

GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT
November 5, 2019 COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP MEETING – SUMMARY MINUTES

LOCATION OF MEETING: GLX Project Office, 200 Inner Belt Rd, 3rd Floor, Somerville, MA 02143

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: November 5, 2019, 8:30 to 10:00 a.m.,

ATTENDANCE:

CWG Members: Viola Augustin (Somerville), Joseph Barr (Cambridge), Elliott Bradshaw (East Somerville - Brickbottom), Jennifer Dorsen (Somerville - Ball Square), Ryan Dunn (Magoun Sq.), Andrew Reker (City of Cambridge) and Jim Silva (Medford - Ball Square)

MassDOT/MBTA: John Dalton (MBTA GX Program Manager), Terry McCarthy (MBTA Deputy Program Manager of Stakeholder Engagement)

GLX Project Team: Quon Chin, Randy Henke, Michael Hoitnik, Randy McSherry, Martin Nee, Erin Reed, Amanda Smith, and Jeff Wagner

Other Attendees: Tim Dineen (VNA resident)

PRESENTATION:

*This meeting is the 24th consecutive, monthly GLX Community Working Group meeting.

Terry McCarthy reviewed emergency procedures for those in attendance for the CWG meeting.

John Dalton thanked members of the group for proposing a plan to speed construction during the day and reduce the amount of nighttime work thereby also reducing noise impacts on a butters. The essence of the plan was to eliminate Lowell Line Commuter Rail service between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. which would provide less construction interruptions during the day.

J. Dorsen explained the ridership data showed that approximately 200 people would be inconvenienced by not running commuter rail service during the day to get the work done. J. Dorsen said the letter included the estimated cost of running shuttles in place of the commuter rail during the daytime to allow for more GLX work to occur outside of the night hours. Jim Silva said the abutters who are experiencing impacts from night work are expressing interruption in sleep and rest. J. Silva also said the daytime work is often interrupted due to commuter rail service and they have been researching ways to alleviate this.

John Dalton stated that Jennifer and Jim's plan, forwarded to Secretary Pollack on behalf of the CWG, was reviewed by MBTA Railroad Operations, MBTA Bus Operations, the GLX Program Management Team, and GLX Constructors (GLXC). As background, he reminded the group that the GLX design-build procurement documents were developed so as to create the greatest level of cost-certainty for ensuring a successful, on-budget and on-time project delivery. In addition to greatly re-scoping the final physical attributes of the Extension (i.e. scope changes to reduce cost from the original GLX construction effort, etc), and modifying contract terms to encourage the most competitive price proposals from the shortlisted design-build teams, the procurement documents were drafted to create the fewest work restrictions as possible for the construction effort. Part of this optimization not prohibiting night work within the GLX corridor.

John stated that after carefully considering the proposal and weighing the benefits of less interruptions against any inefficiencies that would be encountered in implementing such a plan, the MBTA and GLXC determined that a number of logistical considerations would offset any productivity gained. The proposal was considered in the context of actual allowable day-time work-windows between the morning and afternoon rush periods. J. Dalton stated that while the proposal offers valuable elements for consideration, the MBTA and GLXC have determined that a number of logistical considerations would reduce the theoretical 6-hour work window assumed in your proposal to a more likely 4 – 4.5 hour work window. As outlined by Randy McSherry, GLXC's Construction Manager during the meeting, his organization has concluded that mobilization and demobilization during a 6-hour work window would reduce productive time to somewhere in the range of 4 hours each day. Additionally, as the field labor industry is premised upon a standard 8-hour work shift, there are economic inefficiencies for requiring the GLX contractor to only work in a less than 8-hour shift – a factor that is only exacerbated if the actual window of productivity is 4-5 hours instead of 6 as is assumed in the proposal.

This standard 8-hour work period for field labor coupled with the realistic productivity of a potential off-peak, no-train work window would make the implementation of such a change detrimental to the project's schedule and budget.

T. McCarthy reviewed the recent outreach regarding the recent Washington Street bridge closure through winter and plan to open earlier than originally planned, in spring. T. McCarthy said the next Public Meeting will be held on 11/19/19 at East Somerville Community School and the auditorium and corridor are available for this use. T. McCarthy said the project boards will be on display in the corridor and there will be a Q&A as at the past open house. Jeff Wagner encouraged CWG members attend.

R. McSherry began the safety discussion with an explanation of the fire life safety meetings that take place on the project. He said there have been 1.5 million work hours to date and safety performance is approx. 400% better than national average. J. Wagner said it was important to communicate any safety incidents and give an update as it happens. J. Silva asked how many people are working on the project; R. McSherry said there are approximately 275 construction workers now and this figure will likely increase.

Q. Chin began the PowerPoint presentation with the Station Design update and said the design team met with Met with Fire Departments and authorities for plan and design reviews as part of design stages. Q. Chin provided the following updates and key highlights since January/February 2019:

- Union Square Station:
 - o GLX team has been working with joint developer, US2, which has committed to adding an elevator to Union Square Station.
 - o The station entrance connecting to US2 plaza will include a 10-foot wide public access off bridge at Prospect Street
 - o The latest design has moved the utility building between the tracks and moved the transformers, so as not to preclude potential future extension
 - o J. Dorsen said she was happy to see the utility building and transformers were moved as requested by the CWG in the past; she thanked the team for this change.
- Lechmere Station:
 - o Recent improvements include glazing on elevators and additional entrances to the main head house, which have been supported by the City of Cambridge

- East Somerville Station:
 - o Station is at grade with artwork on a higher elevation to serve as a good wayfinding presence for the station. Q. Chin added the team went through the plans to modify access points where pedestrians and bikes converge to improve sight-lines.
 - o Previous designs had the utility building located between Commuter Rail and GLX. The building has since been moved to the right side of the station platform and in between the inbound and outbound tracks.
 - o T. McCarthy said the plans will show “landscaped area” as opposed to individual trees to prevent confusion. E. Bradshaw asked about the standard plantings; Q. Chin said the landscaping will be highly maintainable and drought resistant. J. Dorsen asked if the landscaped area south of the station, inside the New Hampshire Commuter Rail line is under GLX control; Q. Chin said this area is outside of the GLX footprint. J. Doren suggested the plans no longer show individual trees so as to not let the public think this will be a vegetated area or would include specific trees.
- Gilman Square Station:
 - o Q. Chins said this station was used as a prototypical station to develop standards and consistency for other stations.
 - o J. Silva asked about the height of intertrack fencing; Q. Chin said it is 4 feet in height.
 - o Q. Chin explained the platform roof design does not include a gable design. The gull-wing design better directs run-off and looks more modern. It also allows for more sunlight to enter the area.
- Magoun Square Station:
 - o Q. Chin said the station design still included the same entry and exit through one point but said the team added a supplemental egress from the north end of the platform to be used in case of an emergency.
 - o T. McCarthy said they met with the City of Somerville to ensure that the emergency path meets ADA requirements.
 - o Q. Chin said the elevated walkway to access the station from the elevator will be 10-feet wide; a prefabricated bridge from Lowell Street.
- Ball Square Station:
 - o Q. Chin said a second elevator would be included without increasing the footprint
 - o Q. Chin said there would be two street entrances to the station; Broadway Bridge and at sidewalk plaza off Boston Avenue.
 - o T. McCarthy said the new #9 trains purchased include ramps from doors to accommodate wheelchair and accessibility needs.
- College Avenue:
 - o Q. Chin said the design included a supplemental egress and the elevator headhouses would all be glazed instead of opaque as previously depicted.
 - o J. Silva asked for the dimensions of the ramps; Q. Chin said the ramps would be a minimum 5-feet wide in each direction between handrails and would be approx. 10-feet tall.

R. McSherry provided a construction update to the CWG. R. McSherry said the longest and deepest drainage area runs between School Street and Sycamore. The team has set up barrier walls, reduced the encroachment zone, and established equipment to prevent swinging into the live track. R. McSherry said the team gets about 6-7 hours done with this set up. R. McSherry said there has been and will continue to be a full track outage on weekends to stay on schedule.

R. McSherry summarized the key construction activities on schedule for the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020. The key construction activities include the following:

- Relocate tracks to final position on eastern side of alignment. In order to relocate the tracks, the team needs to complete the drainage work north of Broadway and Granville and complete the replacement of the retaining walls and noise walls.
- Continue work on the new vehicle maintenance facility foundation, underground utilities, retaining wall and stormwater detention facility.
- Continue work on the Lechmere Station
- The project team will be constructing a new Track 1 near Central Street in Somerville and will shift the two existing tracks to the east
- The first phase of work at the Washington Street rail overpass is nearing completion and the demolition of the second half will occur after the tracks have been shifted.
- Modification to the Medford Street bridge west abutment is underway and is being done in conjunction with Somerville High School to prevent disruptions
- The Broadway bridge is still on track to be reopened in March 2020
- Beginning installing the foundation for the Vehicle Maintenance Facility and transportation building
- Work is progressing well at the Lechmere Station area with concrete columns currently being poured
- Noise wall and retaining wall installations continue between McGrath Highway and Walnut Street, north of College Avenue, and between School Street and Central Street. J. Silva asked about the noise wall completion on the west side, R. McSherry said the team expects this work to be completed by the end of January 2020.

J. Barr asked about the weekend Fitchburg line outages; R. McSherry and T. McCarthy said the outages are discussed during weekly meetings with the MBTA and Keolis, system-wide to review operations and plan for service accommodations as needed. J. Barr said the Red Line will be shut down from Kendall to Broadway for 4 weeks and this work may cause additional trouble for those looking to transfer to another line.

J. Wagner provided an outreach update to the CWG. J. Wagner said through the hotline, the team has received 920 inquiries (a mix of calls, emails and direct contact with outreach staff. J. Wagner said the outreach team has successfully closed out 864 inquiries to date. M. Nee said J. Wagner was able to close out the oldest inquiry recorded for this project. The inquiry was recorded approx. two years ago regarding a tree stump that was recently removed. M. Nee said some inquiries cannot be closed out quickly as the work required to address them is not always immediately possible as it may be tied to work that has not been scheduled yet. J. Wagner and M. Nee explained that each inquiry is recorded and maintained to keep open lines of communication for updates and status checks. J. Wagner said the GLX team is participating and promoting a Fall Food Drive with the Somerville Homeless Coalition. R. Dunn asked if packages could be sent to this office for donation; J. Wagner said yes. T. McCarthy said there are collection boxes located throughout the building for those who want to donate. J. Wagner said some of the GLX team participated in the 5k Detour Run in Somerville on October 6th and the event was a success.

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Next Community Working Group meeting December 3, 2019 at 4:00 – 5:30 p.m., at the GLX Project Office at 200 Inner Belt Rd in Somerville.