

**MBTA Green Line Extension (GLX) Project
Community Working Group (CWG) Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2020
4:00 to 5:30 PM Via Webinar**

*This meeting is the 37th consecutive, monthly GLX Community Working Group meeting.

ATTENDEES:

CWG Members:

Viola Augustin (Somerville)
Michaela Bogosh (Magoun Square)
Elliot Bradshaw (Brickbottom)
Ryan Dunn (Magoun Square)
Jim McGinnis (Union Square)
Andrew Reker (City of Cambridge)
Laurel Ruma (Medford – College Ave)
Jim Silva (Medford - Ball Square)

MassDOT/MBTA:

Melissa Dullea (Senior Director MBTA Service and Planning)
Terry McCarthy (MBTA Deputy Program Manager of Stakeholder Engagement)
Aaron Neeley (GLX Testing and Commissioning Manager)

GLX Project Team (in alphabetical order):

Martin Nee (GLX-MBTA)
Erin Reed (GLXC)
Amanda Smith (GLX-MBTA)
Jeff Wagner (GLXC)

Other Guests:

Tim Dineen (VNA Resident)
Matt Hartman (Senator Jehlen's Office)
Brandon Hagan
Bob Mason
Rocco Dirico (Tufts University)

PURPOSE: The GLX Community Working Group (CWG) was formed to help engage and foster communication with the communities along the GLX corridor by meeting with representative members (both residents and officials) of Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford.

BACKGROUND: The Green Line Extension (GLX) Project is an initiative of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), in coordination with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). The project intent is to extend existing MBTA Green Line service from Lechmere Station through the northwest corridor communities of Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford. The goals of the project are to increase mobility; encourage public transit usage; improve regional air quality; ensure a more equitable distribution of transit services; and support opportunities for sustainable development.

Terry McCarthy welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for continuing to be engaged throughout this entire process. Jeff Wagner provided the safety briefing for the CWG and presented the new COVID-19 requirements and protocols now in place. The new requirements include a mask worn at all times when on all MBTA properties. T. McCarthy added that all MBTA employees are required to wear a mask covering over nose and mouth 100 percent of the time and that a 6-foot distance requirement is no longer valid. GLX is working to strictly enforce this rule with everyone in the field.

T. McCarthy and Melissa Dullea provided an update on the “Forging Ahead” initiative by the MBTA to best understand current and future service needs across all of the MBTA. M. Dullea said the term “forging ahead” is a term to cover many aspects of the MBTA forecasting and planning to address the budget deficit and reduction in ridership as a result of the pandemic. M. Dullea said the MBTA is looking at options to fill gaps created as a result and are exploring reallocation potential and other options to preserve funding. The MBTA is reviewing potential service cuts across all of the MBTA and two specific bus route concepts within the GLX area. Given the extreme budget concerns, the two proposals the MBTA is reviewing now include changes to the Route 80 route bus and the Route 88 bus for efficiency improvements and possible redundancies. M. Dullea said there are frequency and span changes proposed across all of the MBTA routes.

T. McCarthy announced the next Virtual GLX Public Meeting will be held on December 9, 2020 at 6:30 PM and has already received over 300 registered attendees. The meeting will be held using Zoom as it more easily accommodates public comment and accessibility features. Attendees will be asked to submit their questions into the Q&A box given the large audience size.

J. Wagner introduced Aaron Neeley to the CWG and said Aaron helped lead a team in Bolivia to replace a bridge that was previously damaged. A. Neeley has been in the transit industry for about 29 years and has built rail systems across the country. A. Neeley explained the “systems” within a rail network, and the four included in GLX are Traction Power Substations, Overhead Contact System, Signals, and Communication. A. Neeley said the team has been busy over the last year doing a lot of underground work. The installation of the OCS poles is visible, and the public will begin to see the signals work and other elements of the systems within GLX. M. Nee asked what happens when the ground settles or the tracks get replaced and the wire only allows for 1-inch of movement in either direction? A. Neeley said the track settling should not happen following compaction, but the pole arms typically allow for some movement once the wire is installed. Andrew Reker thanked Aaron for sharing this information and asked how much time will there be between the OCS poles and when the trains begin to run? A. Neeley said the GLX project will expect to see a minimum of 6 months of train testing the systems. The pre-revenue test runs are done to “break” the system Aaron and his team have designed and installed to be prepared for any and all potential situations in the future during revenue service.

J. Wagner provided a construction update:

- Union Square Station:
 - o Most advanced platform; track placement well underway and the sound walls are progressing
- Lechmere Station:
 - o South elevator shaft lifted into place last weekend
- Viaduct Construction:
 - o One span of decking left to pour this week
 - o Three more days of waterproofing
 - o Several parapets still to be poured

- Vehicle Maintenance Facility:
 - o Track placement underway
 - o Exterior siding installation continues and working to complete waterproofing prior to winter
- Viaduct & Community Path:
 - o Photo from the roof of the 200 Innerbelt Road offices show the continued progress of the viaduct and community path along Innerbelt Road
- East Somerville Station:
 - o Wall work, systems work, and station work continues
- Washington Street construction:
 - o North sidewalk is open
 - o Temporary sidewalk to close while work begins on south sidewalk
- Retaining Walls:
 - o The MCW-2 wall between McGrath Highway and Walnut Street is under construction and has been graded with erosion control matting
- Medford Street Bridge Modification:
 - o Pouring concrete to support new center pier
 - o Work underway on abutment-side of the bridge
 - o Steel placement anticipated January 2021
- Gilman Square Station:
 - o Closer to pouring platform
- School Street Bridge Modification:
 - o Bridge is jacked up and work is continuing on walls and abutments
 - o Excavation continues
- Lowell Street Bridge Modification:
 - o Continue reinforcement of new abutment
- Magoun Square Station:
 - o Station foundation and utilities are in place
- Ball Square Station:
 - o Platform is taking shape
 - o Completed major water line work and sewer line work
 - o Will be paving beginning Friday with millwork and paving as early as Saturday
- Track Placement between College Ave. and Broadway:
 - o Still some wall work and signal work needed in the area
- Medford/Tufts Station and Wall Construction:
 - o Sound wall panels in progress to fill remaining gaps

Other updates:

- T. McCarthy said The Moles Organization selected the GLX Project to do a documentary film to support their scholarship efforts aimed to encourage students to enter engineering and construction management fields.
- T. McCarthy said the Wall Street Journal wrote an article about infrastructure in the United States and used a photo of the GLX Community Path under construction as part of the piece.

J. Wagner said the GLX team recognized the Veterans in November on Veterans Day. The next Community Connection Team event will be the Fill-A-Bus program and work with the Medford Family Network to provide gift cards to families in need.

Q&A:

- Jim McGinnis (Union Square): Would facilities be provided if US-2 is not running at the time of revenue service?
 - o T. McCarthy said the station will be operational mid-2021 and additional bike storage will likely be provided.
- Jim McGinnis (Union Square): What is in the mechanical building?
 - o T. McCarthy said utilities rooms and communications rooms are located within the mechanical building at Union Square Station.
- Jim Silva (Medford - Ball Square): What is the current state of the sound walls along the ROW?
 - o T. McCarthy said panels are being installed as quickly as they arrive but has been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. J. Wagner added that crews are working every night to install panels, dependent upon what panels are available. Workflow will continue until complete. J. Silva asked if the sound walls are in final condition behind homes and if there will be sound testing done. T. McCarthy said testing is done as a requirement of the contract. T. McCarthy said the team will invite the sound wall expert back to a CWG meeting to explain the verification process as required in the contract.
- Jim Silva (Medford - Ball Square): What can the community do to ensure exposed beams are safe for pets and children if that is the final design/condition?
 - o J. Wagner said the team is working in a few areas where there is a small area of space between a private property and the ROW to try to sure up these locations along the noise wall. T. McCarthy requested the addresses of the homes to visit and review the conditions.
- Jim Silva (Medford - Ball Square): Who is taking responsibility of the graffiti and what is the timeframe?
 - o T. McCarthy said the GLX Team met with the Mayor and will not be involved in a graffiti removal program until next spring. The Chief of the Railroad said there is an annual program to remove graffiti, in collaboration with MBTA Transit and Commuter Rail. J. Silva said they are hopeful the sites are kept more secure and would prevent trespassing. J. Wagner said GLX has a night safety team that canvases the project, but the security process is improving as the project progresses.
- Andrew Reker (City of Cambridge): Will the Zoom meeting dial-in information be posted on the website?
 - o M. Nee said there is a phone number that has been created and accessible via Zoom.
- Andrew Reker (City of Cambridge): What are the expected completion dates for full opening of Washington and Broadway for multi-modal transportation?
 - o J. Wagner said Broadway is mostly open and there is no completion date yet for the south sidewalk on Washington Street. J. Wagner said he would anticipate 1st quarter of 2021 but can get back to him with more information.
- Andrew Reker (City of Cambridge): Is the bus bridge removal on track for April 2021?
 - o T. McCarthy said the updated anticipated date is summer 2021 and is dependent upon getting Lechmere online and operational.

T. McCarthy thanked everyone for attending and for their continued input and feedback. The meeting ended at 5:39 PM.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR January 5, 2021, 8:30 to 10:00 AM via Video Conference.

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