

# Memo

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Date: March 12, 2012  
To: Mary Ainsley – Director of Design and Construction  
From: Karen Arpino-Shaffer – Deputy Program Manager/Gilbane  
Beverly Johnson – Public Involvement Consultant/Bevco  
Subject: Gilman Square and Lowell Street Station Design Meeting  
March 7, 2012

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**LOCATION/DATE OF MEETINGS:** Somerville High School Auditorium, 81 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA  
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

**ATTENDEES:**

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Mary Ainsley, Senior Director of Design and Construction, Green Line Extension  
Margaret Lackner, Director of Design  
Jeff Sarin-Project Manager, Green Line Extension  
Ugo Ewulonu

HDR/Gilbane Project Team

Michael McBride, HDR/Gilbane Program Manager  
Karen Arpino-Shaffer, HDR/Gilbane Deputy Program Manager  
Robert Cone, HDR/Gilbane Director of Design  
Michael Epp, Lead Station Design Architect, Kleinfelder/SEA  
Tom Jin, Kleinfelder/SEA  
KyAnn Anderson, Kleinfelder/SEA  
Vanessa White, Bryant Engineers  
Michael Izzo, HDR/Gilbane  
Beverly Johnson, Bevco  
Deneen Crosby, CSS  
Josh Burgel, CSS  
Erin Kay, CSS  
Maren Lane, CSS  
William Lyons, Fort Hill Infrastructure

Agency/Elected Officials

State Representative Carl Sciortino  
Pete Sutton-MassDOT  
Al Weiz-MassDOT  
Hayes Morrison-City of Somerville  
Brad Rawson-City of Somerville  
Arn Franzen-City of Somerville

## Gilman Square and Lowell Street Station Meeting – February 8, 2012

### Media Representatives

Adam Vaccaro-Somerville Scout

### Other Attendees

Bill Dearing-Resident  
Jon Plate-Resident  
Karen Molloy-STEP  
Steve Taylor-HMM  
Jackie Goode-Resident  
Jason Miller-Resident  
Shallum Miller-Resident  
Dick Bauer-Resident  
John Gonzalez-DHK Architects  
Michael Desroches-Jacobs  
Mary Mangan-Resident  
Marc Chabot-PEI  
David Hart-Resident  
Jonah Petri-Friends of the Community Path  
Sheila Fay-Resident  
Chris Kanes-Resident  
Paul Morgan-Resident  
Jim McGinnie-USMS  
Wig Zamore-Resident  
John Orosz-Resident  
Steven Nutter-Resident  
Lismary Rodriguez-Green  
Theresa Smith-Resident  
Kristi Chase-Resident  
Janet Steins-Resident  
Courtney O'Keefe-Resident  
George Katsoufis-DHK Architects  
Lucas Rogers-Resident  
Eric Groft-Resident  
Greg Yates-AECOM  
Joe Lynch-Magoun Square Neighborhood Association  
Frank Astone-Jacobs  
William Crawford-Resident  
Phil Burke-HNTB  
Thomas Burdulis-Resident  
Maureen O'Connell-Resident  
Jeff Marotta-Rogers Foam Corp.  
Caroline Downing-AECOM  
Richard Grant-Resident  
Kristine Gorman-STV Inc.  
Lynne Thompson-Resident  
Melissa Suderman-Resident  
Joseph Beckmann-Resident  
Lynn Weissman-Friends of the Community Path  
Liam Nolan-Schools for Children  
Rebecca Schrumm-Friends of the Community Path  
Jeff Reese-Resident  
Tim Bradshaw-Resident  
Patti Davis-STEP

Christine Barber-Resident  
Chris Mancini-Groundwork  
Debra Cuoco-Resident  
Dori Hale-Resident  
Deborah Fennick-Resident  
Mashaal Majid-Resident  
Roberta Baines-Resident  
Linda Carrubba-Resident

#### OVERVIEW AND WELCOME

Karen Arpino-Shaffer, HDR/Gilbane Deputy Program Manager welcomed the attendees, and introduced MBTA representatives and key members of the project team.

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer stated that the current station design plans are at a 30% level of development, and the purpose of the meeting was to present the design progress achieved subsequent to the June 2011 station design workshops. She also pointed out that some community comments were incorporated into the station design plans as will be evidenced during the presentations, and that some issues have not been resolved because the stations are only at a 30% level of design.

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer pointed out that during the June 2011 station design workshops, the project team rolled up its sleeves and worked alongside community stakeholders who provided numerous comments at the June 2011 Gilman Square and Lowell Street Station Design Workshops, and that these comments along with project team responses are reflected in the “Community Comments Matrices” that were available at the registration table. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer also indicated that the Gilman Square and Lowell Street Station Community Comments Matrices will be posted on the project website along with the information presented at this meeting. As a final note, Karen Arpino-Shaffer indicated that all information from the seven June 2011 station design workshops was put into a community booklet to memorialize the public process.

#### OVERVIEW OF GILMAN SQUARE STATION COMMUNITY COMMENTS AND PROJECT TEAM RESPONSE

Karen Arpino-Shaffer highlighted the key community concerns that were raised at the June 2011 station design workshop as follows: (1) Station entrances & orientation to Gilman Square neighborhoods; (2) Pedestrian connection & safe accessible routes to the station, and (3) Station & bus route connections.

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer stated that the project team had evaluated the concerns about the orientation to the station from the municipal complex along with accessible station connections, and had also focused on the optimum route for the Community Path. Karen Arpino-Shaffer also pointed out that public bus connections and routes to the station are still a work in progress that will be presented at a later date. She also presented station design renderings.

Karen Arpino-Shaffer presented the MBTA and project team response to community concerns about station entrances and orientation, accessibility, and Community Path Design as follows:

- Added an entrance on the West side of the right-of-way that will have direct access to accessible path. This entrance creates improved access to the Somerville City hall/High School/Library complex. This entrance eliminated the need for the pedestrian bridge.
- Created multiple access points to ensure that routes to the station are accessible.
- Created pedestrian connections from the neighborhoods including a signalized intersection and raised pedestrian crosswalk at Medford & Pearl Street.
- Created an accessible upper plaza and lower plaza.
- Designed an accessible Path on the west side of the station that will later be part of the community path.

### GILMAN SQUARE STATION SITE DESIGN PLAN

Josh Burgel of CSS presented the Gilman Square Site Design Plan. In order to establish station orientation, Mr. Burgel presented a “neighborhood access diagram” that he indicated was shared with the community at the June 2011 station design workshop. Mr. Burgel also highlighted the key streets that connect with the station as follows: (1) Highland Avenue; (2) Pearl Street; (3) Medford Street, and (4) School Street. Mr. Burgel also provided a visual overview of the station site to highlight neighborhood characteristics.

Mr. Burgel highlighted the following key elements of the proposed Gilman Square Station Design Site Plan for the upper and lower levels:

- Upper Level: Two main entrances at Medford Street and an accessible route from Medford and School Streets. Pedestrian access from School, Pearl, and Medford Streets.
- Lower Level: New signalization at Pearl Street that will include a pedestrian-only phased light.
- Civic Area: Passengers at the High School, City Hall, and other municipal buildings will now be able to have direct station access by using the new entrance.

Josh Burgel highlighted the Bike Access Diagram/Plan. He indicated that a new station entrance is directly on the Community Path and that bike storage space will be provided for bikers at the path entrance as well as the lower level entrance.

Mr. Burgel provided an overview of site existing conditions, highlighting the Peanut Butter Factory located at Pearl and Medford Streets. He also highlighted the connections between the high school and the existing rail tracks at School and Pearl Streets. Josh Burgel also pointed out that the existing trees must come down to clear a path for construction; and will be replaced with possible birch and beech trees. He also stated that the community’s accessibility concerns were addressed by the team by creating an accessible path between School & Medford Street on the west side that will provide direct access into the station; and accessibility at Medford and Pearl Streets providing access to the lower level entrance with a signalized intersection and raised crosswalk.

Josh Burgel highlighted the fact that a fairly steep sidewalk adjacent to the bridge will connect the upper level to Pearl Street, and that the lower level will include a signalized intersection with a raised pedestrian crossing and a pedestrian-only phased light. He indicated that the accessible drop-off/pick-up area is yet to be determined, and the MBTA and project team are working with the City of Somerville to reach resolution on this issue. Mr. Burgel also pointed out that an emergency egress directly adjacent to the station platform is still under consideration, and that a substation that is still in development will be built to support train operations.

Mr. Burgel provided an overview of old photos of the area to emphasize that the historic elements from the past will be mixed with new elements to create an exciting station design plan. He pointed out that site furniture and fencing along with the bike parking, the creation of a new wall on top of the former walls surrounding the site, and rebuilding the adjacent urban wild, are key site design elements. Mr. Burgel also presented proposed new station perspectives.

### GILMAN SQUARE STATION DESIGN CONCEPTS

#### Entry-Level Plan

Michael Epp, Lead Station Design Architect, with Kleinfelder/SEA presented the Gilman Square Station Design Concepts. Mr. Epp thanked the community for the great idea of adding a station entrance adjacent to the Community Path. He added that this idea generated a more elegant solution to the issue of accessibility to the Community Path.

Mr. Epp stated that at the June 2011 station design workshop, the elevators and escalators were located side-by-side due to the station size. He pointed out that upon further evaluation, the design team was able to come up with a solution that increases the length of the station by locating the elevators and escalators parallel to each other. Mr. Epp added that key

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design features at the upper and lower level of each station entrance will include redundant elevators at each stair or escalator to provide direct access to the station platform.

Michael Epp pointed out that the main design goal was to create a station design that will complement the Gilman Square Historic District and begin filling in the neighborhood. He also pointed out that as more land development begins in the future, the station will be a great addition to the community.

### Station Elevation

Michael Epp pointed out that the structural rhythm of the Peanut Butter Building is being incorporated into the station design, with such features as windows that have an industrial design, the inclusion of terra-cotta columns with horizontal banding, and the use of wood-paneled ceilings that will create a warm, yellow light at night.

Mr. Epp presented an aerial view of the station which highlighted the three key design components as follows: (a) Head House; (b) Bridge; and (c) Concourse (which will have copper panels that will develop a future patina that will compliment site design).

### OVERVIEW OF LOWELL STREET STATION COMMUNITY COMMENTS AND PROJECT TEAM RESPONSE

Karen Arpino-Shaffer highlighted the key community concerns that were raised at the June 2011 station design workshop as follows: (a) Station design & neighborhood context; (b) community connections; and (c) Station drop-off/pick-up.

### LOWELL STREET STATION SITE DESIGN PLAN

Josh Burgel gave an overview of the neighborhood access diagram that was shared with the community at the June 2011 station design workshop. He pointed out that the closest bus stops are at Magoun Square and Highland Avenue, and that the station is located downhill from both.

Mr. Burgel presented a view from Vernon Street that was generated in the spring of 2011, and pointed out that since that time the Maxwell Greens project has made significant progress and that the MBTA and representatives of Maxwell Greens are coordinating site connection options. Mr. Burgel pointed out that the site design plan will include installing a new crosswalk and putting existing utility lines underground. He also presented an Existing Conditions Plan which reflected a plan for the Community Path to cross under the bridge.

Josh Burgel presented the following key components of the site design plan:

- Locating the main station entrance on the newly-built bridge.
- Locating the Community Path under the bridge with connections up to Lowell street station through Maxwell green.
- Creating a covered ramp at along the sidewalk to optimize station access.
- Creating a terraced access at the street edge for aesthetic impact.
- Relocating utility lines underground to widen sidewalks.
- Create a small scale that compliments neighborhood characteristics.
- Install bollards for visual impact at drop-off/pick-up area, possibly using historic artifacts from Max Pac, such as granite boxes.
- Creating community green space with the use of shrubs due to lack of room for trees.
- Using plantings to screen and buffer trash receptacles and sand storage boxes.

### LOWELL STREET STATION DESIGN CONCEPTS

Michael Epp presented the Lowell Street Station Design Concepts. Mr. Epp pointed out that this station presented numerous design challenges due to the small size of the station footprint, the very narrow plaza, and the fact that the station height is 32 feet above the plaza, which is basically the same height as adjacent residential properties.

#### Entry-Level Plan

Mr. Epp presented the station entry-level plan, highlighting that the Community Path will provide station accessibility for those who are permanently and temporarily disabled; as well as bikers and pedestrians. He also stated that since the station has minimum dimensions, the design team will continue to focus on how the station size will impact circulation.

#### Platform-Level Plan

Michael Epp presented the platform-level plan, highlighting that since the structural steel supports are exposed at platform level, a light, cream-colored paint will be used to create warmth.

#### Key Station Design Concepts

Other key station design concepts were presented by Mr. Epp as follows:

- Installation of a 10 foot tall bicycle storage facility.
- Design a 15 foot tall head house.
- Direct access from Community Path to station entrance.
- Install 10 foot tall covering over sidewalk/accessible ramp.
- Installation of steel windows that will provide the same sense of scale as windows from old Max Pac.
- Install wood timber and wood deck at station entrance.
- Improve station sight lines.
- Maximize visibility of Way-Finding Devices.
- Coordinate with Maxwell Greens regarding connecting driveway.

### NEXT STEPS

Karen Arpino-Shaffer provided an overview of the Public Involvement Meeting Schedule as follows:

- March 21<sup>st</sup> -Ball Square and College Avenue Station Design Meeting
- Spring 2012-Corridor-Wide Right-of-way/Noise/Vibration Meeting
- Spring 2012-Community Path Follow-Up Workshop

### COMMUNITY QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

**Q.** At the Gilman Square Station, are any pedestrian crossings planned for School Street, rather than just at Medford Street and Highland Avenue? **A.** Josh Burgel of CSS responded that the pedestrian crossing is actually located at Montrose Avenue where the Community Path will cross at street level. He stressed that due to the steep slope (7%-10%) at School Street, the project team is working with the City of Somerville to explore what options may be available to create a pedestrian crossing at this intersection, because adding a crossing with the current steep slope will only make the problem worse.

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**Q.** At the Lowell Street Station, current plans do not show all abutting residential properties and this situation is generating resident concerns that their properties may be demolished. Please clarify. **A.** Karen Arpino-Shaffer of HDR/Gilbane responded that even though it is correct that some of the plans do not show all abutting residential properties, it is merely based on a delay in updating all of the plans rather than reflecting the intent to demolish these properties. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer also pointed out that some of the plans as presented do not include the retaining walls that will be built. She indicated that the updated plans will be presented at future public meetings.

**Q.** Why do the current plans for Lowell and Gilman Stations not include lighting? **A.** Karen Arpino-Shaffer responded that the stations are only at a 30% level of design. Therefore, lighting and other station features will be added as the plans advance to a 30%-60% level of design.

**Q.** Have the surveys of property lines been completed? **A.** Karen Arpino-Shaffer responded that the survey work is still underway.

**Q.** NStar has scheduled a hearing on their plans for the removal and installation of telephone poles, and it was advised that the MBTA and project team coordinate this issue with NStar relative to any direct impacts on station design.

**Q.** The pedestrian sidewalks in the Site Plan that was presented for Lowell Street Station create an awkward path for pedestrians because they are configured in a manner that will force people walking to cut through the station concourse even if they don't plan to enter the station. **A.** Karen Arpino-Shaffer responded that the sidewalk is configured in this manner because the goal is to create a natural walking path rather than require pedestrians to take a big detour.

**Q.** The traffic flow at Lowell Street Station will put more pressure on Vernon Street to absorb additional vehicular traffic. **A.** Karen Arpino-Shaffer responded that the MBTA and project team will discuss this concern with City of Somerville officials.

**Q.** The Lowell Street Station will change local traffic patterns. Therefore, has any consideration been given to managing the traffic impacts of Maxwell Green and impacts on driver sight lines? Will a four-way stop sign or traffic light be installed to accommodate the additional traffic? **A.** Karen Arpino-Shaffer responded that the MBTA and project team have evaluated these issues with the City of Somerville and have also studied the traffic projections that were included in the Green Line Extension Environmental Assessment (EA). She indicated that the EA commits the project to making improvements at a number of intersections to improve vehicular flow, and this issue is still a work in progress.

**Q.** Please clarify if the fare gates at the Gilman Square Station will require pedestrians at Walnut Avenue and Vernon Street to pay a fare in order to walk through the station. **A.** Karen Arpino-Shaffer confirmed that due to the small size of the station, the fare gates are configured in a way that will require anyone walking through the station to pay a fare.

**Q.** What is the projected life cycle of the Gilman Square Station lighting and metal wall panel system? Also, the MBTA and project team were complimented for providing a strong pedestrian connection linking Gilman Square and Marshall Street to Broadway. **A.** Mike Epp (Lead Station Designer at Kleinfelder/SEA), responded that the MBTA and project team are planning to use metal panels for aesthetics and durability, and that the MBTA plans to use a TA florescent light fixture, although they are also considering the use of LEDs since they are more energy efficient.

**Q.** The accessibility to the Gilman Square Station is a major improvement. LED lighting would provide more design flexibility and will create a common palette for all Green Line stations. However, the design of both stations still looks complex. Can the design be simplified? Also, it appears there is no convenient accessibility to water for the plantings. Finally, at the Lowell Station, it would have been great if the MBTA and project team had considered erecting two head houses on each side of the street with one elevator for each of them because it will improve accessibility. **A.** Karen Arpino-Shaffer responded that having head houses on both sides of Lowell Street would create too many impacts on adjacent properties. Instead, the MBTA has directed the project team to minimize impacts by configuring the station within the tight confines of the existing MBTA right-of-way. The speaker voiced appreciation for this situation, but indicated that transit authorities in other parts of the country have successfully done this when facing the same challenges.

**Q.** The station designs are nice. However, the deviation on the west side of Lowell Street forces pedestrians to walk in and out of the station concourse area. If at all possible, pedestrians need to walk straight. Also, even though the design is better, having a direct connection extend between School Street and the station platform (500 feet) would make an

enormous difference in the amount of time it will take pedestrians to walk to and from the station. **A.** Karen Arpino-Shaffer responded that creating an entrance on the west side of the station is a function of cost, and since the MBTA is seeking Federal Transit Authority (FTA) funding, the cost/benefit of such a decision must be justified. Josh Burgel addressed the concourse issue, indicating that the sidewalk configuration was evaluated by the MBTA and team and at one point included a design that allowed pedestrians to bypass the concourse, but such a course would have had too much impact on keeping the station within the confines of the constrained MBTA right-of-way. Therefore, the accessible route and the terraced route at the street edge was the solution. Mr. Burgel indicated that the team also explored an option of installing a sidewalk that would have had a steep grade, but they ultimately determined it could not be successfully done. He also pointed out that the installation of a raised driveway will enhance the pedestrian environment.

**Q.** The Friends of the Community Path are very pleased with the current route and configuration of the path at the Gilman Square Station, especially the way it connects School and Medford Streets. Please clarify the direction of the Community Path at the Gilman Square Station. **A.** Karen Arpino-Shaffer responded that the Community Path will travel up to Medford Street and that the plan will include flexibility for a future route under the Medford Street Bridge.

**Q.** Installing 52 spaces for bike storage will not be enough since bikers will be traveling from many communities to commute via the stations. **A.** Karen Arpino-Shaffer responded that the team will take another look at the bike storage facilities to ensure they have maximized the amount of storage spaces. She pointed out that given the numerous space constraints at both station, it may not be possible to increase the number of spaces.

**Q.** Is the Medford Street Bridge slope ADA compliant? **A.** Karen Arpino-Shaffer responded yes the bridge is but the bridge approaches are not. She pointed out that the team has tried to raise sidewalks and use other tools to minimize the feel of the slope.

**Q.** Please clarify if the canopy cover at the Lowell Street Station will also enclose the sidewalk. **A.** Karen Arpino-Shaffer responded that the canopy will only cover the sidewalk, not enclose it.

**Q.** Will the Medford Street Bridge be entirely rebuilt? **A.** Karen Arpino-Shaffer responded yes, the bridge will be rebuilt because the bridge abutment must be widened to accommodate the new Green Line tracks.