

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS
GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT**

PUBLIC MEETING – SUMMARY MINUTES

LOCATION OF MEETING: Century Bank, 400 Mystic Ave., Medford

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: February 27, 2008 from 6:30 to 8:00 PM

ATTENDANCE: 88 (signed in)

PROJECT TEAM: Stephen Woelfel, EOPW; Michael McArdle, VHB; Kristine Wickham, VHB; Regan Checchio, RVA, Charlie Patton, RVA

PURPOSE/SUBJECT: This general project meeting provided an opportunity for those less familiar with the project to be updated about the Green Line Extension Project. Topics included a project overview, history, review of the station workshop meetings, and next steps.

BACKGROUND:

The Green Line Extension Project is an initiative of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation & Public Works (EOTPW), 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.

HANDDOOTS: Winter 2008 Project Fact Sheet

PRESENTATION:

Steve Woelfel, Project Manager for EOTPW, opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

Mike McArdle, VHB, then gave a brief overview of the project. He said the project purpose is to extend the Green Line from Lechmere Station to Somerville and Medford in order to improve regional air quality, improve corridor mobility and regional access, boost transit ridership, ensure equitable distribution of transit services, and support opportunities for smart growth initiatives and sustainable development.

Mr. McArdle then gave a brief overview of the planning history of the project from the 1960s to the present. In September 2007, EOTPW began this phase of the planning which requires the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). Throughout this long history of planning, there has been much public outreach. In this phase, outreach efforts include an Advisory Group, with representatives from Cambridge, Somerville and Medford; neighborhood Station Workshop meetings; local

official briefings, interagency meetings, and a project website – www.greenlineextension.org.

Mr. McArdle then reviewed the four Alternative Alignments being studied as part of the DEIR:

- Alternative 1: Green Line Extension to Medford Hillside with spur to Union Square
- Alternative 2: Green Line Extension to Route 16/Mystic Valley Parkway with spur to Union Square
- Alternative 3: Green Line Extension to Medford Hillside with spur to Union Square via McGrath Highway/Somerville Ave.
- Alternative 4: Green Line Extension to Route 16/Mystic Valley Parkway with spur to Union Square via McGrath Highway/Somerville Ave.

Mr. McArdle explained that siting the proposed stations is an important part of the environmental process. Consideration for station siting includes station access, transit operations, land use opportunities, impact on residents, ADA considerations, costs and environmental impacts.

Mr. McArdle then discussed the criteria being evaluated in the DEIR including operations, noise and vibration, air quality, land takings, traffic & parking, the support facility, construction impacts, and community impacts, including environmental justice. With respect to traffic impacts, 38 intersections will be analyzed to form an existing baseline along with the proposed ridership impacts. Mr. McArdle also noted that the most construction impacts will likely be in modifications to existing bridges. He said temporary and long-term impacts will be evaluated.

Mr. McArdle reviewed information from the recent round of public meetings and station workshop meetings:

- Medford General Information meeting (1/23/08)
- Brickbottom/Washington Street/Gilman Square Station Workshop (1/28/08)
- Lowell Street/Ball Square (1/29/08)
- College Avenue/Winthrop Street (1/31/08)
- Mystic Valley Parkway/Route 16 (2/6/08)
- Union Square (2/19/08)

Key discussion points during the station workshops included platform siting, access, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) considerations, transit operations, intermodal connections, land use opportunities, impact on residents, impact on bridges, and property acquisitions. Each workshop had an attendance of approximately 100 people. There were still some questions about the platform sitings at specific locations. Mr. McArdle said all the public comments will be evaluated and incorporated as appropriate. Meeting notes and drawings, including all written public comments, will be posted on the project website.

DISCUSSION:

Before opening the discussion for questions, Mr. Woelfel thanked Century Bank for hosting the meeting.

Lauren DiLorenzo, City of Medford, requested the team review the proposed station locations. Kristine Wickham, VHB, explained the project team is developing criteria to evaluate potential locations on Washington Street, Gilman Square, Lowell Street, Ball Square, College Avenue, Winthrop Street, Mystic Valley Parkway/Route 16, and Union Square. Many of these locations had been identified through previous planning studies including the 2005 Alternatives Analysis (the Beyond Lechmere study). In addition to these sites, the Certificate issued by the Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) in 2006 states that EOTPW should evaluate the feasibility and advisability of locating stations at Route 16; Winthrop Street, between Winthrop Streets and College Avenue, and the Brickbottom/Twin Cities area.

Brian Bamity, Medford resident, asked if the extension would go all the way to West Medford Square. Mr. Woelfel said that possibility was examined in the Major Investment Study (MIS) phase, but based on the environmental impacts and comments received during the public process, the current planning process is only looking at extending to Route 16.

An attendee asked if the DEIR will have new information or use the information gathered from the previous study. Mr. Woelfel said there will be new information, and it will be researched at a higher level of detail than in the MIS phase. Air quality data, for example, will all be redone—both regionally and locally. He added that the team hopes that the draft report could also be reviewed as a final Environmental Impact Report, but that the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office (MEPA) will be the final arbiter of that decision.

Wig Zamore, STEP, said he was interested in the air quality modeling being conducted. He also said he would be willing to share local monitoring data that is being gathered in Somerville. Mr. Woelfel said that the modeling work is being done by the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS). Mr. Zamore also expressed concern about the headways on the viaduct structure near the Museum of Science. Mr. Woelfel said the team will be looking into that issue.

Benny Talbot, Local 88, encouraged the team to investigate tunnel options. Mr. Woelfel said the team will look at this possibility and examine the feasibility.

Councilor Frederick DelloRusso, Medford, also recognized the other Medford City Councilors present: Stephanie Muccini Burke and Michael Marks. Councilor DelloRusso requested funding from EOTPW for a Medford Office of Community Development staffer to monitor project information. Mr. Woelfel said he did not have an answer for that request this evening. Councilor DelloRusso also requested that preliminary schemes for the project be shared with the Medford Office of Community Development. Mr. Woelfel said the project team meets regularly with city staff and shares information. Councilor DelloRusso asked how the decision regarding the terminus of the extension will be reached. Mr. Woelfel said that the data collected will be shared with the public and project Advisory Group once it is available. He noted that EOTPW will listen to the feedback that is received, but ultimately will make the final decision as the project proponent. Councilor DelloRusso asked if the ridership projections will be updated from the MIS effort. Mr. Woelfel said that that analysis has already begun.

An attendee asked if the project team also sends out postal mailings as part of its public outreach. Mr. Woelfel said it does.

Michael Bernstein asked if the traffic study being conducted for the Route 16 area includes the influence of Whole Foods. Mr. Woelfel said he believed it does, but will check.

Rowena Hodges, West Medford resident, asked how and when the ridership for each station location is assessed. Mr. Woelfel said that CTPS employs a pre-existing (and federally approved) travel-demand model that is based on a household survey and demographic projections.

A participant asked about the potential for riders to park at Route 16 in order to take the Green Line. Mr. Woelfel said that a potential terminal station at Route 16 is being studied both with and without parking.

Gwen Blackburn said that tunneling could resolve some of the concerns that have been brought up. Mr. Woelfel said that this suggestion was still too premature to evaluate, but that the team will be addressing comments from all of the meetings. Ms. Blackburn asked if a maintenance facility at Route 16 was off the table. Mr. Woelfel said that the team was still evaluating potential sites, and this question will hopefully be answered within the next month or so.

Ann Marie Clinton said there was no meeting notice for this meeting in the Medford Transcript. Mr. Woelfel said the team will continue to employ a variety of public outreach methods, including press releases to the local newspapers to notify the public.

Phyllis Bucci-Notaro, Medford resident, asked which potential maintenance facility sites the team was currently evaluating. Mr. Woelfel said the facility requires a parcel that is about 11-12 acres, noting that most of the focus has been on Somerville sites since the team is unaware of any Medford sites of appropriate size.

Joe Lynch, Magoun Square, noted that the MIS advocated eliminating freight runs on the Lowell Line. He asked if the team has made any progress on this issue. Mr. Woelfel said those discussions are just beginning. Mr. Lynch also expressed his opposition to the possibility of locating the maintenance facility at the current Somerville DPW site.

Carolyn Rosen, GLAM, said that her group placed a display ad in the Medford Transcript advertising this meeting. She requested the project team specifically notify all project abutters with a letter advertising meetings because there has not been enough notification of this process. She said the project should be treated as a zoning process. Ms. Rosen said that GLAM's website currently has the potential station drawings from the workshops. Ms. Rosen also said it was misleading to state that these are general station locations because there is no consensus on the location on Harvard/Boston Ave. Mr. Woelfel said there is consensus regarding the neighborhoods. Ms. Rosen said that Somerville residents attended workshops held in Medford and lobbied Medford residents. Ms. Rosen added that the RFR indicates that the project team needs to study a maintenance facility at Route 16 or at the end of College Ave./Medford Hillside. Mr. Woelfel said that the team is investigating other sites for the facility other than Route 16 and that no decision has been made yet regarding the terminus of the line. She also said that Somerville dominates the EOT Advisory Group. Mr. Woelfel said that EOTPW listens to all who participate in this process.

Andrew P. Castagnetti, Medford resident, said he believed that the perfect solution would be to tunnel from Tufts University all the way to Medford Square. He said a stop in Medford Square would be walkable to most people and require no additional parking. He added that it could be extended in the future all the way to Stoneham. Mr. Woelfel said the team appreciates all ideas.

John Worden, Arlington resident, said that the Lowell Commuter Rail line should be electrified. This way it would lessen diesel pollution and noise impacts without having to build a new project that will need additional infrastructure like new bridges. He also encouraged the city to hold a referendum on this issue.

Judy Kaplan, West Medford resident, said that those who can walk to a Boston Avenue location already take transit, a train or a bus to the JFK Building. She asked if it would be that much more convenient to take a Green Line train versus a bus. She also suggested that an outdoor station would lower the number of riders and encouraged the team to investigate whether riders would be allowed to wait on trains, unlike the current standard at Lechmere. Mr. Woelfel said that the ridership modeling will sort out many of these questions, and that the team still needs to develop an operational plan that includes proposed headways and projected travel times.

Keith Blaszok, Medford resident, expressed his support for this project which he said was long overdue.

Charles Gomez, Somerville resident, said he was in favor of an extension, and a determination should be made based on the option that has the least displacement and impact on private properties. Mr. Woelfel said that over the next few months, the team will be able to share the definitive impacts of each option. He added that this is also intrinsic to federal regulations.

Brian Sylvain, Local 88, said that his team was currently building a tunnel in South Boston using a tunnel boring machine that had many less construction impacts than a cut and cover tunnel.

Laurel Siegel encouraged participants to spread the word to their neighbors to get them involved in this process. She said that residents cannot rely on the government to do their jobs as citizens.

Margaret Webster, a resident of Medford Hillside, thanked EOTPW for the workshops. She added that the Tufts workshop summary at the end of the meeting indicated that the Winthrop Street stop was popular, which she believes it is not with residents. She said that shopkeepers and students should not have as much say in this process as long-term residents. She noted that Medford Hillside is a very narrow and densely residential neighborhood. Mr. Woelfel said that EOTPW recognizes the concern of the community. Ms. Webster asked why the line cannot just stop by College Avenue. Mr. Woelfel said the team will be examining that scenario.

Bob Kangas, Medford resident, said that residents are concerned that three of the four alternatives stop at Route 16. [Note: only two of the alternatives have a Route 16 terminus.] Mr. Woelfel said that EOTPW is required to look at the Route 16 option as part of the Secretary's Certificate, but will examine the impacts of this routing before making an informed decision on the terminus.

A participant asked about the impacts to neighborhood parking. Mr. Woelfel noted that up to 40 intersections are being studied as part of the DEIR and the team will be working closely with the City to examine traffic impacts.

Suzanne Lipsky, Somerville resident, requested notice letters be mailed to all abutters in the project study area. She also requested a study of parkland impacts to the Mystic River.

Mary Bradley suggested notifying residents of meetings through the city's "Reverse 911" system. She also supported including this issue as a ballot question.

Mary Ann Dusky asked how cost plays into the decision-making process. Mr. Woelfel said that the alternatives will be recommended based on their merits, before cost is taken into account. He noted that the federal funding process uses a cost-effectiveness measure so it is a balancing act.

Ken Krause, Medford, said he was surprised to see a parking facility included during the Route 16 workshop. He said he believes this goes against the MEPA instructions in the Secretary's Certificate, and a parking structure will only invite more cars to Route 16. He added that traffic management and enforcement of parking is critically important at the end of the line, and added that he was pleased that city officials have decided to form a traffic enforcement division. Mr. Woelfel said it has not been decided that a parking facility would be at a Route 16 station but the team is analyzing the scenario in order to make informed decisions.

Ms. Clinton asked how North Medford residents will access the line. Mr. Woelfel said the team is still figuring out the best ways to access the platforms.

An attendee urged the team to consider the fact that Medford has four elementary schools within a one-mile walking distance to Route 16. Mr. Woelfel said the team will consider this in the evaluation.

A participant asked if the federal government has mandated the Green Line Extension. Mr. Woelfel said that the project is part of a 1991 legal commitment as part of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) so that Massachusetts would be in compliance with federal air quality conformity. He added that the project may also be competitive enough to receive federal funding under the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) New Starts program.

Councilor Michael Marks, Medford, said that the City Council recently received a commitment from the Mayor of Medford for a parking enforcement division. He encouraged EOTPW to provide funding to help fill the understaffed Medford Office of Community Development so the City can conduct matching studies on the project. Mr. Woelfel said that EOTPW is happy to share all its data and analysis with the Office of Community Development, but he did not know if EOTPW could fund a staffing position for the City.

Mr. Deacon said he supported tunneling due to the drainage issues in Medford. He also asked to see station renderings and clear responses about maintenance and security for

these stations. Mr. Woelfel said the project team is still working with the MBTA on design and ADA issues. Once they are drafted, they will be shared with the community.

James Moody, Medford resident, said he supported the Green Line Extension Project, but noted that with more transfers, the less likely riders will be to use light rail. He added that light rail helps property values and reduces carbon loading.

Representative Carl Sciortino, Massachusetts House of Representatives, encouraged those present to continue to attend meetings on this project and learn more. He noted that the Transportation Bond Bill passed out of committee that evening and it includes full funding for the project.

Karen Rosetti asked if the project would increase Medford's MBTA assessment. Mr. Woelfel said that he did not believe that the current assessment formula is not geared to the level of service, but that he would check on this issue.

Attendance

Mary Anne Adduci	Joseph Lynch Jr., Magoun Sq. Neighborhood Association
Brian Ahearne	Philip Mallard
Brian Bamity	Janet Marino
Elizabeth Bayle	Michael Marks, Medford City Council
Christine Bennett	Edward Martin
Keith Blaszk	Don Meglio
Paul Brancato	Martha Metzler
John J. Buckley	Endri Misho
Phyllis Bucci-Notaro	James Moodie
Beata Bujalska, Mass Alliance	Mary Jo Morgan
Stephanie Burke, Medford City Council	Norma Nighelli
Andrew P. Castagnetti	Jim Nighelli
Michael Catald	Mark Norton
Eha Chang	Ruth Piscitelli
Ann Marie Clinton	Meredith Porter
Patricia A. Clinton	Luis Ouilhani
Dan Colangelo	Ikuko Otsuka
John F. Deacon	John Recint
Maria F. DiBenedetto	Carolyn Rosen, GLAM
Michael DiBenedetto	Margaret Palmieri
Andrea Diiorio	Alan Peterson
Lauren DiLorenzo, City of Medford	Laurel Ruma
Paul Rallo	Rep. Carl Sciortino, MA House of Representatives
Rita Donnelly*	Elizabeth Sherman
John R. Elliott	Laurel Siegel
Keith Faton	Amy Slade
Bob Feigin	Jim Silva
Jim Gallagher, MAPC	Jamil Simon
Elaine Garrett	Laura Solano
Carol Ghiloni	Bill Stephens
Jean Hannafin	Brian Sylvain
Sarah Harder	Benny Talbot, Local 88
Rowena Hodges	Denise Tecci
Steve Honeycott	Sal Tecci
Jerry Iaueretano	Jeff Thielman
Erik Jacobs	Lynne Thompson
Sen. Pat Jehlen, MA State Senate	Roger Tyler
Robert Kangas	Don Walker
Judy Kaplan	Valerie Washburn Geiselman
B. Kennedy	Margaret Webster
Mike Korczynski	William Wood*
Ken Krause	John Worden
Frank Leathy	Wig Zamore
Toni Leathy	
Suzanne Lipsky	
David Loutzchelizer	

* denotes Project Advisory Group Member