

**MBTA Green Line Extension (GLX) Project
Community Working Group (CWG) Meeting Minutes
November 3, 2020
8:30 to 10:00 AM Via Webinar**

*This meeting is the 36th consecutive, monthly GLX Community Working Group meeting.

ATTENDEES:

CWG Members (in alphabetical order):

Jason Alves (East Cambridge Business Association)
Viola Augustin (Somerville)
Joe Barr (City of Cambridge)
Michaela Bogosh (Magoun Square)
Elliot Bradshaw (Brickbottom)
Rocco Dirico (Tufts University)
Jim McGinnis (Union Square)
Nicole Morell (Medford City Council)
Andrew Reker (City of Cambridge)
Laurel Ruma (Medford – College Ave)
Jim Silva (Medford - Ball Square)

MassDOT/MBTA:

Terry McCarthy (MBTA Deputy Program Manager of Stakeholder Engagement)

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)

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. T. McCarthy introduced the “Forging Ahead” initiative by the MBTA and the upcoming public meeting schedule.

Jeff Wagner provided a construction update, including the sound walls and adjusted dates for sound wall panel installation. The COVID-19 impacts to the sound wall panel installation included temporary closures at manufacturing facilities and limited availability to concrete suppliers. This temporary interruption in the supply chain has not affected the overall schedule of the project. The panels at Gilman Street are being put into place and the section north of College Street will start to see more activity and walls will be installed in the open gaps. J. Wagner said weekend work occurred to catch up on sound wall installation and placement, and crews may be moving to different sections but not necessarily in a linear sequence because the availability of materials will dictate where work can occur. T. McCarthy said track outages are required to install sound walls on the commuter rail side; this is the reason for working over the past weekend. J. Wagner said the Granville section is of concern and crews are now awaiting the panels for this section. The east side panels should all be installed by January 2021.

T. McCarthy said the graffiti is a crime and is of ongoing concern for the MBTA/MassDOT throughout the system. He encouraged attendees to take photos of the graffiti and send it to the team without posting on social media. The project team will deal with the graffiti closer to revenue service and need the public's help to address the problem. Laurel Ruma said there is a significant graffiti tag along the ROW and is confirmation that the ROW is not secure as she has mentioned prior. She encouraged the team to not wait until revenue service and to take care of the graffiti that is already there; graffiti attracts more graffiti. T. McCarthy apologized for confusion and said the team is developing a program to address graffiti and will likely power wash their infrastructure in the Spring of 2021. T. McCarthy said the security and fencing of the area can be improved and addressed within the project limits; will reach out to Keolis as well.

T. McCarthy presented the anticipated schedule of CWG meetings in 2021 and said the team is anticipating the meetings will be virtual through the summer. The meetings of 2021 will be milestone focused and anticipate live trolley cars will be running on the system to test starting in March 2021.

T. McCarthy presented photos of tree hazards on the Green Line from a recent Legislative Briefing and said the questions asked at the last public meeting will be addressed prior to the next. L. Ruma asked if the CWG meetings could be recorded and posted online; T. McCarthy said the original intent of the CWG meetings was to be a working meeting and the public is always invited.

T. McCarthy said the discussion about bollards vs. guardrails was discussed and Ball Square Station does include guardrails as recommended by the MBTA Security and Safety Team. The installation of bollards if needed could be done later. L. Ruma said the guardrails do not make sense along a sidewalk and bollards are more appropriate for pedestrians. J. Silva expressed concern that the guardrails do not match the pedestrian environment of the area and would like the team to review the design with the public for feedback.

Construction Update from Jeff Wagner:

- Safety:
 - Remain vigilant and regularly engaging employees about COVID-19 requirements (social distancing and masks)
 - New Safety Manager in place
- Walking Tour on October 6, 2020:
 - Led by John Dalton; great turnout (20+ attendees)
 - Toured the Viaduct and Vehicle Maintenance Facility

- Viaduct:
 - Waterproofing is underway as the concrete has been installed

GLX Systems Installation:

- Will include the installation of over 800 Overhead Contact System poles; foundations being dug now
- Factory Acceptance Testing completed for all 9 signal houses; expecting delivery of first on December 1, 2020 and the rest will be delivered one per week

Stations:

- Union Square Station:
 - Farthest along; platform taking shape and the track placement is in progress. Most track work is at the McGrath Overpass to Charlestown Yard
 - Continuing to work on the interior of the mechanical building
- Lechmere Station:
 - Elevator towers in place; South elevator tower to be installed later this month
 - Expecting steel canopy installation on platform to occur later in November
 - Goal for entire viaduct to be in place by end of 2020
- East Somerville Station:
 - Station platform is advancing and expect steel for canopy to be installed later this month
 - OCS poles are in place
 - Concrete pour of the community path occurring presently
- Gilman Square Station:
 - Platform foundation in place and utility work is underway
- Magoun Square Station:
 - Station platform foundation in place
 - Working to frame deck for future pour
- Ball Square Station:
 - Platform foundation in place; prepping for deck pour
 - Waterline tie completed across tracks to Newbern Ave
 - A lot of utilities come into this area and crews have paid additional attention to all construction and work to prevent disruptions in services
- Medford/Tufts Station:
 - Working on station and prepping for foundation pour
 - Drainage work and wall work in the area had to be completed prior to foundation and station work
 - L. Ruma said the sound wall panels installed so far are just one side of the two-sided wall

Bridges:

- Washington Street:
 - Plan to open north sidewalk later this month after finalizing details
 - Work still underway on south sidewalk
- Medford Street:
 - Rebar and reinforcement installation work underway
 - Advancing work on retaining wall and abutment
 - Steel bridge deck placement aimed for mid-December
- School Street:
 - Footings being built for new center bridge pier

- New abutment is being prepped for steel placement in coming months
- Lowell Street:
 - No traffic impacts at street level and working to move abutment back; tie backs in place
- Broadway:
 - Roadway and sidewalks are open; traffic is flowing well (cars, bikes, pedestrians)
 - Few finishing details remain to completion
 - T. McCarthy highlighted the access to the future station from the Broadway Bridge

Traction Power Substations:

- Interior work is advancing at Red Bridge and prepping exterior for paint
- Gilman Square (aka Pearl Street) work includes making it weather tight; interior work and prepping exterior for paint
- Ball Square substation has been primed for paint and transformers (2) to be placed this month. Working well with neighboring property owner to gain access to site to complete work and use adjacent driveway; in regular communication.

Vehicle Maintenance Facility:

- Exterior painting complete and siding installation is underway. Should be completely enclosed by next CWG meeting
- Started asphalt paving around entire VMF footprint (began last week)
- In process of creating parking lot; some challenges and requires detailed coordination to allow for employees/works to park; T. McCarthy said there are about 650 craft employees and 200+ administrative staff at any time and creates challenges

Retaining walls:

- Preparing to close down Chester Ave access point next week to advance the wall work
- Chester Ave is a stop along Community Path but includes a switch back to bring to a lower elevation and down to track level; portion of path sits atop of the retaining wall being installed

Community Path:

- Last pieces of steel are being set for viaduct portion
- Expecting decking work to start by end of 2020 or by Spring 2021
- Pouring concrete at Washington Street this week

Hotline Updates:

- 1592 inquiries total; 47 new in October 2020
- 1415 actions closed out to date
- Working one-on-one with neighbors impacted by fencing and tie-in placement work along easements

Community Connection Team:

- Participated in virtual 5k run for Somerville Homeless Coalition; raised \$42,000
- 10 people from team participated

Team Building:

- GLXC team submitted Halloween Costumers and photos (20+) will be included in the upcoming GLXC newsletter

Q&A:

- L. Ruma asked when the College Ave bridge construction will begin; T. McCarthy said mid-winter but does not expect lane closures or movements. Some work requires coordination with Tufts. J. Wagner will inquire for anticipated schedule.
- T. McCarthy said the project is still on track from completion by December 2021 and much of next year will be focused on bringing assets online for testing
- Jim McGinnis asked for an update on Medford and School Street bridges reopening for traffic; T. McCarthy said Spring 2021.
- J. McGinnis asked what the canopy materials will be made of; T. McCarthy said he will get the information and provide that to him. T. McCarthy said the canopies are modeled after Landing Station; similar system.
- Tim said there are some potential dead trees along sound wall that may have been damaged during recent storms; T. McCarthy thanked him for the notice and the team will go out to inspect and review if on the T property.

T. McCarthy thanked everyone for attending and for their continued input and feedback.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR December 1, 2020, 4:00 to 5:30 PM via Video Conference.

###