

**GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT**  
**September 3, 2019 COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP MEETING – SUMMARY MINUTES**

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

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: September 3, 2019; 8:30 to 10:00 AM

**ATTENDANCE:**

CWG Members: Elliott Bradshaw (East Somerville), Andrew Reker (For City of Cambridge), Jim McGinnis (Union Square), Laurel Ruma (College Ave), Jim Silva (Medford Ball Square), Joseph Barr (Cambridge), Ryan Dunn (Magoun Sq.), Jim Silva (Medford) Jennifer Dorsen (Ball Square)

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

GLX Project Team: Martin Nee, Randy Henke

Other Attendees: Tim Dineen (VNA resident), Brad Rawson (City of Somerville), Melissa Dullea (MBTA Bus Operations), Matt Hartman (Senator Jehlen’s Office).

**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 and touched on the agenda. He also talked about the mechanical failure of a large drill rig on the afternoon of August 29<sup>th</sup> which caused the shutdown of the Lowell Commuter Rail Line during the evening rush. The shutdown was done out of an abundance of caution and did not involve the rig falling onto the tracks as reported by various prominent news outlets. The reason for the shutdown was because the rig was considered unstable in its upright position in close proximity to the tracks. The machine was removed in time for the morning rush.

GLXC was not present at the meeting due to a competing “All Hands” meeting.

Terry went on to explain that the project is still considered to be on-schedule. An announcement to the effect that the project is beginning to see “pressure” on the schedule should not be construed to mean that potential delays are not recoverable. Schedule recovery efforts are underway in certain areas to offset pressure and the project will continue to announce progress.

Weekend commuter rail outages will play a big role in advancing schedule recovery efforts. There are 50 weekend shutdowns planned over the life of the project and the contractor is expected to take advantage of them to speed construction and make up for any lost time in certain areas. Terry also mentioned, the contractor is exposed to major fines if they do not meet ultimate schedule requirements. These fines are high as \$70,000 per day. Jim McGinnis, also mentioned the prime contract for the project was based on a “guaranteed not to exceed” price, meaning if the contractor cannot perform on-time, the agreed upon price for the taxpayer does not necessarily go up. Jim would like see this message stressed more as schedule discussions play out.

Discussion ensued about the possibility of rerouting freight at night and taking advantage of night work to keep the project on-schedule. There was also detailed discussion on the day-to-day work schedule decisions that are made which are not always easy to predict. In order to provide more clarity on what to expect, Jennifer Dorsen stated she would like to see a general chronology of how various components of the project (e.g., stations) will be built without necessarily tying the activities to dates.

The GLX team agreed to work on a chronology of events which people will begin to see in each area.

The discussion turned to train horns at night. Residents claim horn noise has escalated in recent weeks. The project agreed nighttime activity is driving horn noise in certain areas, however, much of this unavoidable and is tied to federal and state safety regulations. Various pockets of construction activity in the vicinity of Broadway Bridge, Richdale Ave, and the area north of College Ave have been driving noise complaints. The GLX team explained that Jeff Wagner has been diligently responding to and mitigating complaints at the door-to-door level. Aggressive door step leafletting has been taking place in these areas.

Terry McCarthy proceeded to present a detailed construction update on PowerPoint. His slides included:

- Commuter and bus traffic routing due to the upcoming demolition of the Lechmere Viaduct in spring of 2020
- Foundation work at Vehicle Maintenance Facility in the Inner Belt Road area.
- Noise and retaining wall outreach from Brickbottom in East Somerville to Burget Avenue in Medford
- A general construction schedule by activities
- A general construction schedule for stations
- Key construction activities through 2019
- Broadway Bridge, Washington Street Bridge, and Medford Street Bridge updates abutment schedule
- School Street Bridge update
- Utility relocation work
- Concrete placement and aerial steel near the future Lechmere Station
- The GLX Community Connections Team donation of more than \$1,000 worth of school supplies to Medford Family Network

Melissa Dullea followed Terry's update with a comprehensive overview of the Better Bus Project as it affects Somerville, Cambridge, and Medford. Near-term changes have affected 29 routes, including several in the GLX affected area. These include bus numbers 89, 90, and 95. Another round of changes will begin this winter to improve efficiencies the vast numbers of riders. A major goal of the program is to create shorter waiting and trip times by eliminating very low-use stops.

Discussion ensued as the details of each route but the group was enthusiastic about the prospects of the Better Bus Project as it relates to local neighborhoods.

Brad Rawson provided an update on the City of Somerville initiative to be the "first in the region" to have bi-directional, 24/7 bus lanes from Main Street to McGrath Highway serving previously underserved, environmental justice populations. Traffic signals have been coordinated carefully to promote efficiency.

Jim McGinnis mentioned the GLX project had good information on the website regarding construction updates. He felt it was an excellent resource for residents trying to find out what is going on and it is the right level of detail for impacted neighborhoods.

The next GLX General Public Meeting will be in November. Details to follow.

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