



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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To: Richard C. Rossi, City Manager

From: Brian P. Murphy, Assistant City Manager for Community Development

Date: December 2, 2014

Re: Council Order #8 dated October 20, 2014 regarding the next steps to advance the creation of the Grand Junction Multi Use Path

The Grand Junction Community Path is proposed to run in a shared-use Grand Junction corridor alongside the existing rail tracks from the Boston University Bridge to the Somerville Community Path at North Point. It will provide a continuous, off-road pathway for residents, schoolchildren, workers and visitors to stroll, jog, or bike, connecting several neighborhoods with each other, with commercial areas, and with regional resources such as the Charles River, Green Line Extension and the Somerville Community Path.

At the June 11, 2014 meeting of the Transportation and Public Utilities Committee focused on the Grand Junction Path, Council heard from the Community Development Department (CDD), MassDOT, MIT, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority, and the Friends of the Grand Junction Path. A copy of the Community Development Department's presentation can be found online at <http://cambridgema.gov/grandjunction>.

As part of MIT's Kendall Square PUD-5 re-zoning in 2013, MIT conducted a more detailed feasibility analysis of the proposed path through MIT property between Main Street and Memorial Drive. On October 8, 2014, MIT submitted the final report for this feasibility analysis to City Council. CDD staff participated in the feasibility study process and commented on the draft final report. Overall, the report concludes that it is feasible to construct the path and identifies some outstanding issues and questions.

These questions include:

- What additional rail service can be accommodated along with a path? MassDOT's 2014 Capital Investment Plan introduced the idea of using European-style Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) trains on the Grand Junction corridor. This would provide urban rail service from a proposed new "West Station" at Beacon Yards near the Allston-Brighton I-90 interchange along the Grand Junction corridor to North Station, with a stop in Cambridge near Kendall Square. MassDOT has expressed interest in not precluding simultaneous 2-way rail service. Cambridge will continue to work with

MassDOT as part of MassDOT's Kendall Square transportation study which will look at use of the Grand Junction.

- A connection from the Grand Junction Path to the Somerville Community Path in Somerville has not been identified. As part of its 90% design phase comments to the Green Line Extension project, the City requested that the project again focus on answering this question.
- The report does not commit to creating any specific portions of the path, although this may be possible to do as planned MIT construction activities progress.
- Costs are also estimated to be significantly higher by MIT as compared to previous detailed cost estimates completed for the entire Grand Junction Path by the City in 2006.

In addition to the planning efforts related to the above, next steps include the following:

- Given that the MIT study showed the feasibility of the Grand Junction Path, construction of the path should occur in stages as part of ongoing campus construction efforts.
- The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority has designed the path between Main Street and Broadway. It is expected that construction on this segment will begin in 2015 using funds (\$500,000) committed by MIT.
- Review other opportunities to fund design and construction of sections of the path over time, including the connection in North Point.
- City staff will continue to participate in the I-90 Allston Interchange project and encourage consideration of the connection to the Grand Junction Path in its comments on the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), which is currently open for public comment.