

**GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT
SEPTEMBER 4, 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: September 4, 2018; 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

ATTENDANCE:

CWG Members: Elliot Bradshaw (Brickbottom), Frederick Dello Russo, Jr. (Medford City Council), Jennifer Dorsen (Somerville Ball Square), Jim McGinnis (Union Square), Laurel Ruma (College Ave), Jim Silva (Medford Ball Square)

MassDOT/MBTA: John Dalton – MBTA GLX Program Manager, Terry McCarthy – MBTA Deputy Program Manager of Stakeholder Engagement, Andrew Smith – MBTA Service Planning, Melissa Dullea, MBTA Service Planning.

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

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

Other Attendees: Todd Blake (City of Medford), Erica Mace (City of Somerville), Mark Niedergang (Somerville Board of Aldermen), Andrew Reker (City of Cambridge)

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 a GLX update:

- Nighttime work begins tonight, September 4, and daytime and weekend shifts will be increasing. Currently working every weekend piggybacking on an outage on weekends for another MBTA project (PTC) on the Lowell Line.
- The Broadway Bridge closure has now been moved to early 2019.
- There is a Somerville Chamber of Commerce outreach event upcoming at the Holiday Inn in Somerville where GLX will be in attendance to discuss GLX.
- To facilitate work on the Lowell Line, freight traffic has been moved to the Haverhill Line (about 6 freight trains a week) and GLX has done outreach to cities and towns along the Haverhill Line to make them aware of increased traffic at night.

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- GLX team will be doing further outreach in early October to business owners in Ball Square and Magoun Square about closures.

Terry McCarthy also gave a presentation on what work needs to be done to expand the Broadway Bridge and why it could not be completed using the Fast 14 method. The Fast 14 method used for bridges by MassDOT in the past, replaces only the top decks of an existing bridge with only minor repair to the concrete work. For Broadway, essentially all of the bridge infrastructure needs to be replaced (structural foundations, under-track drainage, extensive support-of-excavation, etc.) essentially creating a whole new bridge. The stages were shown over an 8-step process (see presentation).

Terry McCarthy shared an issue that was resolved about complaints from Joy Street neighbors about odor from newly delivered railroad ties. This was from the creosote on the railroad ties that had been delivered to the area. The issue was resolved by removing them to a more remote yard.

John West, the Project Manager for GLX Constructors (GLXC), gave a project design and construction update covering:

- Overview of how the Commuter Rail track shift would occur to allow for the Green Line tracks to be built (see presentation).
- The demolition of the Medford Street Bridge utility bridge.
- Tree clearing that was done on west side of the alignment has been completed.
- Homans Building demolition in Gilman Sq. to occur September/October 2018 (see presentation for updates).

Terry McCarthy then gave an update on ongoing outreach including:

- Door to door outreach
- Joining Somerville tabling events in Ball Square and Magoun Square in August to talk about Broadway Bridge closure.
- Attending Somerville Hoyt Sullivan Playground Opening in August.

Marty Nee, Outreach Coordinator for the GLX team, gave an overview of the recent changes to the MassDOT GLX website. The switch to the new site occurred last Thursday and an interim page will be up for a week at the old site notifying of the change, and afterward it will just automatically redirect from the old site to the new site. Historical documents related to the project have been removed for space and now only relevant historical documents related to the current GLX project are on the site.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION/ISSUES:

Broadway Bridge

A member asked if the bridge was being reduced at all lane wise. The GLX team said that the traffic lanes, sidewalks and bike lanes were not being reduced but the parking lane was being eliminated on the bridge span.

It was inquired if the Broadway Bridge sidewalk would remain the same width or get wider. The team said that the sidewalk would meet ADA standards so if the sidewalk currently does not meet ADA then it would be expanded.

Communication of project work/Tree Cutting

There was frustration expressed by member about the recent tree cutting that was done along the corridor that had previously been projected to be scheduled for 2019 and only short notice was given. The GLX team said the decision was made to cut trees in the corridor earlier than anticipated because trees were falling on Positive Train Control (PTC) wires that had been installed in the corridor and cutting back the trees would better protect them from damage. The project decided this was the best opportunity to have access.

It was suggested that the GLX team get the news of these changes to the members as soon as possible so they could then share what was happening with neighbors. The team acknowledged that short notice changes can be frustrating. But they are getting the info out to the community as soon as decisions are made. It was acknowledged that changes like this should be anticipated as the project continues to take advantage of circumstances to best deliver the project on time and on budget.

A member suggested having a mid-month 30-minute conference call with the members just to keep them informed of any new changes. Another member said that might be a hard commitment for some members to make and that more targeted updates from the project to group members about work in certain neighborhoods would be more helpful.

Business Outreach

It was suggested by a member that the GLX team's outreach to business affected by road/bridge closures should include businesses along Main Street in Medford.

Track Shift

It was asked if any erosion control was being implemented by GLXC. GLXC said it was being done across the line with hydroseeding spray that stabilizes the slopes.

A question was raised as to where the track shift would start. GLXC said the initial relocation would start at Lowell.

It was inquired if the track relocation would require any rail grinding work. GLXC said the initial phase would not require any grinding.

There was a question about how the phasing of the old alignment tying into the new alignment would work for the Commuter Rail. GLXC said there would be 3 weekends where the old alignment would tie into the new alignment. The first shift is expected at the end of the month and then 2 weekends in October.

Tree Cutting

It was asked if the tree cutting in the corridor is complete. GLXC said that all major tree clearing is complete and that roots and stumps are to remain to help stabilize slopes.

There was a question as to if there was a plan for any replanting to be done on some of the non-slope areas where trees were removed like at Junction Park and the parking lot. The GLX team said that there is no specific plan for tree replacement at this time, but that there would be landscaping done as part of the contract. The team said they would get more information about the specific area of concern, but that tree removals along fence lines were done in many areas to accommodate the location of the Community Path, future rail road operations (for both the future Green Line and the existing Commuter rail) and the existing PTC infrastructure and did not go beyond what was in public notices.

Sound Barriers

It was asked if the project knows what materials will be used for the sound barriers. The project team responded that materials are still being looked into and that by early 2019 they will have a better idea and can present the information to the group.

Demolition of Homans Building

The dimensions of the Traction Power Substation were asked for. The GLX team said that designs were being finalized but that it was roughly a 40' by 60' building with transformer yard attached.

New GLX Website

A suggestion was made to re-include the next meeting information box on the main page of the site. The GLX team said they are working to get that restored.

Members suggested that the FEIR and other federal environmental documents be included in the historical documents. The monthly SIP updates from the Boston MPO/DEP (from back in 2016) were also suggested as possible historical document links.

Ball Square

An issue was raised about clearing brush off the sidewalk on Medford side as you approach Broadway Bridge to help navigate a sidewalk. Since this is not under MassDOT jurisdiction it would be up to the city and there was question as to whether Somerville or Medford would do the work. A call had been put into the City of Somerville and Medford was aware of the issue as well.

It was noted that Titan Gas was planning to close its Car Wash during construction and that the owner was looking for the construction schedule for work from Broadway to Harvard St. GLXC said they had been in discussions with the owner and would follow up with him.

Detours

It was asked if all the detours for the Broadway bridge closing have now been finalized. The GLX team said that the traffic and pedestrian detours are finalized and MBTA Bus Service Planning is working on finalizing their bus detours now.

One of the issues Service Planning wants to discuss with Medford is options that involve Harvard Street where a lot of pushback was received at Medford public meeting because of the condition of the road. Without the use of Harvard, it creates nearly a half mile walk to Main Street for commuters using the #80 Bus near Powder House Square. Service Planning was open to reducing the number of buses that would use the Harvard Street Route to help mitigate the concerns.

A concern Medford City Councilor Dello Russo raised about Harvard Street detour option is that it could be closed for a period time for gas utility repairs.

The City of Medford and Somerville Alderman Niedergang advocated for a shuttle van service to be provided for helping people get to their bus stops and around the pedestrian detour. It was requested that as detours get finalized to please share them with the members.

Alderman Niedergang also requested detours be enforced with assistance from MBTA police. He had concerns about the Cedar Street bump outs for large vehicles, and he suggested that

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before the Broadway closure a test run be done in early December for three days to work out any issues.

Next CWG meeting:

October 2, 2018

4:00 pm to 5:30 pm

GLX Project Office at 200 Inner Belt Rd in Somerville – 3rd Floor Lechmere Conference Room.