

**GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT  
JANUARY 8, 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: January 8, 2019; 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

**ATTENDANCE:**

CWG Members: Jason Alves (East Cambridge Business Association), Joseph Barr (City of Cambridge), Elliot Bradshaw (Brickbottom), Jennifer Dorsen (Somerville Ball Square), Jim McGinnis (Union Square), Dylan Manley (East Somerville), Brad Rawson (City of Somerville), Andrew Reker (City of Cambridge/Lechmere), Laurel Ruma (College Ave), Jim Silva (Medford Ball Square)

MassDOT/MBTA: Melissa Dullea – MBTA Senior Director of Service Planning, Terry McCarthy – MBTA Deputy Program Manager of Stakeholder Engagement

GLX Constructors (GLXC): Hannah Brockhaus, Jeff Wagner, John West

GLX Project Team: Randy Henke, Martin Nee, Joe Sgroi

Other Attendees: Viola Augustin (City of Somerville), Todd Blake (City of Medford), Tim Dineen (VNA resident), Pat Jehlen (State Senator), Tim McGivern (City of Medford), Alan Moore (Friends of the Community Path), Mark Niedergang (Somerville Board of Aldermen), Lynn Weissman (Friends of the Community Path)

**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, MBTA GLX Deputy Program Manager for Stakeholder Engagement, gave introductions for the meeting and went over the following:

- Roll call - followed-up on the suggestion of a member roll call from last meeting saying that the sign-in sheets provided would serve as the attendance for the meeting and for members to make sure to sign in.
- Public art at stations – Terry said that Margie Lackner is the person at the MBTA who is working with the artists and art program for GLX and she will be invited to a future meeting when she is available. He also noted that there is a requirement that the art be an element of the station and not a separate piece.

## Green Line Extension Project

- GLT Program – the Green Line Transformation program is looking at the Green Line in its entirety (except for GLX) for state of good repair and needed upgrades, but will not have a report until later in the year (April/May) – which GLX will review.
- January 30, 2019 Public Meeting
  - The GLX team is looking to have a meeting the week before the public meeting to review documents that will be presented with the GLX CWG.
  - The GLX CWG submitted a packet of general GLX questions that would be of interest to the community (distributed at meeting and attached); it is the GLX team's intent to have answers for these questions for the public meeting.
  - It was noted that there would be a screen at the meeting with a presentation on loop that would give the public a general idea of what the GLX project was about.

John West the Project Manager for GLX Constructors (GLXC) gave a construction update including:

- Safety (slide 5)
- Demolition update (slides 6-8)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to start late June following utility isolation
  - Homans Building demolition trending for Feb/March and could happen before 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave
  - Ball Square is trending for a March/April demolition
- Broadway Bridge closure update (slide 9) - target is March 2019 for 12-month closure
- Washington Street Bridge update (slide 10) – will start to see construction activity at 50 Tufts St.
- MPM (slide 11) – has excavation equipment, runs along tracks, and is used to transport materials
- Drainage Work at Rogers Foam (slide 12)
  - 60-inch concrete pipe
  - finding a lot of hard rock to get through
- Walls (slides 13-14)
- Future Vehicle Maintenance Facility (slide 15) – at the site currently materials are being hauled out while others are being stockpiled.
- Overview of what work was occurring across GLX corridor including:
  - Union Square (slide 16) – no activity by developer yet so trying to get work done before they begin in the summer.
  - Haul road shown on slide 17 will help with building noise wall.
  - These haul roads (slide 19) will be limited to 9 mph so they won't kick up too much dust.
  - The Project continues to meet with the High School project to coordinate (slide 20).
  - Existing control wall (slide 21) is in good shape and will remain with a shoring system installed.
  - Working with Roger's Foam on access and coordination (slide 22).
- GLX Project Community Connection Team (slides 28-29) – looking to keep working with the groups they worked with over holidays and expand.

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION/ISSUES:

### Public Meeting

## Green Line Extension Project

It was asked if plans/documents that will be shown at public meeting could be shared with members any sooner than 1-1.5 weeks in advance. The GLX team said they are still working on putting together the information and will work on providing the group with a preview before the public meeting.

There was a question about how information is being released to public and if the team is waiting until the designs are at 100%. The GLX team said that even though a design is at preconstruction it doesn't mean changes won't happen, they would just be more technical in nature. It was clarified that the project isn't planning any design meetings where it will solicit changes.

It was asked what design elements might be more amendable. The GLX team said that the fundamentals are relatively set and for the most part, refinements are being made; the team did not want to send the message that substantial changes could still be made. It was also noted by the team that years of community input on design went into the performance specifications inherent in the current design which the contractor must adhere to.

With regard to CWG design questions, it would be helpful to have the answers shown on plans rather than in written or verbal format. The GLX team said that this was a good suggestion.

### Demolitions

It was asked if the demolition at Ball Square will take place before the bridge closure. It was noted that Harvard St. has been closed to truck traffic so having the Broadway Bridge open during the demolition could be helpful. The GLX team said it would happen before the closure.

### Bridge Closures

There was a question about changing steel costs with the Chinese tariffs and members wondered if that was a concern effecting the overall cost of the project. The GL team said that the steel for the project was actually bought in one of the earlier phases of the project. It was also noted that the project's FTA funding required GLX to buy U.S. steel. A member noted that GLXC has a fixed-price contract so they would have to absorb any unusually high cost anyway.

It was asked how the budget was going. The GLX team said that it was on track and that any budget related items would be covered at the MBTA Fiscal & Management Control Board (FMCB) level. A member mentioned that the FCMB meetings are streamed live on the MBTA site.

It was asked if work would be going to 24/7 soon. The GLX team said they are targeting overnight work to begin as winter winds down and spring breaks.

### Walls

It was inquired what material would be used for the wall in slide 13. The GLX team said it was a metal sound wall.

There was a question as to what material would be used for the barrier between the Commuter Rail and the Green Line. The GLX team said it would likely be a chain link fence – the requirement is that there be a separation barrier.

## Green Line Extension Project

It was asked if any transparent or plexi-glass walls were still part of the project. The GLX team said that there were no longer any transparent/plexi-glass sound walls.

There was an inquiry as to whether the noise walls would all be metal or different materials. The GLX team said some would be metal others would be concrete depending on the needs of that particular section of the corridor; the team is working through this level of design now.

An example of what the walls would look like was asked for. The GLX team said they could show samples at the next meeting. It was then suggested that an example be shown at the public meeting. It was also suggested that cross sections of the walls could be helpful to show the thickness of the walls.

It was asked what is determining if wall is metal or concrete. The GLX team said that using what is most effective for that area of the corridor is the first criteria, but also looking at noise studies and cost functionality.

There was a concern about what the walls would look like.

There was a question as to whether concrete walls would have greater noise reduction capabilities than steel. The GLX team said that concrete is not necessarily more effective than steel and material selection would be dependent on multiple factors including cost.

It was asked if sample materials for the walls could be made available at the public meeting. The GLX team said they may have pictures available but not samples.

### Construction

It was asked if Broadway Bridge and bridges in general were being constructed with future-proofing so they could be expanded further in the future (for another track for example). The GLX team responded that they are designed to handle the new Green Line track but further expansion is not on the horizon and would require substantial land takings. The City of Somerville commented that they are future-proofed in regards to storm drainage capacity.

It was asked if the asbestos remediation at the Ball Square buildings had been completed. The GLX team said it had.

A member noted that people in the community have been asking if materials could be salvaged for art projects from the Ball Square buildings such as the lanes from the bowling alley. The GLX team said there was already a request for the signs and that they can inquire further as to other materials, but a lot of the stuff is in poor shape inside and extracting it would interfere with the existing contract.

It was asked if the design would preclude the future Green Line Extension into Medford and Route 16. The GLX team said it does not preclude that extension.

It was asked if all the notices had been sent out for the preconstruction surveys. The GLX team said they had.

A member wanted to know the reason the surveyors had been out during past week staking. The GLX team explained they were probably staking for clearing and excavation for wall

## Green Line Extension Project

construction. It was noted that the wall (near College Ave) is one of the first to be built because of its length so it will require a longer duration of work.

It was asked when work would start on this wall. The GLX team said it would be within 30 days.

The group wanted to know if there would be drilling for the sound wall panels. The GLX team said that retaining walls and sound walls will require drilling. It was clarified that major drilling would not take place overnight but would take place on weekends. It was clarified that the wall work involved pile drilling and not pile driving. It was stated that sound wall work should begin in June 2019.

A member asked about the fence coming down from Driscoll Electric to Granville Avenue and if a wall would be put in place in the final state. The GLX team said that once the drainage is in place a wall will be put in.

There was a question as to whether there would be drainage work in the spring. The GLX team said they have 2 crews working on drainage and a line would be installed beneath the Broadway Bridge after demolition.

A member asked for more communication to the Burget Avenue neighborhood about work hours and weekend work before construction starts on the wall.

It was asked what the final condition of walls at the Granville properties would be – where does it begin and end and further details. The GLX team said they can make the information available.

It was inquired where the wall would begin or end for Granville to Harvard and a member was looking for more information on walls especially around the commercial properties like Driscoll Electric (Newburn Avenue). The GLX team said they could get the member more information.

It was asked to have information about the walls at the public meeting.

The City of Medford wanted to make sure what is happening in the Granville area and wanted a description during the meeting of the wall and fences. The GLX Team said they could take that question offline and provide information after the meeting.

The City of Medford commented that the City is in support of “flex refinements” within the schedule and budget of the project that benefit the community such as trees and street planning (and other elements listed in the questions the CWG submitted). The City of Medford want them to be addressed appropriately with the community. They want to make sure MBTA is taking a proactive approach with community to refine these things. GLX officials said they would respond but made no commitments.

There was an inquiry about Union Square wall activity and whether there was any sense for the timing of this work. The GLX team said there are 3 walls in Union Square and they are currently working on utility locations. On the Union Square branch there is a wall behind the junk dealer, the Target wall, and one closure to Union Square at Community Alternatives.

It was stated that the hope for the Brickbottom residents is that the project won't be working at wall location by next winter because that is their snow removal path. The GLX team said they will get Brickbottom a more detailed construction update.

It was commented that there is a sensitivity within the community in regards to wall issues and it would be helpful for project to communicate to neighborhood images, schedules, materials, etc. at the public meeting and through leafleting the Brickbottom and Burget Ave neighborhoods. Having 60 day notice would be best.

### Buses

Melissa Dullea, the MBTA Senior Director of Service Planning, noted that the 80 and 89 buses currently have a little extra slack/cushion in their schedule because they anticipated the bridge closure would be sooner.

It was suggested that there be announcements on the 80 and 89 busses about 2 weeks in advance of the detour change. Also having some sort of notification at the terminus (Lechmere) talking about the changes a few weeks in advance. The MBTA said they will often post flyers in the buses about the schedule changes, but handing out leaflets has gotten too messy in the past. The MBTA will have T alerts and information on the website and also updated paper schedule cards, and issuing press releases.

It was suggested that the MBTA use the LED display on the buses to make the announcement of the change. The MBTA said they would check in on that with the appropriate department.

It was asked if the revised bus schedules are up on the MBTA site already. The MBTA said they will wait until closer to the detour for when they will go up on the regular schedule site but can work to get up on the GLX site in advance.

Member noted that they hope the cities can help with getting the schedule changes out on their websites as well. It was noted that there was a concern by parents about the buses at school closing times. The MBTA said that from now through March the schedule is already set but they are looking at what options are for the Spring schedule (March – June)

It was noted by a member that Arlington Catholic High School is at the end of the 80 route in Arlington center and it was requested that the project should reach out to let know about the upcoming changes.

The City of Somerville noted that part of the City's strategy that the mayor announced the previous night has been to self-finance dedicated bus lanes for the MBTA bus routes 89 and 101 from Main Street to McGrath where the buses will be able to override signals.

The City of Somerville was asked about the Somerville shuttle service. The City said that they are reviewing submittals and will begin the contracting phase soon. The shuttles will be for Ball Square and East Somerville and will all be ADA compliant. The shuttle contractor is also to provide ridership data so changes can be made where necessary.

It was suggested that the MBTA reconsider a flyer for the buses about the changes or maybe a small business card with the information. It was also suggested that the MBTA's outreach for the detour include information about the Somerville shuttle. It was also suggested a QR code could be helpful in lieu of a flyer if the MBTA wanted to eliminate paper.

## Green Line Extension Project

It was asked if the Somerville shuttle schedule would mimic the same hours of operation as the MBTA. The City of Somerville answered that it would run 7AM-7PM only on weekdays and that currently it was limited to a \$400,000 budget.

A member commented that the Somerville mayor had emphasized how important it is to take care of vulnerable populations, so it was asked by the member that everyone involved could do all they can to publicize the shuttle.

It was asked what discussion is going on with businesses along the detoured bus routes about them helping to publicize the changes. The City of Somerville said they have been doing business outreach in Ball Square and plan to do more near Washington Street. They are discussing how trucking and deliveries can use the best routes during the closure. The GLX team said as they get closure to bridge closure, they will be reaching out more to businesses.

It was asked if the Broadway Bridge closure was on track for the end of March. The GLX team said March is the target, but snow is a big consideration.

It was commented that people are concerned with making sure stations have passenger drop-off areas for rideshares and such so that they are not blocking driveways and pedestrian traffic around the station especially Ball Square. The City of Somerville commented that they will be trying to up their enforcement efforts by police and they are looking at Ball Square and what improvements can be made by the city.

It was commented that Ball Square needs collaboration between the two cities on coordinating issues.

The City of Medford commented about College Avenue and is considering the practical elements of where to put the crosswalk, etc., to maintain a functional intersection.

Next meeting February 5, 2019 at GLX Project Office at 200 Inner Belt Rd in Somerville.