

**GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT
FEBRUARY 27, 2018 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: February 27, 2018; 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

ATTENDANCE:

CWG Members: Jason Alves (East Cambridge Business Association), Michaela Bogosh (Magoun Square), Frederick Dello Russo, Jr. (Medford City Council), Ryan Dunn (Magoun Square), Mark Johnson (DivcoWest), Jim McGinnis (Union Square), Justin Moeling (Gilman Square), Polly Pook (Brickbottom/East Somerville), Brad Rawson (City of Somerville), Laurel Ruma (College Ave), Jim Silva (Medford Ball Square), Tegin Teich (City of Cambridge)

MassDOT/MBTA: John Dalton – MBTA GLX Program Manager, Terry McCarthy – MBTA Deputy Program Manager of Stakeholder Engagement, Jeff Sarin – MBTA Project Manager, Tamiaka Thibodeaux – MBTA Division Chief Light Rail Operations, Kimberly Woollard – MBTA Deputy Director Light Rail Vehicle Maintenance and Engineering

GLX Constructors: Hannah Brockhaus, Ashley Camp, Clyde Joseph, John West

GLX Project Team: Randy Henke, Neil Kelly, Martin Nee, Joe Sgroi, Steve Taylor

Other Attendees: Elliot Bradshaw (Brickbottom), Rocco DiRico (Tufts University), Amy Eastment (Brickbottom), Tom Gibbons (AA MacPherson), Matt Hartman (Office of Sen. Jehlen), Alan Moore (Friends of the Community Path), Ellin Reisner (STEP), Jackie Rosseti (City of Somerville), Wes Turner (BU Student), John Wendellan (BU Student)

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.

INTRODUCTION/TOUR

The GLX Team began the meeting by taking the CWG members and others in attendance on a tour of the GLX Project offices of the GLX Program Management Team and GLX Constructors.

PRESENTATION:

Tamiaka Thibodeaux, MBTA Division Chief for Light Rail Operations, and Kimberly Woollard, MBTA Deputy Director for Light Rail Vehicle Maintenance and Engineering, gave a presentation

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about typical Green Line daily operations, vehicle and track maintenance, overnight vehicle storage and about the new Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF) being built as part of GLX.

Clyde Joseph, the Project Executive for GLX Constructors, gave an update about the GLX Constructors team current and upcoming project operations including soil borings, tree clearing, pest control and pre-construction surveys. Also presented were some initial concept renderings of Gilman Square Station that were based on the GLX Constructors proposal (so the additive options were not included).

MBTA GLX Deputy Program Manager Terry McCarthy presented the different public outreach and social media strategies the GLX Team would be using during the project.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION/ISSUES:

MBTA Operations

In response to an inquiry at a previous CWG meeting, MBTA Operations discussed that the MBTA does not store vehicles after non-revenue hours on the main line. All trains are stored (as will also be for GLX) in a yard for both maintenance and security reasons; the only time trains would be left on the main line during non-revenue hours would be during wintertime when tracks or catenary wires need to be cleared – but someone would need to stay with vehicle at all times.

MBTA Operations was asked by a member about what start of service would look like for GLX at the College Ave and Union Square ends of the line. MBTA said that set schedules have not been determined at this time and would be worked out further along the project timeline (closer to the end of construction). When asked about when Lechmere starts service currently, the MBTA responded that in response to customer demand they have a first train that leaves at 4:50 AM, but Lechmere has a yard so trains are already at this location before start of service; this would be different than College Ave or Union which would not have storage yards.

Because the MBTA could not yet say how early trains would leave the yard to travel to College Ave and Union Square stations before morning service, it was requested by a member that the MBTA follow up when that schedule is determined.

A member asked if there were operations at the VMF yard that would generate noise. MBTA Operations stated that their trains run 24 hours/day so you would always here the air releasing from them; it was noted that the newer vehicles do not run as much air as older vehicles so they are quieter. Other noises/activity during non-revenue service (approximately 1 AM-4:30 AM) noted by MBTA: vehicle maintenance trains leaving yard, grinding associated with maintenance/fixing of rail, cleaning crews at stations, and test trains after any maintenance work on track.

A member followed up on this discussion asking if there would be an expected “grace period” where the new GLX wouldn’t expect to need maintenance. The MBTA said they could not guarantee a period where maintenance issues would not arise even on a new system, but if there are any major maintenance issues MBTA operations will inform the community.

A member inquired if there was anywhere on the GLX that one would expect the loud squealing from the vehicles like what happens out near the yard at the end of the B branch of the Green Line. MBTA answered the B branch yard is an older yard in a tighter area than would be the

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new VMF yard and that lubricators have been installed on older cars and the new cars will already have them which will decrease the squealing.

In response to a member question about maintenance the MBTA clarified that vehicle maintenance would occur at the VMF but track, signal and wire/catenary maintenance would still need to occur along the main line.

It was also noted that most maintenance of vehicles occurs inside the facility and not in the yard, that the VMF would run 24 hours/day, and that the new VMF would have a wheel truing machine which would prevent the need for vehicles in need of wheel maintenance needing to travel out to Newton (disrupting service in the process). The MBTA said that truing machines help prevent derailments, extend the service of the vehicles and are not very loud.

MBTA operations noted that GLX will not just have the new Type 9 cars (which are being procured as part of GLX Project) but would include the older Type 7 and 8 cars as well (though the hope is that these will eventually be able to be phased out as more new cars are procured).

A member asked how many vehicles the new VMF would be expecting to hold. The GLX Team responded that it would have storage room for 40 active cars (ones that would run during revenue service) with additional room for 20 cars for maintenance.

It was asked if there was opportunity to use the Government Center loop during planning service for GLX for turnarounds to prevent delays of service. MBTA said that the Government Center loop was only for single car trains due to the space constraints (which couldn't be expanded) but that the crossovers at North Station could be used for GLX service.

A member inquired if the GLX part of the Green Line would have the Positive Train Control (PTC) safety system used to prevent train collisions. MBTA responded that PTC on the GLX is going forward but would be a parallel effort separate from the GLX project or the current Commuter Rail PTC program.

Construction

One member stated that he was already hearing concerns from neighbors and aldermen about the impact of the amount of construction that will be happening in Gilman Square. The GLX Constructors said that they had been discussing a haul route with the high school that could be used to decrease construction traffic on the streets. The City of Somerville also commented that they have proposed a staff increase to help support construction operations and the impacts on the community.

It was asked if any new construction fences would be going up for work anticipated in the near term. GLX Constructors said there would be some control fences and guard fences between the work zone and Commuter Rail to provide buffer. It is the contractor's responsibility to make sure the sites are secure and safe so they will be going through to make sure all fences are secure and functional.

Asked about tree removal and site clearing beyond what was needed for survey work, GLX Constructors said that clearing work across the GLX corridor would begin at the end of March. The current plan is to work along the east side of the corridor, but eventually both sides will be done. They said they would be working with an arborist and that if any private trees needed to be trimmed back that they would discuss with the residents.

GLX Constructors noted that they are discussing noise mitigation with the GLX cities and plan to design their noise mitigation plan around the city noise ordinances.

A discussion was had about how residents would soon be notified about pre-construction surveys for homes (inside and out) and properties adjacent to the corridor (focusing at first along the east side of corridor) to document conditions in the event that any damage should occur during construction. It was asked that the CWG talk to their neighbors to let them know the importance of these surveys should future construction damage occur.

Asked if the pre-construction survey info would be shared, the GLX team said that the information would not be shared and would not be public information.

It was questioned what construction activity would present the most risk to property. The GLX team said that pile driving probably presented the most risk but that there was not a lot of this activity anticipated for this project.

A member asked if there was a plan yet for the expansion of the Broadway Bridge to gauge the impact on neighbors. GLX Constructors said that the plan and staging of the construction was currently being worked on and was not finalized.

A member inquired if trees would be replaced if they were removed from a private property. The GLX team responded that the goal was to not remove trees from private properties (just trim them back) but if needed a discussion would have been had with the property owner on how that removal was going to be mitigated. The member had a specific property in mind that had recently changed owners which the GLX team said they would follow-up with him.

It was asked if a new noise baseline study was going to be performed. GLX Constructors said they would be doing new studies area by area as needed for construction for mitigation. A request was made by members that the GLX team share the results.

The City of Somerville inquired when the pre-construction surveys would be starting and if the city could assist with getting information out to residents using the city communication resources. The GLX team said that the surveys were planned to occur within the next 2-3 weeks and they would coordinate with the City of Somerville.

It was asked what the timeline was for design deliverables being shared with the public specifically the stations. Though early packages would be released in a couple of months, designs on stations and the Community Path would be maybe late in the year or early next year.

A member inquired if there were any preliminary conceptual plans for the Community Path available. The GLX team said that there was a very preliminary conceptual plan in the GLX Constructors proposal that is being made available to CWG members (and to be posted online).

Asked why there was no public comment on the additive options specifically the Community Path, the GLX team explained that the additive option to expand the Community Path did not give any design direction or specifications that could have been commented on. It was up to the contractor to devise a design plan. As GLX Constructors advances their design that design can be shared.

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In answering a member question about which side of the line they would begin their work, GLX Constructors stated they plan to work across the corridor at multiple locations simultaneously with the exception of the viaduct which would be a little further down the road.

Asked about the replacement of a temporary wall in the College Ave area that was recently put in as part of the early construction works, the GLX team said that wall was the focus of some of their earlier construction to be planned.

It was inquired if it was expected that revenue service would begin over the entire GLX at the same time or if there would be early service to any of the stations. The GLX team said that the contract allows for one branch to open 60 days prior to the other branch but does not specify which branch is to open first and would be up to the contractor. GLX Constructors said it is their intention to do both at the same time because it makes better sense for planning purposes.

Public Outreach

A member asked if the GLX project would have its own dedicated social media (Twitter, Instagram etc.). The GLX team responded that they would be using the MassDOT accounts and not GLX specific accounts.

A member inquired if the GLX email blast notices could be targeted to neighborhoods specifically. The GLX team said that the way the account was set was with a global database that does not allow for specific neighborhood targeting but discussed working with City of Somerville's communications to target neighborhoods if necessary about specific neighborhood construction.

Asked about the plan for contacting residents about the pre-construction surveys, GLX constructors said they would contact by phone or door hangers. The GLX team also plans to get the information out in advance using other social media and communications methods.

A member made a request that the GLX website have static links so that the links would not be broken if provided on other sites.

The GLX team also provided a draft Q & A soliciting feedback from the CWG members.

CWG members reported that they had created a Google Group to discuss issues between meetings and were setting up individual Facebook pages for their neighborhoods.

A suggestion from one of the members was to target people on the current bus routes along the GLX service area with information and flyers (in both English and Spanish).

Next meeting tentatively March 27 at GLX Project Office at 200 Inner Belt Rd in Somerville.