be an invaluable asset to the Somerville community. The coalition’s activities and meetings have educated and empowered the city's residents. CCP should continue to employ a wide variety of outreach and participation tools, as this array of approaches has proven effective at engaging a diverse collection of residents, including those who are often left out of the process. If CCP were to dedicate time and energy to strategic planning on internal processes, it will make the coalition’s external processes that much stronger. Thanks to CCP, a “livable, equitable Somerville” is on the horizon.


Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville


Interviews

Chelsea Clarke  
Groundwork Somerville

Amanda Gaudet  
Somerville Community Corporation

Ronald Leaks  
Groundwork Somerville

Meridith Levy  
Somerville Community Corporation

Ellin Reisner  
Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership
Appendix A: Core Community Principles for CCP

Core Community Principles for Neighborhood Development Along the Green Line Corridor

As part of Community Corridor Planning, a grassroots initiative to engage Somerville residents in the land use planning of the Green Line Corridor, community members ratified a list of eleven core principles. The principles listed here were chosen from a larger list of principles generated by over 300 residents who participated at various community meetings held between April and October, 2009, which were then prioritized and ratified at a community meeting attended by 150 people on October 28, 2009. The community members engaged with CCP would like to see all decisions related to the planning of the Green Line and the land use in the half mile areas around the 7 proposed stations to reflect this list of Corridor Core Principles.

- **More Local Jobs:** We want a fixed percentage of respectable jobs of all types with good wages and benefits for Somerville residents, from construction to permanent.
- **Increase Commercial and Economic Development:** We want to see the creation of squares as destinations, with careful attention to mixed use of commercial/residential, reuse of buildings, and economic development to increase the tax base.
- **Keep and Add Local Businesses:** We want locally owned, culturally diverse, clean businesses in commercial areas with employees who live in Somerville.
- **Keep Somerville Affordable:** We want to make sure people of all economic means have the ability to afford housing and living costs, so that Somerville residents, such as child care workers, cab drivers, local business employees and others can stay here affordably.
- **Maintain Our Diversity:** Preserve and encourage economic and ethnic diversity of residents and businesses.
- **Improve the Green Environment:** We want a safe, environmentally friendly neighborhood with more green space, trees, and gardens; reduction of noise; avoidance of light pollution; and prevention of toxic chemicals in the air.
- **Encourage Walking and Biking:** We want to encourage walking and cycling, through safe, bike/pedestrian friendly design of streets and paths around and between stations.
- **Create Community Gathering Spaces:** We want both indoor and outdoor safe, public gathering spaces for community members.
- **Improve Access:** We want above standard, safe access to and between stations for people with disabilities, strollers, and pedestrians in general.
- **Community Involvement:** We want to make sure residents are included on an ongoing basis in the planning, design, and zoning changes to the stations and areas around them. Youth, artists, and others should help design stations, with attention to amenities. We need an easy and clear process for residents to address problems as they come up, with ways of immediately resolving unseen impacts.
- **Connecting Buses and Trains:** We want to ensure inter-modal access between neighborhoods and stations, for new train service to be adequate and speedy, and for existing bus lines to continue to serve areas not connected by train.
## Appendix B: Workshop Agendas

### Workshop Agenda

_February 22, 2011_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time General</th>
<th>Time Exact</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td></td>
<td>Welcome &amp; Intro</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:05</td>
<td>CCP Intro (8 mins)</td>
<td>Chelsea/Ron</td>
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<td>- History of CCP</td>
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<td>- Where we are in the planning process</td>
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<td>- Lay out CCP principles</td>
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<td>- How this meeting fits in; Introduce big players in the room</td>
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<td>6:13</td>
<td>Tufts Project Intro (1 min)</td>
<td>Amara</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:14</td>
<td>Personal Intros (4 mins)</td>
<td>Amara, Caitlin, Gabe, Andrew</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Name, urban planning interests, quick personal story</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:18</td>
<td>Agenda &amp; Goals for the Meeting (2 mins)</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:20</td>
<td>Introduce large map (3 mins)</td>
<td>Gabe</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:23</td>
<td>Break all into small groups (2 mins)</td>
<td>Gabe</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:25</td>
<td>Small Group Intros (5 mins)</td>
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<td>- Name and what you love about Somerville</td>
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<td>6:30</td>
<td>Small Group Activity (14 mins)</td>
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<td>- Discuss what you see in the map &amp; photos</td>
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<td>- What do you think is missing?</td>
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<td>- What have been your experiences here?</td>
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<td>- What do you not want to see here?</td>
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<td>6:44</td>
<td>Small Group Report Back (10 mins)</td>
<td>Group Leader</td>
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<td>- Write out on flip chart</td>
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<td>6:30</td>
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<td>Existing Conditions</td>
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<td>6:55</td>
<td>Introduce section &amp; photos (3 mins)</td>
<td>Caitlin</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:58</td>
<td>Break all into same small groups (2 mins)</td>
<td>Caitlin</td>
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<td>7:00</td>
<td>Small Group Activity (18 mins)</td>
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<td>- Discuss what you want/don’t want to see here</td>
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<td>- What do you like about these photos?</td>
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<td>- Building use &amp; size</td>
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<td>- Green Space</td>
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<td>- Businesses</td>
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<td>- People</td>
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<td>- Safety issues</td>
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<td>- Beautification ideas</td>
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<td>- Noise concerns</td>
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<td>- Meeting spaces</td>
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<td>7:18</td>
<td>Small Group Report Back (10 mins)</td>
<td>Group Leader</td>
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<td>- Write out on flip chart</td>
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<td>7:00</td>
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<td>Future Goals</td>
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<td>7:28</td>
<td>Guiding Q’s (2 mins)</td>
<td>Amara</td>
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<td>- Size</td>
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<td>- Location</td>
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<td>- Use (current zoning)</td>
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<td>7:30</td>
<td>Group Feedback (10 mins)</td>
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<td>- Which parcel would you choose and why?</td>
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<td>7:40</td>
<td>Post-it Note Voting (5 mins)</td>
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<td>7:30</td>
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<td>Choosing a Property</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:28</td>
<td>Guiding Q’s (2 mins)</td>
<td>Amara</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Size</td>
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<td>- Location</td>
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<td>- Use (current zoning)</td>
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<td>7:30</td>
<td>Group Feedback (10 mins)</td>
<td>All</td>
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<td>- Which parcel would you choose and why?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:40</td>
<td>Post-it Note Voting (5 mins)</td>
<td>All</td>
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<td>7:45</td>
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<td>Evaluation / Wrap-up</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>Group Oral Evaluation (5 mins)</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
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<td>- What did you like?</td>
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<td>- What didn’t you like?</td>
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<td>- Suggestions for improvement?</td>
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<td>[hand-out the paper evaluation]</td>
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<td>7:50</td>
<td></td>
<td>Announcements (5 mins)</td>
<td>Chelsea/Ron</td>
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<td>- Next meeting</td>
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<td>- Ways to get involved</td>
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<td>- Sign-up sheets, email lists</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Thanks!</td>
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</table>
## WHAT KIND OF GREEN LINE NEIGHBORHOOD DO YOU WANT TO SEE?

### Workshop Agenda

**March 22, 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:10</td>
<td>Welcome &amp; Intro (20 mins)</td>
<td>- Amara</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Logistics &amp; Agenda (bathrooms, timing, thx)</td>
<td>- Tufts Team</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Tufts Project &amp; Mission</td>
<td>- Chelsea/Ron</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Green Working Group</td>
<td>- ALL</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- ALL – name &amp; something you noticed about Lowell Street area</td>
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<td><strong>Recap of Last Meeting (5 mins)</strong></td>
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<td>6:30</td>
<td>- Where, when, who, why, and ideas that came out of it</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
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<td><strong>Present &amp; Explain Design Map (20 mins)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6:35</td>
<td>- Big picture (institutions, roads, station, etc.)</td>
<td>- Caitlin</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Community space</td>
<td>- Amara</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Lighting, signage, sidewalks, connections</td>
<td>- Gabe</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Inclusive design plans, e.g. elderly too!</td>
<td>- Andrew</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Local business, e.g. bike café</td>
<td>- Caitlin</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Parks</td>
<td>- Gabe</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Small Group Activity: 6 Design Themes (40 mins)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6:55</td>
<td>- Introduce group activity (2 rotations)</td>
<td>- Andrew</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Design Team Leaders to Guide Small Groups</td>
<td>- Tufts Team</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Explain Topic → Guiding Questions (2 mins)</td>
<td>- GWS</td>
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<td>- Partner Up (5 mins)</td>
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<td>- Come back together w/ small group &amp; report out (13 mins)</td>
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<td>- REPEAT THE ABOVE STEPS W/ 2ND GROUP</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>6 Design Themes:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Teen Opportunities, Concerns: Ron</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Parks: Chelsea</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Local Business: Caitlin</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Elderly Opportunities, Concerns: Andrew</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Community Space: Amara</td>
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<td>6. Sidewalks, Signage, Trails, etc.: Gabe</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Small Groups Report Back to Large Group (12 mins)</strong></td>
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<td>7:35</td>
<td>- Introduce Activity</td>
<td>- Amara</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Report Back</td>
<td>- Various attendees</td>
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<td><strong>Evaluation / Wrap-up (10 mins)</strong></td>
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<td>7:47</td>
<td>- Group Oral Evaluation (6 mins)</td>
<td>- Amara</td>
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<td>- What did you like?</td>
<td>- Ron/Chelsea</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What didn’t you like?</td>
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<td>- Suggestions for improvement?</td>
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<td>Next Steps (4 mins)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- How to stay involved</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Upcoming meetings</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville
Appendix C: Workshop Prompt Questions

The following questions were used to facilitate small group discussions in the first workshop session.

I. What it is!

*Prompt people to give reasons why and personal experiences*

What do you see? (Call out obvious objects, any landmarks.)

Any personal experiences on Lowell St. or areas similar? (Do you ever go there?)

Does anyone know the history of this place or any buildings, parks, etc?

Is the street noisy? Does it look noisy?

What are the buildings used for? (Or what do they look like they are being used for?)

What about the trees and natural environment?

How are the buildings, parks, empty spaces connected?

Are the streets walkable? (Can you get from point A to B)

How about walking or driving through this space during night? (compare to the daytime. Is it safe?)

How do you enjoy this space? (Or how would you enjoy this space?)

How about how pretty the space is? (How does it make you feel?)

How do feel about the sizes of the spaces and the buildings?

Do you see yourself living there, going to school there, or other specific special occasions?

What are the types of businesses and restaurants?

Is this a place for all ages—young people, older people, families, parent, all types populations? (Who do you think lives there? For example does this area have a big Brazilian population because of the cafes or maybe churches and other community buildings?)

How does the building fit into the surrounding environment and the intended uses?

If you were going to meet someone here, where would you meet? Where would you wait for someone? Is there a place to seat or rest?

Last Question: How will the station be useful to this area, what do you think will be the effects of the Green Line coming in?
II. What it ought to be!

Ask people to not be shy about what they would like to see and ask for reasons and encourage debate.

Is there anything obvious missing on this map or in pictures? What have you seen in nearby places?

How would the addition of what was suggested make your personal life more enjoyable?

What do think would be fair given this suggestion contradicts this suggestion?

What about opportunities to get involved in the area? What would you like to see here that would encourage you to come around more?

What should the Lowell stop be known for? What puts it on the map?

What are some possible uses of buildings or ways to incorporate more uses to existing buildings?

What would be a could connector? For example, more sidewalks that link the parks to the T-station to the mainstreet businesses?

How visible should it be? For example, should the pathways or sidewalks be lined with vegetation, more trees or green space?

What about spaces specific for young people, young children, and elderly? Separate spaces or integrated spaces? For example, child/adult parks? Community Gardens?

What makes a space or lot beautifully and comfortable?

How would a well designed plot of land make you feel like? Intended uses?

What’s a good size building or park? What’s good design to you? (Maybe use a different word than design… so folks are not too detailed.)

What should change or be adaptable when the seasons change?

What would make this useful for residents like yourself and those who may just visit the spot for daytime or nighttime purposes?

What about jobs in this area?

How to encourage and make more visible diversity?

Do you have any ideas for other types of community space, safe space, or types of jobs in that you would like to see be a part of this process?

What do you think we can plan for in the future? Do you expect that there will be more people, less people, different types of communities?

Process and tools questions

Is the map clear? Is it helpful to think about the city this way?
Could you draw something like this? Or if you could draw a plan for your city—how would you begin to do that?

What is some information you would like to know about the map, building, green line, how much things cost, etc.? (How do you think we can make information accessible for everyone? What do people need to know in order to fully participate?)

### III. Choosing a Parcel

*Big Group Discussion*

When looking at the these properties think about the types of uses. Are they commercial buildings, schools, etc.?

Think about the size of the property and what a property that size could be used for.

Think about what already exist in the surrounding area.
Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville
Appendix D: Additional Workshop Visuals
Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville
Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville
Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville
Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville
Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville
Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville
Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville
Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville
Appendix E: Leadership Development Checklist

While organizations must constantly plan for specific projects, it is equally important to plan how people within the organization can continue to develop their leadership. Michael Jacoby Brown (2006) outlines an exercise that is a useful tool to continuing leadership development for individuals. After completing this checklist, Brown advises for it to be constantly referred to and modified as needed.

Date completed:

By:

Name of leader:

1) Who recruited this person to the organization?

2) When recruited?

3) Background:

4) What are this person's core values?

5) Where and how did this person get these values?

(You should have some idea of this person's story. You should know the outline of why this person cares about certain things, and where he or she received these basic values—whether it was from parents, teachers, or experience.)

6) Issues this person is concerned about:

(Although people are more than bundles of the specific issues that affect them, you should have a general idea of the person's more immediate self-interest and what might move him or her toward action now.)

7) Networks:

(Does this person have networks? Family, friends in his or her congregation, workplace, or other organizations? If not, you have to question the person's ability to be a leader. With whom does the person have relationships? Who could the person bring to a coffee at his or her house or to a meeting at work?)
8) Past organizational work:

(What work has the person actually done in the organization or elsewhere? Is she or he all talk and no action? Has the person ever hosted a house party? Brought people to a meeting? Made a flyer? Made phone calls? Helped out at the office? Contributed money? Helped plan a program? This will give you an idea of what this person might like to do and what else he or she might do with encouragement.)

10) What leads you to think that this should be the next step?

(If you find that there are gaps in your knowledge about this person, that’s okay. Have another conversation with the person to find out what you need to know.)

9) Next step for leadership:

(What might this person do to develop his or her leadership? The next step may vary. It might make sense to ask what the person thinks might be a good next step.)
Appendix F: Memorandum of Understanding

Memorandum of Understanding  
between  
Tufts University Field Projects Team No. 2  
and  
Groundwork Somerville (GWS) + Somerville Community Corp. (SCC)

I. Introduction

Project number: 2  
Project title: Land-use Planning along the Green Line Extension in Somerville  
Client: Groundwork Somerville (GWS) and Somerville Community Corp. (SCC)

This Memorandum of Understanding summarizes the scope of work, work product(s) and deliverables, timeline, work processes and methods, and lines of authority, supervision and communication relating to the Field Project identified above, as agreed to between the UEP graduate students enrolled in the Field Projects and Planning course UEP 255 offered by the Tufts University Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning who are identified in Paragraph II below; Groundwork Somerville and Somerville Community Corp, further identified in Paragraph II below; and UEP, as represented by a Tufts faculty member directly involved in teaching the Course during the spring 2011 semester.

II. Specific Provisions

(1) The Field Projects Team working on the Project consists of the following individuals:

1. Caitlin Dolan  
2. Gabriel Holbroak  
3. Amara Wosu  
4. Andrew Wagoner

(2) The Client's contact information is as follows:

Client name: Groundwork Somerville and Somerville Community Corp.  
Key contact/supervisor: Jennifer Lawrence, Meredith Levy Chelsea Clarke  
Email address:  
Telephone number:

FAX number: (?)  
Address: 21 Properti Way, Suite G, Somerville, MA 02143  
Website: www.groundwork-somerville.org

(3) The goal/goals of the Project is/are:

The UEP Field Projects team will focus on action items ratified at CCP's December 2010 community meeting, working closely with neighbors of the proposed Lowell Street T station to create a physical plan for one parcel of land within a half-mile of the station.

(4) The methods and processes through which the Field Projects Team intends to achieve this goal/these goals is/are:

That parcel will be chosen jointly by the Field Projects team and CCP coalition members through a workshop to be hosted by the team. At a second workshop, community members will review and comment on the team's preliminary design documents, with those comments incorporated into the final plan.

The students will be responsible for developing the agenda for this workshop. To do so, they will incorporate ideas from the CCP action agenda, the CCP Station Design Report (an EPA-funded report created by a local transportation planning firm that focuses on community-supported station designs) and interactive Somerville (an online mapping tool, to be further refined throughout the academic year by a team of undergraduate Tisch Scholars (from Tisch College at Tufts), that will allow community members to comment on station area design).

Although the ultimate goal of the project is to develop and implement this design workshop process, many intermediate components will need to be completed if the effort is to be successful -- including the creation of workshop templates shaped by the community's vision. In addition, the Field Projects team will work closely with two Tisch Scholars who will be planning a series of workshops for young people that will focus on the proposed T stop at Gilman Square. Though working on different station areas and target audiences, these two team efforts will serve as sounding boards/pilot projects for the CCP Coalition, as it creates similar parcel designs along the entire Green Line corridor in Somerville and Medford.

So, although the project will focus on a single parcel, the team also should work to develop insights on community education, organization and process that generally apply to land use and related issues arising from the Green Line extension.
Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension in Somerville

(from Project Description)

(5) The work products and deliverables of the Project are (this includes any additional presentations for the client):

- Two Workshops to engage residents
- A literature review of “best practices” for participatory planning processes;
- Preliminary and final design documents and GIS maps based on input from community members and the Field Projects team at the design workshops;
- Educational and related materials that can be used by the CCP advisory team and other volunteers to implement future workshops; and
- A plan that describes how these design products can be linked to interactive Somerville, the online mapping tool.

(from Project Description)

(6) The anticipated Project timeline (with dates anticipated for key deliverables) is:

- February-April: Meet with key stakeholders, staff of CCP coalition, and attend any relevant community/public meetings in Somerville and on the Green Line Extension
- February to March publicizing for workshops and the promotion of multilingual interpretation
- Feb. 16 Meeting with Instruction Team and Staff member of GWS at Tufts
- Feb. 22 First Workshop, choosing a parcel and design elements
- March 1 Initial Project Outline Due for course
- March 9 and 16 Midcourse in-class presentations
- March 13-15 Meeting with Instruction team at Tufts
- March 22-24 or March 29 Potential dates for the 2nd Workshop to present project design of chosen parcel next to Lowell T-Station
- First draft of written deliverables due for the course (specified in question 5)
- April 20 and 27, May 3 Final in-class presentation
- May 6, 4pm final deliverables due at UEP
- May 9, Assessment/Reflections memo due

(7) The lines of authority, supervision and communication between the Client and the Field Projects Team are (or will be determined as follows):

The Client and the Field Projects team will communicate through email, phone, and in person when necessary. Communication between Field Project Staff and the Client with average around 1-3 hours every two weeks. The Client will also be available to support the Field Project team in between meetings.

- Starting February 2nd: meeting every other Wednesday from 11-12 at Tufts for an hour with site supervisor
- Workshop in Feb. and March: representatives present from CCP
- Feb. 16: Meeting with instruction team and client at Tufts
- April 20, 27, or May 3: Final in-class presentations, representatives present from CCP
- May 9: Assessment/reflections memo due

(8) The understanding with regard to payment/reimbursement by the client to the Field Projects Team of any Project-related expenses is:

- UEP has provided students up to $100 dollars to cover project related expenses. Reimbursements for Field Project related expenses will be provided through UEP and not by the GWS and SCC.

III. Additional Representations and Understandings

A. The Field Projects Team is undertaking the Course and the Project for academic credit and therefore compensation (other than reimbursement of Project-related expenses) may not be provided to team members.

B. Because the Course and the Project itself are part of an academic program, it is understood that the final work product and deliverables of the Project—either in whole or in part—may and most likely will be shared with others inside and beyond the Tufts community. This may include, without limitation, the distribution of the Work Product to other students, faculty and staff, release to community groups or public agencies, general publication, and posting on the Web. Tufts University and the Field Projects Team may seek and secure grant funds or similar payment to defray the cost of any such distribution or publication. It is expected that any issues involving Client confidentiality or proprietary information that may arise in connection with a Project will be narrow ones that can be resolved as early in the semester as possible by discussion among the Client, the Field Projects Team, and a Tufts instructor directly responsible for the Course (or his or her designee).

C. The Client can review all research data and notes if need be, can alter the text of the final report as long as changes are noted. The Client should refer to the authors of the report by name and affiliation (name of students and UEP). The Client can edit or use excerpts under any circumstance as long as the
The work product will be used in various ways:

- The workshops may be video recorded and the Client will use the video for training purposes and to circulate among CCP coalition members.
- The Client can use the final written report for training purposes and to circulate among members.
- The Client may also use the final report to present to the city or other government entities.

D. It is understood that this Project may require the approval (either through full review or by exemption) of the Tufts University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This process is not expected to interfere with timely completion of the project.

IV. Signatures

[Signatures]

For Groundwork Somerville
By: Chelsea Clarke
Date: Feb 9, 2011

[Signature]

Representative of the Field Projects Team
By: Amane Ikensu
Date: Feb 9, 2011

[Signature]

Tufts UEP Faculty Representative
By: David Bratt
Date: Feb 9, 2011
Appendix G: Approval from the Tufts Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Re: IRB Study # 1102039
Title: Somerville Community Workshop: Land-Use Planning Along the Green Line Extension
PI: Caitlin Dolan
Co-Investigator(s): Gabriel Holbrow, Andrew Wagoner
Faculty Advisor: Rachel Bratt
IRB Review Date: 2/18/2011

February 18, 2011

Dear Caitlin,

Your Application for Exempt Status for the above referenced study has been reviewed. This study qualifies as exempt from review under the following federal guidelines.

Exempt Category 2 as defined in 45 CFR 46.101 (b). For complete details please visit the United States Department of Health and Human Services Office (DHHS) for Human Research Protections (CHRP) website at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html#46.101

Please know that this exemption does not relieve the investigator of any responsibilities relating to the research subjects; equal care must still be taken to ensure that subjects experience no harm to themselves or to their legitimate interests.

Furthermore research should be conducted in accordance with the ethical principles, (i) Respect for Persons, (ii) Beneficence, and (iii) Justice as outlined in the Belmont Report.

Any changes to the protocol or study materials that might affect the exempt status must be referred to the Office of the IRB for review. Depending on the changes, you may be required to apply for either expedited or full review.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of the IRB at (617) 627-3417.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Wakeford, Ph.D.
IRB Administrator
Appendix G. IRB Approval

Workshop Questions

Our research team plans to conduct two community workshops (each two hours in length). The community members (N=69 research "participants") will be recruited by our client, Groundwork Somerville, through various media including flyers, Facebook, and website postings.

- What would you like to see around the proposed Lowell Street T stop and why?
  o What would enhance this area’s impending transportation development?
  o In terms of land use and development, what is this neighborhood currently lacking?
  o How do these land-use proposals respond to the "Core Community Principles" which were ratified in the fall of 2009?
- Alternatively, what do you not want to see developed in this area?
- Which existing T station and surrounding area would you most like to see serve as a model for the Lowell Street T? Why? Please describe the elements that you would like to see replicated in this neighborhood.
- Which parcel(s) would you most like to see developed in relation to the proposed T station?
- Which parcel design do you feel best fits the needs and desires of this community?

Workshop Evaluation

Our research team plans to distribute a one-page evaluation form to all those who attend the community workshops. The form should take no longer than 3 minutes to complete. It will be distributed and collected immediately following the workshops.

Please circle the answer(s) that best match your opinion. When applicable, please write in your response.

- I feel that tonight’s workshop was...
  too short  just right  too long
- Do you find this meeting place convenient?
  o If no, where do you suggest we hold future meetings? _________________
- I found the content of tonight’s meeting... [please circle all that apply]
  interesting  relevant  boring  repetitive
  fun  Important  confusing/unclear  Irrelevant
- This evening’s workshop...
  did NOT meet my expectations  met my expectations  exceeded my expectations
- I felt comfortable participating in the workshop?
  o Please explain why or why not: ______________________________

Please rate the workshop facilitators on the following:

- Presentation Skills:  o Poor  o Fair  o Good  o Excellent
- Ability to Engage Participants:  o Poor  o Fair  o Good  o Excellent
- Knowledge of Subject:  o Poor  o Fair  o Good  o Excellent
- Meeting Organization, i.e. agenda, visual aids, etc.:  o Poor  o Fair  o Good  o Excellent

APPROVED
FEB 14 1996
Tulsa SBER IRB
EXPIRES
FEB 17 2011
Tulsa SBER IRB

1 of 1
Land-Use Planning along the Green Line Extension in Somerville

UEP Field Project 2011