



**MBTA Green Line Extension (GLX) Project
Community Working Group (CWG) Meeting
September 1, 2020
8:30 to 10:00 AM
Via Webinar**

*This meeting is the 34th consecutive, monthly GLX Community Working Group meeting.

ATTENDEES:

CWG Members: Viola Augustin (Somerville), Ryan Dunn (Magoun Square), Jim McGinnis (Union Square advocate), Andrew Reker (City of Cambridge), Jim Silva (Medford - Ball Square), Elliot Bradshaw (Brickbottom), Dylan Manley (East Somerville), Andrew Reker (City of Cambridge)

MassDOT/MBTA: Terry McCarthy (MBTA Deputy Program Manager of Stakeholder Engagement); Melissa Dullea, MBTA Bus Operations

GLX Project Team: Martin Nee (GLX-MBTA), Jeff Wagner (GLXC), Erin Reed (GLXC)

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 opened the meeting and welcomed everyone for attending and delivered a safety moment. He then proceeded with an updated included slides and images concerning:

MBTA ridership and operational deficit

- Average ridership decreased precipitously in mid to late March 2020
- Post COVID-19, all modes fell approximately 80%
- By late summer, all modes rose slightly but are still operating in the range of 10 to 20 percent of normal.

COVID-19 Cases statewide peaked in April and fell considerably over the summer but are expected rise this fall.

MBTA Operation vs. Capital Budget

- For now, fare increases are not being considered
- Adjustments are being looked at in Federal Funding, shifting within Capital Budget, and delay of some capital proposals.



Rail Activation Program includes:

- System Testing and Acceptance
- Training
- Staffing
- Operations Planning
- Maintenance
- Safety
- Security and Emergency Management
- Public Information/Marketing
- Service Integration
- Materials Management

Congratulations to the City of Somerville for partnering with the MBTA to produce:

- 14 miles of dedicated bus lanes in multiple cities
- An increase in bus reliability and reduced crowding during the pandemic

Terry then handed the presentation over to Robert Guptill, MBTA Director of Service Planning who presented the Fall 2020 MBTA bus service changes.

Robert began with an overview of changes to MBTA service in response to COVID-19 including:

Fall Bus Service Changes:

- Accommodating changing ridership patterns
- Supporting physical distancing of riders and employees
- Optimizing service with finite resources

Changing ridership patterns:

- Bus ridership dropped less than other modes
- Ridership is highest on essential trips in minority and low-income communities
- Ridership has been highest in communities with access to vehicles

Ridership is down roughly 80% overall.

MBTA supports physical distancing

- MBTA is planning for 20 passengers to 40-foot bus, down from 46 to 52 passengers pre-COVID
- For the short term, MBTA has the same number of buses and operators
- Looking ahead, reduced capacity of the bus fleet will require strategic allocation of resources
- This may result in reduced capacity in areas where ridership is lower
- Many routes that were not operating on weekdays will resume service
- Weekday service will resume same or better than pre-COVID on some routes
- Other routes that were less traveled may see reductions
- In September, the MBTA will review new ridership, crowding, public feedback and internal feedback and recommend further changes for the Winter Schedule



The GLX team then provided a construction update including progress with station construction, bridge work, traction power substations, trackwork, and vehicle maintenance facility.

Stations:

- Union Square
 - Platform is poured
 - Mechanical building interior work continues
- Lechmere
 - Platform is poured
 - Steel work is arriving on site
- East Somerville
 - Platform wall have been poured
 - Steel is expected this fall
- Gilman Square
 - Station is in beginning stages
 - Steel is expected to arrive this fall
- Magoun Square
 - Station is in early stages
 - Steel is expected to arrive this fall
- Ball Square
 - Station foundation is progressing
 - Rebar is being installed for platform concrete pour
- Medford/Tufts
 - Early station work has begun
 - Form work underway

Bridges:

- Washington Street Bridge
 - Work on drainage and pedestrian access continues
- Medford Street
 - Installing rebar at center pier
 - Drainage work continues
- Broadway Bridge
 - Continued work on sidewalk, traffic approach, fencing, lighting and punchlist items

Traction Power Substations

- Red Bridge – Roughing interior and DC traction power gear work continues
- Gilman Square – Roof and interior work continues
- Ball Square – Interior rough work progressing

Vehicle Maintenance facility

- Work continues on Overhead Contact System (catenary), rough interior, communications equipment

Community Path

- Main truss for Community Path Extension placed in August



GLX Hotline:

- 1,491 Inquiries thru Hotline, e-mail, or direct contact with outreach staff project to date.
- 49 contacts received in August.
- 1,310 actions closed out

GLX Community Connections Team

- Total of \$3,411 raised during toiletries & food drive for Project Soup including:
- 3,093 toiletry items
- 291 lbs. of food
- \$155 in cash donations
- \$1,000 donated by local IBEW Local 103

Questions/Comments:

- Brad Rawson, City of Somerville, commented on the bus lane at Washington Street Bridge being restricted by construction and affecting ridership all the way to Medford.
- Jim McGinnis expressed concern about the limited amount of landscaping proposed by the project. He would like to see green space taken up as an issue a future Community Working Group meeting. Terry McCarthy explained the project will present plans later in the construction process when agreements with municipalities are further along. He cautioned that the plan for GLX has always been for small shrubs at station entrances and hydroseeding, but nothing more elaborate has ever been a part of the GLX design (since the project was reactivated after cost-cutting measures).
- Andrew Reker, City of Cambridge, asked to be notified of further closures of Monsignor O'Brien Highway on weekends through September. Terry McCarthy agreed to keep him updated.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR October 4, 2020, 4:00 to 5:30 PM: Via Video Conference.

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