

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MassDOT)
GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT**

PUBLIC MEETING – SUMMARY MINUTES

LOCATION OF MEETING: Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, Cambridge, MA

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: December 16, 2009 from 6:00 – 7:30 PM

ATTENDANCE: 123 (signed in)

PROJECT TEAM: Kate Fichter, MassDOT (Project Manager); Mike McArdle, VHB (Project Manager); Kristine Wickham, VHB (Deputy Project Manager); Kristen Bergassi, VHB; David Boate, VHB; Mark Louro, VHB; John Burkardt, PB; Regan Checchio, RVA (Public Participation); Nancy Farrell, RVA (Moderator); Charlie Patton, RVA (Public Participation)

PURPOSE/SUBJECT: This project meeting presented alternatives for the siting, design, and construction of a vehicle storage and maintenance facility to support the proposed Green Line Extension.

BACKGROUND:

The Green Line Extension Project is an initiative of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), in coordination with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). This project will extend existing MBTA Green Line service from Lechmere Station through the northwest Boston corridor communities of Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford, with an extension of the main line to Medford and a spur line to Union Square in Somerville. 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:

Kate Fichter, Project Manager for MassDOT, opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming out. She said MassDOT had heard the community's concerns about the Yard 8 location and initiated an alternatives analysis of two additional alternatives. She noted that the purpose of the meeting is to present the results of the analyses. She noted that MassDOT has no new policy recommendations since the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (DEIR/EA), which is still out for public comment.

The three options are: 1) Yard 8, which is the proposed location in the DEIR and has undergone a full environmental analysis; 2) Mirror H, a site suggested by the City of Somerville; and 3) Option L, an alternative developed by MassDOT. She introduced Nancy Farrell, Regina Villa Associates, who served as moderator. Ms. Farrell explained the meeting format.

David Boate, VHB, gave a short technical presentation about the three options. Mr. Boate explained that the existing Green Line fleet is currently stored at the Reservoir, Riverside, Lake Street, and Lechmere facilities, as well as within the central subway. In order to support the proposed Extension, it will be essential to store a number of cars on the north-side of the line to provide cars for start-up in the morning, provide a convenient location for overnight and off-peak storage, and minimize the distance a disabled train has to travel to reach a maintenance facility. Mr. Boate then reviewed the program and space requirements for the facility.

Mr. Boate reviewed the three alternatives:

Yard 8

Yard 8 is an approximately six-acre railroad yard located adjacent to the proposed Green Line alignment and accessed from Inner Belt Road in Somerville. The yard is partially owned by the MBTA and Pan Am Railways. A detailed environmental analysis of Yard 8 was provided in the project DEIR/EA.

Mirror H

The Mirror H site straddles portions of the NorthPoint site (which includes portions of Cambridge, Somerville, and Boston) and a portion of MBTA land. This alternative located the facility at the north side of the proposed NorthPoint development and partly on MBTA land south of the Boston Engine Terminal (BET), and represents a plan that places new light rail facilities next to existing commuter rail facilities.

Option L

The Option L site is located immediately adjacent to the BET, on the northwest. It is located along the southern and southeastern edge of the existing Inner Belt industrial area. The layout of yards and buildings is in an "L" shape and adjacent to the "Valley Tracks" just north of the BET facility.

Mr. Boate then reviewed a comparison matrix of the alternatives, rated on a scale of "+1" to "-1."

Criteria	Yard 8	Mirror H	Option L
Ability to Meet MBTA's Program	+1	+1	+1
Order of Magnitude Capital Cost Estimate	0	0	-1
Property Impacts	0	0	-1
Operational Impacts	-1	+1	-1
Compatibility with Other Transportation Proposals	+1	-1	+1
Compatibility with Existing Land Uses	+1	-1	+1
Ability to Meet Project Schedule	+1	-1	0
Future Economic Development Opportunities	-1	-1	0
Neighborhood Impacts	-1	-1	0
Future Vision Transportation Access	-1	0	0
TOTAL	0	-3	0

DISCUSSION:

Beth Rubinstein, Assistant City Manager of Cambridge, said the City supports the Green Line Extension, and she would be submitting comments for the record. She said that the Mirror H alternative has significant negative impacts for land that has already been permitted and is ready for development. She added that the cost estimate of \$8 million to purchase these parcels seems low. Ms. Rubinstein also said that above-ground parking planned for these parcels was intended to be a noise buffer between the BET and the East Cambridge neighborhood. She said that according to Cambridge zoning regulations, commercial property in NorthPoint can be no more than 35% of a parcel. If Mirror H goes through, the residential area will be reduced, causing an upset in the balance of commercial to residential. She added that the City of Cambridge regards the NorthPoint development as an important transit-oriented

development opportunity and is an important aspect of the City's ability to expand the local tax base and job opportunities. She also said she was supportive of efforts to convert old Lechmere Station into a market.

Monica Lamboy, City of Somerville, thanked MassDOT for convening the meeting. She said that most if not all of the alternatives are within the border of Somerville and are subject to the Mayor's three principles for a maintenance and storage facility: 1) improve the quality of life; 2) promote economic development; and, 3) reduce neighborhood barriers. She requested that the Yard 8 alternative be taken off the table officially. She said that the new Option L provides a positive opportunity with which the City could work with MassDOT on the nuances. She added that the City of Somerville has not permitted those sections of North Point that are within Somerville.

Michael Lambert, City of Somerville, said the meeting presentation shows significant progress on this issue. He said that Option L has the potential to meet all three of the Mayor's criteria for the maintenance facility. Mr. Lambert said he would like to see better land use planning as part of the design and for MassDOT to minimize the land acquisitions as much as possible. He suggested consolidating the proposed 100 employee parking spaces with existing BET parking. With regard to access, Mr. Lambert proposed keeping the planned Urban Ring bridge to NorthPoint as well as future rail expansion that could be part of Urban Ring Phase 3.

Lee Auspitz, Project Advisory Group, said offering the Option L alternative was a responsive thing to do. He asked if the maintenance facility needs to be completed by 2014, as it is not part of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) commitment. He also asked MassDOT to look at the timing of the Lechmere Station construction and extension to Route 16. He noted including the cost of building new Lechmere as part of this project hurts the project for federal funding since it does not add any distance to the line. On the other hand, keeping the extension to Route 16 could help the project competitively.

Carolyn Rosen, GLAM, said Medford still has many issues with the proposed Route 16 extension, and MassDOT should not move ahead with it too quickly. She also noted that although the project team had completed this requested analysis on the maintenance facility, the team had not analyzed her proposal regarding a connection to Alewife.

Louis Clark, Board of Directors of the Riverview Residence Condominium (8-12 Museum Way), said that his association is opposed to Mirror H due to its proximity to their buildings. He said that Mirror H will be too noisy and negatively impact the quality of life and real estate values of their residents. He also said Mirror H jeopardizes plans for NorthPoint. Mr. Clark said he supported the Option L alternative.

Charles Poirier said he was concerned about Mirror H, and the prospective noise from the facility. He said that the City of Somerville gains the most from the Green Line Extension and should bear some of the burden. He said he favors Option L because it is the alternative that has the least impact on neighborhoods.

Alan Moore thanked MassDOT for exploring the options for the maintenance facility. He said he would like to see Options H and L advance over Yard 8. He said he believes Option L uses too much land that could have better future uses. He asked MassDOT to continue to explore their design options for Mirror H and Option L, including using more BET property, and drop Yard 8 from consideration.

Kathleen Zeigenfuss, City of Somerville, noted an additional benefit of Option L is that it would support more reliable and better Green Line service, as well as more easily accommodate the Community Path. She added that she would also like to see future air rights development ideas accompany the design.

David Daubach said he had some issues with the comparison of the maintenance facility options in the analysis. He asked if the "operational impacts" of Option L really deserve the "-1" rating given in the presentation. He also said that Option L is the only alternative that would facilitate a future extension of the Union Square branch into Porter Square. For this, he said it deserves a "+1."

Ivy Turner, Glass Factory Condominiums, said she strongly opposed Mirror H due to its close proximity to residential buildings. She said this alternative would wipe out the whole NorthPoint neighborhood. She said she supported her Brickbottom neighbors in her opposition to Yard 8. She added that she supported the exploration of Option L, but additional sites should also be investigated.

Jim McGinness, Project Advisory Group, said he appreciated the project team's flexibility on this issue. He said that Yard 8 objections go back to the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), and the Commonwealth has had years to resolve this issue. He said that moving forward, there needs to be a viable community process. He advocated for a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report with a Citizens Advisory Committee that can call its own meetings and receive staff support. He said that Option L is the "least unacceptable" alternative and urged MassDOT to make it as good as possible.

Heather Van Aelst, Brickbottom resident, thanked MassDOT for its work on the maintenance facility issue. She asked MassDOT to take the Yard 8 option off the table. She added that Option L looks promising, but urged the project team to consider consolidating with the existing BET rail yard. She asked that the storage facility be covered and moved away from residential areas.

Miki Polunbaum, Brickbottom resident, said MassDOT should scrap Yard 8 because it is completely unacceptable in terms of noise, light pollution, and environmental disadvantages. She noted that Somerville will be losing tax revenue from the property takings and said that Option L seems like the most palatable alternative.

Paul Cote, Project Advisory Group, said he supported Option L because Yard 8 and Mirror H impinge too much on the development potential of the area. He said that Yard 8 hurts the development of the Inner Belt Industrial Park by making it more difficult to access.

Representative Tim Toomey, Massachusetts House of Representatives, said that since MassDOT first announced the Yard 8 alternative two years ago, the delegation has rejected the site. He said the DEIR submitted on October 15 lists Mirror H and Option L as possible alternative sites, but still calls Yard 8 the preferred option. He said that Yard 8 will have serious impacts on Brickbottom and Glass Factory residents, will lock in the Inner Belt area, and have serious consequences to abutters and economic development for Somerville. He said if MassDOT wants to choose a site with little to no negative impact, Option L is the closest. Although it may cost more, he said that future benefits will outweigh these costs.

George Gabbin, Brickbottom resident, thanked Ms. Turner for her comments showing the understanding of the noise Brickbottom residents would have to bear. He noted that the noise

from the facility would occur from 5AM to 1AM every day, and the tracks surround the Brickbottom building on three sides. He urged MassDOT to think of the quality of life of the residents.

Steve Mackey, Somerville Chamber of Commerce, said economic development is an important issue for Somerville. He said he appreciated the continued work on the maintenance facility issue and believes that Option L has more merit than Yard 8. He added that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is the largest property owner in Somerville, owning 43 acres of the BET. He said that earlier in the process, he had suggested consolidating light and heavy rail at the BET and urged the project team to revisit this option. He asked if a representative of the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) was present and could discuss an economic development plan for the area. Ms. Fichter said that she had discussed the meeting and plans with EOED prior to the meeting. At this time, that office does not have the capacity for local economic planning, but MassDOT intends to keep them informed as the project moves forward.

Steve Kaiser noted he was a Cambridge resident, but said he agreed with the remarks made by the Somerville city officials. He said Somerville has been active in stating its concerns, and its representatives have been accessible through the process. He said that Cambridge is only interested in defending NorthPoint. He noted that MassDOT has inherited the design for new Lechmere station, and it has some serious design flaws. He also said the design plans for all the maintenance facility alternatives have a serious flaw; in order to inject a train inbound, the train must travel in the opposite direction first. He said this flaw needs to be addressed or it will affect the entire Green Line operations.

Rich McKinnon, Archstone representative, said that the Green Line Extension brings up complex issues for Archstone. He requested a meeting with MassDOT to let the issues discuss some of these issues. Ms. Fichter agreed to attend the meeting.

Ken Krause, Project Advisory Group, thanked MassDOT for continuing to evaluate these alternatives. He said that Option L has strong potential that can be perfected by reducing the amount and cost of the land acquisition. He said he would be submitting proposals to this affect during the comment period, hoping to reduce the \$50 million additional cost. He asked MassDOT to engage in a similar effort with regard to the Route 16 extension to help boost the overall success of the project. He said there is overwhelming support within Medford, Arlington and Somerville for the Route 16 extension.

William Wood, Project Advisory Group, said that if the MassDOT extends to Route 16, there will be a serious fight in Medford. He said he supported the Brickbottom residents, and their fight to keep their homes. He said that development is not just tax money, and he will continue fighting to let people stay in their homes.

Robert Martel, Brickbottom resident, said the storage part of the facility should be covered to mitigate impacts on economic development and residents. He asked if there was a willing seller for the property listed in Option L. Ms. Fichter said MassDOT is prohibited from formally approaching property owners at this point in the process, but has heard no particular concerns from the owners of the parcels in discussion for Option L.

Alan Green, East Cambridge resident, said that after studying the report, he would like to support Option L. He questioned the rating system using by the project team and argued the scale should be from "-5" to "+5" instead of "-1" to "+1." He said based on his understanding of

the alternatives, in the Yard 8 and Mirror H scenarios, trains begin backing up. That does not happen with Option L.

Mark Jaquith, East Cambridge resident, thanks Representative Toomey and Ms. Rubinstein for their remarks. He argued that keeping noise and vibration impacts away from residential homes is worth a significant amount of money. He said that Mirror H would eliminate NorthPoint Avenue, which connects to Inner Belt Road. The Yard 8 alternative would interrupt McGrath Highway, hurting the flow from East Cambridge into Inner Belt. From an urban design perspective, he said that Option L is the "least unacceptable."

Tom Joyce thanked Mr. Jaquith for his comments. He said if you look at the effect of the alternatives on people, Mirror H is problematic and Somerville and East Cambridge are both violently opposed to Yard 8. He said he cannot understand how Yard 8 could get approval and urged it be dropped right away.

Jonathan McDowell, Brickbottom resident, thanked MassDOT for exploring the additional alternatives. He said Yard 8 should be taken off the table as a result of the comments expressed.

Charlie Hardwicke, East Cambridge resident, said Cambridge and Somerville are united in opposition to Yard 8. He said that Option L should be examined in conjunction with using the BET for cost reasons. He noted that all plans call for one acre of parking, which may be too much. He asked MassDOT not to put other developments at risk.

Heather Hoffman, East Cambridge resident, said she was distraught at the way the early public comments pitted Cambridge against Somerville. She said the communities must work together to find a better decision for everyone. She said the residents work together well now, and residents and businesses must do so in the future so the communities become more viable. She noted that Davis Square benefits Cambridge, as Inman Square benefits Somerville.

Senator Anthony Galluccio, Massachusetts State Senate, said that while serving on the City Council and as Mayor, he oversaw the zoning of NorthPoint. As a state senator, he now represents Inner Belt. He noted that the maintenance facility is a difficult and challenging issue, but the goals are to improve mass transit and economic development opportunities. He said the Inner Belt hold great potential for future mixed use development and connects with NorthPoint. He added that Yard 8 conflicts with that vision, and Option L looks like the place to work around it with some improvements.

Wig Zamore noted that East Cambridge and East Somerville share a single corridor, with two residential anchors in Brickbottom and the Glass Factory. The area needs good economic development plans within a sustainable mixed use context. He said he supported Mr. MdGinness's call for a Supplemental EIR with a Citizens Advisory Committee to deal with the maintenance facility and land use issues. He noted that the South Coast Rail Project is a model and has won awards by taking this approach. He added that although plans for the Urban Ring Phase 2 have been shelved, it is important that development in the area not conflict with future track use.

Rob Cassel, Brickbottom resident, thanked MassDOT for the continued dialogue. He said that Mirror H and Option L are better options for the Community Path than Yard 8 and urged MassDOT to take this issue into consideration. He said that Mirror H is still worthy of future

study, and the key will be to view the facility as a 20 foot high sound barrier for the BET, as well as an overbuild opportunity.

Peter Marquez, Brickbottom resident, asked for Supplemental EIR to examine the environmental impacts of runoff and solvents generated by the maintenance facility.

Julia Shepley, Brickbottom resident, said she wanted to reiterate Senator Galluccio's comments. She also asked MassDOT to examine mitigation costs more thoroughly.

Ms. Fichter thanked those present for coming out for the meeting. She also noted that January 8, 2010 is the deadline for comments on the DEIR and that information for how to submit a comment is available on www.mass.gov/greenlineextension.

Attendance

Arthur M. Agnew
*Lee Auspitz
Sherry Autor
John Baehrend
Ellen Band
Connie Blaszczyk
David Bond
Juan M. Boterd
*Eric Bourassa, MAPC
Tom Bout
Alan Brams
Bonnie Burthwicka
Lee Busch
Linda Camiel
Chris Carilli
Leonard Cheong
Louis Clark
Abigail Collins
Scott Cooledge
Leiha Costa
*Paul Cote
David Daubach
Deborah Davidson
*Bill Deignan, City of Cambridge
Klye Dougherty
Charles S. Fineman
Bob Fitzpatrick
George Gabbin
Jim Gallagher, MAPC
Senator Anthony Galluccio, MA State Senate
Jeremy Garczynski
Bill Gilligan
Linda Goulet
Arthur Graf
Alan Greene
Cynthia A.M. Grenier
Jack V. Grenier
Charlie Hardwicke
Heather Hoffman
Karen Hoffman
Shuba Iyengar
Mark Jaquith
Tom Joyce
Steve Kaiser
Chris Kanels
Lyn Kardatzke
Rob Kassel
George Katsoufis
Joan Keating
Priscilla Lamb Kennedy
Frances Klunk
Lewis Klunk
Judy Kobek
Donna M. Koehe
J. Kobel
Mike Korczynski
*Ken Krause
Bernard LaCasse
Michael Lambert, City of Somerville
*Monica Lamboy, City of Somerville
Sophia Lan
Cindy Larson
Jen Lawrence
Bob Lewis
Derek Lombard
*Steve Mackey, Chamber of Commerce
*Rafael Mares, Conservation Law Foundation
Pete Marquez
Robert Martel
Rhonda Massie
Jonathan McDowell
*Jim McGinness
Rich McKinnon
Lynn McWhood
Chris Mesarch
Dan Mesnick
Jonathan Mitchell
Karen Molloy
Alan Moore
John D. Moore
Thomas Moore
Michael Morelli
Paul Morgan
Junji Morokuma
Steve Mulder
Charles Munitz
Shriam Nallcemhetty
Debra Olin
Levi Paomerter
Christopher Park
Bhupesh Patel
John Paul
Cynthai Pellegrioni
Miki Polumbaum
Charles C. Poirier
Beth Quartel
Jared Quartel
Eriks Rancans
Carolyn Rosen, GLAM
Beth Rubenstein, City of Cambridge
Marie Saccoccio
Erica Salvuca
Sandy Schafer
Alyson Schultz
Julia Shepley
Kate Snodgrass
Julie Sober
Pat Stevens

Nancy Stieau
Martha Stone
Jessica Straus
Bonnie Joyce Tacheron
Thomas Trangott
Randal Thurston
Rep. Tim Toomey, MA House of Representatives
Ivy Turner
Heather Van Aelst
Jay Wasserman
Charles Wilbur
*William Wood
Ellen Young
Wig Zamore
Kathleen Zeigenfuss, City of Somerville

* denotes member of Project Advisory Group