

28 July 2008

Monica R. Lamboy
Executive Director
Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development
City Hall, 93 Highland Ave
Somerville, MA 02143

Dear Ms. Lamboy:

LivableStreets appreciates the opportunity to comment on the **Broadway in East Somerville Project**.

Based on the latest plans and the presentation given at the June 25, 2008 community meeting, we are very excited with the possibilities for Broadway and the direction the design is headed. The amount of vision and collaboration taking place between the consultants, the city, and the community is wonderful. Without a doubt, the end result will be a true "complete street", one that encourages and invites people to walk, bike, shop, or just hang out and relax.

We are very glad to see that the sidewalks will be dramatically widened and that bike lanes will run throughout the entire project. We are also thrilled that there is such a strong emphasis on calming traffic by removing travel lanes, designing for slower speeds, and creating curb extensions at crossings. In addition, the strong emphasis on place-making will without a doubt create some much-needed quality public space that the city so desperately needs.

Finally, the idea of a "bike-station" at the eastern edge of the project is one we fully support. Having a place where people can park their bikes, have them serviced, or even rent one will without a doubt bring people to the area (and to the local businesses) without bringing more cars to the neighborhood. Cities around the nation are just starting to realize the potential of bike-sharing, and we are glad to see that Somerville wants to be one of the early-adopters as well.

With all this in mind, we would like to make some suggestions to help you further enhance the design of the project. First, two that we feel are essential:

- **Extend the medians to the other side of the crosswalks.** The current plan has the medians ending just before the crosswalks. If the medians are extended to the other side of each crosswalk, a pedestrian crossing the street will have a refuge on either side of him or herself, instead of on just one side. This will make the crossings safer and more comfortable.
- **Bring the bike lanes through the intersection of Broadway and McGrath Highway.** The bike lanes are planned to begin/end one block east of McGrath Highway. The intersection of Broadway and McGrath is already very large and quite challenging to cross by bike (as well as on foot). It is our understanding that the city is working with DCR to try to improve this intersection. We feel that this is very important, as it is a key connection to East Somerville. Removing/narrowing travel lanes to allow for bike lanes and shorter crossing distances should be studied. It is also our understanding that bike lanes will be coming to Broadway through Winter Hill as part of the Bicycle Committee's efforts to expand bike lanes throughout the city, which would ideally connect to the new bike lanes on Broadway in East Somerville if this intersection were redesigned.

Second, an alternative accommodation for bicyclists:


- **Consider a design that has "cycle tracks" for bicyclists instead of bike lanes.** While the current plan for 6' on-road bike lanes is without a doubt a terrific design, the city and the consultants could push the envelope even further by considering a design that uses European-style cycle tracks. They tend to attract a wider range of bicyclists than on-road lanes do (in both age and ability), and do not have the problem of double-parked cars blocking them. We have yet to see true cycle tracks in the Boston area, so there is potential to really be on the forefront of street design and be a model for others to follow.

Thank you for considering these suggestions as you continue to further the design of this project. Please feel free to contact me to discuss any of our comments in greater detail. My cell phone number is 413-478-9058 and my e-mail address is cdenison@comcast.net.

(Please note that I am also a member of the Somerville Bicycle Committee, which is also giving feedback on this project.)

Ms. Lamboy, Re: Broadway in East Somerville Project
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charlie Denison".

Charlie Denison
Board of Directors
LivableStreets Alliance