

GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT
October 1, 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: October, 2019; 4:00 to 5:30 PM

ATTENDANCE:

CWG Members: Elliott Bradshaw (East Somerville), Jim McGinnis (Union Square), Jim Silva (Medford Ball Square), Joseph Barr (Cambridge), Ryan Dunn (Magoun Sq.), Jim Silva (Medford) Jennifer Dorsen (Ball Square), Dylan Manley (Union Square), Justin Moeling (Gilman Square)

MassDOT/MBTA: Terry McCarthy – MBTA Deputy Program Manager of Stakeholder

GLX Project Team: Martin Nee, Randy Henke

Other Attendees: Tim Dineen (VNA resident), Viola Augustin (City of Somerville), Matt Hartman (Senator Jehlen’s Office), Jeff Wagner (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.

PRESENTATION:

Terry McCarthy opened the meeting by explaining that the Washington Street Bridge will likely remain closed to vehicular traffic in November which will allow GLXC to complete the entire bridge contract by spring of 2020. The previous plan would have opened the bridge underpass to vehicular traffic for the winter (2019/2020) and then closed the roadway again from April 2020 through summer of 2020. The latest plan involves approximately the same number of months for the closure, but the bridge is expected to open to traffic a full five months ahead of the original schedule.

Terry proceeded to summarize outreach activity during September, which included weekly updates to the cities of Somerville, Cambridge, and Medford outlining night work, weekend work, and maintenance of traffic planning. Weekly notifications also include script material for municipal police department to put out reverse 911 “robocalls” to residential areas experiencing potentially disruptive noise impacts. Terry acknowledged that the project is in full-blown construction mode. He highlighted recent night work at Lechmere, Brickbottom, Washington Street Bridge, School Street to

Rogers Foam, Broadway Bridge, and the area north of College Avenue. He outlined extensive neighborhood leafletting efforts as well as door knocking and personal visits to areas hardest hit. Terry also notified the group that the use of aerial drones would be visible in the coming week to provide detailed survey data throughout the entire MBTA right-of-way.

It was announced that the next GLX Project-Wide Public Meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2019, at 6:30 PM, at the East Somerville Community School, at 50 Cross Street in Somerville. The meeting format will be a hybrid incorporating elements of an open house as well as a typical public meeting style presentation. Design drawings of each station will be on display during the informal portion of the meeting showing any changes in design since January of 2019. The open house setting will be followed by a presentation on construction progress as well as six-month to one-year look-ahead describing upcoming milestones and activities.

Terry also mentioned recent GLX participation at Tufts Community Day and an MBTA initiative called "Stand Behind the Yellow Line" which will promote transit safety.

John West, Director of Engineering for GLX Constructors, provided a detailed construction overview. He outlined key construction activities and milestones through the end of 2019 including:

- Relocating the Commuter Rail track to its final position on the eastern side of the alignment in 3 phases:
 - 300' South of College Ave. to northern project limits (Mid to late fall)
 - Washington St. to Cedar (Late fall / early winter)
 - Cedar to north of Ball Square (Winter/Spring 2020)
- Prior to track relocation the project must:
 - Complete drainage work including north of Broadway Bridge at Granville (Dec. 2019 – phase 2)
 - Complete noise wall and retaining wall panel placement (Dec. 2019 or nights following track shift)
- Ongoing work at the Vehicle Maintenance Facility
 - Foundation, underground utilities, retaining wall, and stormwater detention facility
- Ongoing work at Lechmere area/Boston Engine Terminal
 - Steel in place throughout & deck placement underway
 - Work started on Lechmere station

John proceeded to present details of construction at:

- Broadway Bridge
- Washington Street Bridge
- Medford Street Bridge
- School Street Bridge
- Union Square Station

- Brickbottom
- Lechmere Station

John concluded his construction update with a comprehensive overview of noise walls, retaining walls, and drainage operations spanning the entire MBTA right-of-way. A good deal of time was spent responding the CWG members' questions about specific construction methodologies, impacts, and sequencing.

When the presentation concluded, Jim Silva expressed concern about the impacts of night work from Ball Square to the northern project limits at Winthrop Street. Jim stressed that he understands the project has an aggressive schedule and the contractor needs time to get the work done. He is concerned that the project is opting to work at night because there are very limited hours during the day when the track is free due to commuter rail traffic. In Jim's view, the night work is causing undue impact on Medford neighborhoods. He suggested that the project seriously look into suspending commuter rail activity during the day so the contractor could work unrestricted for long stretches of time during the day between the morning and evening rush hours. Right now, his observation is the contractor can't get enough track time during the day to make reasonable progress.

Terry McCarthy acknowledged Jim's concerns and credited him for his solution oriented approach, but he cautioned him that suspending day-time commuter rail service is problematic because many of the outbound trains are "dead-ending" (i.e., returning mostly empty trains in one direction to pick up passengers on the opposite end of the line). Discussion ensued on this topic and Jim suggested that his proposal be given consideration at the MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board level.

Jim McGinness asked if the GLX team could provide an update on the Union Square elevator proposal. Terry explained the elevator proposal for Union Square Station is being handled separately from the project via the private developer proposal adjacent to the station. He agreed that all involved parties (US2, City of Somerville, and GLX) should make their latest plans available at the upcoming GLX public meeting on November 19 so the public can assess the status/progress of the elevator proposal.

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Next Community Working Group meeting October 1, 2019 at GLX Project Office at 200 Inner Belt Rd in Somerville.