

**MBTA Green Line Extension (GLX) Project
Community Working Group (CWG) Meeting Minutes
January 5, 2021
8:30 to 10:00 AM Via Webinar**

*This meeting is the 38th consecutive, monthly GLX Community Working Group meeting.

ATTENDEES:

CWG Members (in alphabetical order):

Viola Augustin (Somerville)
Joseph Barr (City of Cambridge)
Elliot Bradshaw (Brickbottom)
Rocco Dirico (Tufts University)
Jim McGinnis (Union Square)
Andrew Reker (City of Cambridge)
Laurel Ruma (Medford – College Ave)
Jim Silva (Medford - Ball Square)

MassDOT/MBTA:

Melissa Dullea (Senior Director MBTA Service and Planning)
Terry McCarthy (MBTA Deputy Program Manager of Stakeholder Engagement)
John Weston (HMMH)

GLX Project Team (in alphabetical order):

Martin Nee (GLX-MBTA)
Erin Reed (GLXC)
Amanda Smith (GLX-MBTA)
Jeff Wagner (GLXC)

Other Guests:

Tim Dineen (VNA Resident)
Matt Hartman (Senator Jehlen's Office)
Andres Sevtsuk (Resident)
Mike Torres (Resident)

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 welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced John Weston who will make a presentation about noise mitigation and Jeff Wagner will provide a construction update. T. McCarthy provided a safety briefing to bring extra warm clothes in the car just in case. T. McCarthy shared the 2021 meeting calendar and so far, the CWG meetings will remain virtual through to July 2021.

T. McCarthy said the GLX project has crossed into a new phase where much of the heavy excavation work will slowly begin to taper off toward the middle of 2021.

Noise Mitigation Update from John Weston:

John has been involved in the project for many years and dates back to the early planning stages. He is familiar with where the project began and the process that brought us to today. There is a process in place to evaluate noise mitigation and ensure it meets pre-determined specifications when all of the work is complete. The noise mitigation criterion is established by the Environmental Assessment for GLX. A final noise/vibration analysis will be done after GLX service starts to confirm that the specified noise mitigation criterion in the Environmental Assessment has been met by the project.

Noise monitoring zones to gauge background readings were identified prior to construction. Additional zones were selected at that time in areas where there are no walls being proposed to ensure the original evaluation was correct. There are 35 monitoring zones along the corridor that will be reanalyzed in a single/final noise analysis when the project is completed. The monitoring will focus on noise impacts from the commuter rail and the Green Line, when in operation.

The noise scale used to measure impacts are known as “Day Night Noise Levels” or LDn for short. These values provide an average over an entire 24-hour day with 10 decibels added during the nighttime to account for increased sensitivity to noise overnight/during sleep. Each noise wall is designed to provide a specific level of noise reduction, measured in decibels.

J. Wagner asked how long noise monitoring systems are set up in each location in the final noise analysis. J. Weston said his team will set up the equipment for 24-48 hours.

Jim Silva asked how locations are selected and noted the topography may have changed in some areas since the start of the project. J. Weston said the locations are determined by focusing on the areas served by each noise wall and then by identifying locations where there is a community in which the noise characteristic was close to the mitigation threshold. J. Weston said the GLXC (contractor) reproduced the original measurements in 2018 and calculations were made in 2019 so any significant topographical changes affecting background noise would have been captured by their reassessment. The GLXC reassessment did not note the need for any additional mitigations that were not identified in the original 2011/2012 data. J. Silva said there is a building on Boston Avenue that has been demolished so it is no longer acting as a noise barrier. He requested that it be looked into in the final assessment. T. McCarthy mentioned that any new apartment buildings would have been designed to absorb noise.

Construction Update from Jeff Wagner:

- Safety Topic: When there is a snowstorm, the snow removal process is more complicated and takes more time. The crews worked as fast and as diligently as possible to prepare for and respond to the recent snowstorm.

- Updates provided in December Virtual Public Meeting: John Dalton did a great job providing a construction update at the public meeting last month and the following is a summary of recent project updates:
 - Last deck poured on December 4, 2020 behind Brickbottom Condominiums
 - New technology, TyBot, was demonstrated to tie rebar and remove the need for hand-tying (time and cost savings; approx. 30% cost saving)
 - Ballast on Viaduct
 - Track placement
 - Station Construction:
 - Union Square Station:
 - Wall work and OCS post installation
 - Lechmere Station:
 - Headhouses and preparing to put up canopy steel
 - East Somerville Station:
 - OCS pole work and inside of utility building
 - Additional wall work and other work association with community path
 - Gilman Square Station:
 - Platform recently poured and headhouse work
 - Magoun Square Station:
 - Framing the foundation and continued utility work
 - Ball Square Station:
 - First concrete pour at station
 - Medford/Tufts Station:
 - Continued headhouse work
 - Bridge work:
 - Washington Street:
 - Sidewalks in progress
 - Medford Street & School Street:
 - Continued work on piers and abutments
 - Lowell Street:
 - Creating more space underneath for Green Line to pass through
 - Cedar Street:
 - Safety nooks created in the event of an emergency along the tracks

Outreach Updates:

- 34 hotline contacts (via phone and email) in December
- 30 actions closed out
- 1676 contacts do date through hotline, email, or direct contact with outreach staff
- Community Connection Team collected presents for the MBTA Fill-A-Bus Program and the Medford Family Network; more than \$600 raised
- Holding a Blood Drive in January at Inner Belt Road Offices

Q&A:

- J. Silva expressed thanks for Jeff's weekly construction updates to over 800 residents to help navigate the area

- Mike Torres (Bluebird Graphic Solutions): Will signage projects in 2021 be broken out into separate packages through separate bids? T. McCarthy said the MBTA has signage and wayfinding as part of the GLX Project and there is art as part of the GLX Project as well. There may be follow-on projects but have been put on hold temporarily as a result of COVID-19 budget constraints. A second contract is not expected at this time. M. Torres asked when his group should check back about this; T. McCarthy said the MBTA does public bidding and signage may be grouped into other contracts but can provide him some additional guidance for finding the advertising bids through the MBTA portal/site. J. Wagner provided another point of contact with the GLXC team about upcoming bids and outreach to local small businesses.
- Elliott Bradshaw asked for a GLX Art Project Update. T. McCarthy said he will get an update from the team at MBTA and provide an update to the CWG.
- Laurel Ruma asked if the sound wall at Medford/Tufts only the one thin wall as it is currently constructed. J. Weston said that current wall is the final construction at that location. The panel itself has material within it to provide additional sound absorption and the panel selected exceeded the specs put out by the MBTA. T. McCarthy said the I-beam is so large because it has to withstand increased wind. L. Ruma said the ugly side is facing the neighbors; the smooth wall faces the tracks. She asked if there is potential to fill this area in to protect from the sharp edges of the I-beams. T. McCarthy said that is an issue could be addressed with fencing and would be happy to discuss this further on a property-by-property basis. L. Ruma asked if there has been regular reading along the tracks and is the data available? Is there mitigation now that walls are in place? J. Weston said a program is not yet in place as the walls are not complete and another noise source will be added as the Green Line Trains. The team will go out and take final measurements of the post construction noise levels and compare them to the levels prior the start of the project.
- Andres Sevtsuk asked if there will be an audio announcing system and is there a plan in place to adjust volume for neighboring homes? T. McCarthy said the announcements are required under the ADA and there is a certain decibel required on each platform. If the volume is excessive, the MBTA can review and assess the volumes post construction. J. Wagner asked if the speakers and equipment installed can be more direct and prevent sound spill from the platform; T. McCarthy confirmed that it can within the ADA specifications. A. Sevtsuk asked if there is a spec for this feature to understand the decibels and how to address as needed; T. McCarthy said they will research the spec and provide them to the CWG.

T. McCarthy thanked everyone for attending and for their continued input and feedback. The meeting ended at 9:43 AM.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR February 2, 2021, 4:00 to 5:30 AM via Video Conference

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