

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

**PUBLIC MEETING – SUMMARY MINUTES**

LOCATION OF MEETING: Brooks Elementary School, 388 High Street, Medford

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: March 9, 2009 from 6:30 – 8:30 PM (Open House - 5:30 PM)

ATTENDANCE: 258 (signed in)

PROJECT TEAM: Stephen Woelfel, EOT (Project Manager); Kristine Wickham, VHB (Project Manager); Lisa Standley, VHB (Environmental); Jason Ross, HMMH (Noise/Vibration); Tom Wholley, VHB (Air Quality); Mark Louro, VHB (Right of Way, Construction); John Burkardt, PB (Maintenance Facility/Community Path); Drew Shelton, VHB (Environmental); Regan Checchio, RVA (Public Participation), Nancy Farrell, RVA (Moderator); Charlie Patton, RVA (Public Participation)

PURPOSE/SUBJECT: This project meeting presented an overview of the Green Line Extension Project, an environmental analysis, recommendations for station sites, and the preferred project alignment; and an opportunity for an extended question/answer period with meeting attendees.

**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.

HANDOUTS: Winter 2009 Project Fact Sheet

**PRESENTATION:**

Nancy Farrell, RVA, opened the meeting and explained the format of the meeting. She stated that she would moderate the meeting and asked those present to follow some meeting guidelines, including keeping comments or questions to two minutes so everyone who wished to speak has a chance. She then introduced Steve Woelfel, Project Manager for EOT.

Mr. Woelfel reviewed the meeting agenda and discussed the project goals: provide transit to previously underserved communities; improve regional air quality; reduce traffic congestion in the project corridor; and provide opportunities for job creation and economic growth.

He noted the Green Line project has been studied for over 40 years. In 2005, the Beyond Lechmere study outlined a transit investment study. An Expanded Environmental Notification Form (EENF) was submitted in October 2006 and approved after an eight week comment period. The purpose of this phase of study is to refine the viable transportation alternatives and propose a recommended alternative.

Mr. Woelfel noted that the Green Line Extension project is still in a relatively early stage, that of the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (DEIR/EA). The project still needs to be submitted for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts funding, as well as to complete Preliminary Engineering, Final Design, and Construction. The project is legally mandated for completion by December 31, 2014.

Mr. Woelfel reviewed the four transportation alternatives studied for the Green Line Extension: for the Medford Hillside branch, the Project Team looked at extending to Medford Hillside as well as to Mystic Valley Parkway/Route 16; for the Union Square branch, the team looked at alignments via the MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line and via McGrath Highway/Somerville Avenue.

The environmental analysis examined: Green Line operations; community impacts, noise and vibration; air quality; land takings; traffic and parking; the support facility; and, construction impacts. This analysis yielded a recommended alternative. The "mainline," the longer of the two lines, will be constructed within the existing MBTA Lowell Commuter Rail Line railroad right-of-way and will travel north from a relocated Lechmere Station to Mystic Valley Parkway/Route 16. The shorter of the two lines will be constructed within the MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line rail right-of-way and will travel to Union Square.

The benefits of the preferred alternative are that it operates in existing rail right-of-way, reducing property takings and construction impacts. It also attracts strong ridership, provides ADA-compliant access, connects environmental justice residents to jobs and services, and improves regional air quality.

Mr. Woelfel then reviewed the proposed station locations: relocated Lechmere, Brickbottom, Gilman Square, Lowell Street, Ball Square, College Avenue, Mystic Valley Parkway/Route 16, and Union Square. All stations will be ADA-compliant, with elevators and escalators. All will have pedestrian, bicycle, and auto drop-off access and nearby transit connections, where possible.

Green Line Extension projected ridership for the year 2030:

Station	Daily Boardings (2030)
Lechmere	11,100
Brickbottom	2,840
Gilman Square	4,520
Lowell Street	1,260
Ball Square	1,890
College Avenue	2,100
Mystic Valley Parkway/Route 16	2,000
Union Square	2,310

The number of new MBTA daily systemwide transit trips generated by the preferred alternative will be 8,600.

Mr. Woelfel also discussed a proposed support facility, which will provide vehicle maintenance and storage on the North Side of the Green Line to support the Extension and provide reliable service. It is proposed to be located at Yard 8 in Somerville because that parcel has the best size, location, and layout for the facility. EOT will continue to work with the City of Somerville on potential area development opportunities in the vicinity of the support facility.

Mr. Woelfel said that the public process for the project has been extensive. The project team has had over 100 meetings with the Project Advisory Group; public agencies; municipal and elected officials; disability commissions; station abutters; and neighborhood, advocacy and business groups. There is a project website: [www.mass.gov/greenlineextension](http://www.mass.gov/greenlineextension), which also has detailed reports on key topics of interest to the public.

Mr. Woelfel said that once the FTA completes its Technical Assistance on the project, the DEIR/EA will be submitted in the spring of 2009. At this point, there will be a public hearing and comment period on this document. EOT hopes to move into PE by the summer of 2009.

Ms. Farrell reviewed the discussion guidelines before opening up the meeting for questions.

#### DISCUSSION:

Representative Carl Sciortino, Massachusetts House of Representatives, said he was pleased to see how the Green Line Extension Project has evolved in Medford. He said that more residents have information about the project and noted the large attendance at the meeting. Representative Sciortino added that 10,000 area residents would be within walking distance to a Route 16 station, and he is proud that the Commonwealth is committed to such a major investment in the City of Medford. He said the challenge was now to build the best project as the process moves forward.

Councilor Breanna Lungo-Koehn, Medford City Council, said she is concerned about the studies on noise and air pollution and would like to see them in more detail. Mr. Woelfel said that the studies have taken longer than expected to be completed because the project team has been committed to addressing comments and concerns as the process went along. He said the DEIR/EA will contain all the detailed studies, and it will be published as soon as it is approved by EOT's federal and state partners.

Councilor Frederick DelloRusso, Medford City Council, noted that he also serves on the Project Advisory Group. He said he was pleased with the turnout for the meeting, happy to see Medford residents involved and engaged in the process. He said once the document is published, there will still need to be further work on mitigation issues. He urged residents to stay positive and engaged and asked EOT to do everything possible to limit or eliminate residential landtakings. He added that change for a community can be good change.

Sharon Kennedy, Medford resident, asked why there is no parking at the proposed Route 16 station. She said as baby boomers age, they may need auto access. Mr. Woelfel said the recommendation was made after looking at the ridership study. Parking would be hard to justify given the lower ridership projections at the station. He added that access to stations remains an important issue as EOT moves forward with the design phase. EOT is committed to working with the neighborhood to develop appropriate neighborhood access.

Christine Bennett, Medford resident, said that the proposed Route 16 station would be a draw for many communities, which would increase the pollution in the area due to more people driving into town. She asked why the Project Team did not consider capping or tunneling from College Avenue to Route 16 because the current plan moves the diesel particulates closer to the neighborhood plus adds to river pollution. Mr. Woelfel noted that EOT has to balance the regional needs for a station with the neighborhood needs of having a walk-up station. He said it is critical to use buses to feed the station so it would not increase local auto traffic. He noted that MBTA buses are very clean. With regard to a proposed tunnel, Mr. Woelfel said the project is part of a competitive funding process, driven by cost-effectiveness. A tunnel would yield exorbitant costs for minimal beneficial impacts. He said EOT will work with the community to review the environmental impacts so that residents will know more and be more comfortable with the impact projections.

A resident asked if there was a 2014 construction deadline for the project. Mr. Woelfel said that if the state did not meet the deadline, EOT would have to provide additional projects and additional costs to provide the same level of Air Quality benefit as the Green Line project. The resident asked if the 2030 ridership projections seem reasonable. Mr. Woelfel said that 2030 projections are a standard part of the ridership analysis detailed by Federal Transit Administration (so projects can be compared against one another). Mr. Woelfel said that development opportunities will be created by the project, and local communities need to work with state agencies so that local development plans are included in state-level growth projections. The resident also asked about how long it would take to go from Route 16 to Lechmere Station. Kristine Wickham, VHB, said that the project predicts a 12 minute ride.

Ken Krause, Project Advisory Group, thanked EOT for having the meeting and noted this was the 13<sup>th</sup> public meeting in Medford since 2008. He said this outreach is appreciated by the residents of Medford. He also thanked EOT for listening to concerns about homes in the area, noting that the project shows no homes being taken or a maintenance facility being located in Medford. He said he supports the Route 16 extension without parking because it will have less negative impact on the neighborhood, noting that one bus used properly can eliminate 60 single-occupancy cars. He said he would like the DEIR to show a strong commitment to mitigation during construction and operation. He also asked EOT to consider keeping the decking possibility open, especially as a single-track between North Street and the terminus. He would also like to see an increase in bicycle parking at the proposed Route 16 station to 260 cages.

Don Hughes, Somerville resident, asked if the state is prepared to fund the project if it does not receive federal funds. Mr. Woelfel said the project will be built regardless of federal funding. He said the previous transportation bond bill included funding to the SIP

commitments. He said the extension to Route 16 is contingent on federal funding. Otherwise, the extension may terminate at College Avenue.

Senator Patricia Jehlen, Massachusetts State Senate, said she was here to listen and hear questions from residents. She said she was excited about the Route 16 extension, and noted that Medford has received \$150,000 in planning funds to plan for development in the area.

Eileen Coleman asked if the state could do something about extending the project into West Medford. Mr. Woelfel said there were no plans to extend the project into West Medford. Ms. Wickham said that in the 2005 study, the team studied a connection to West Medford, but was limited by the historic Mystic River Crossing and the need for at-grade crossing at Canal and High Streets.

Andy Selurus, West Medford resident, said the project team should consider a transfer between commuter rail and the Green Line. He suggested doing away with commuter rail stops and providing a covering to mitigate noise and particulates between stations. Ms. Wickham said that the team had looked at these connections (like between Gilman Square and College Avenue), but the commuter rail lines also need to accommodate freight. Connections would also necessitate right-of-way takings. She added the project team's report on tunnels and decking is available on the project website.

Joel Swets, Executive Director of the Cummings Foundation, said that his organization is supportive of enhancements to mass transit and the Green Line. He said he would like to continue to work with EOT and the project team over plans for the Route 16 station and the parcels required. He is most concerned with the easement shown on the station drawing between the two buildings at Boston Avenue; he would prefer the team to explore using the open lot connecting Boston Avenue and the U-Haul parcel, in order to spare the two buildings. He is also concerned about the possibility that both buildings might be taken in order to build the station and said it is against the Commonwealth's interests to displace businesses. He said Cummings could be a good neighbor to the terminus without demolishing buildings.

Ellen Camparo asked that the conversation be directed to using green energy. Mr. Woelfel noted that Green Line vehicles are electric and run on a catenary. He said that EOT is going to try to use green technology to power the stations so there are no emissions. He added that the MBTA bus system has been upgraded to use compressed natural gas over the past decade; soon, commuter rail vehicles will be made cleaner, as well.

Suzanne Lepsky said she is concerned about mitigation for the project and would like to see a detailed traffic survey regarding drop-off at the Route 16 station. Mr. Woelfel said the complete traffic study will be included in the DEIR/EA.

Bryan Sylvain, Local 88, said he disagreed with the cost estimate of \$1 billion for the tunnel. He said the work could be completed within a matter of months with a boring machine, using the method used to construct Deer Island, not the Big Dig.

Doug Carr, Medford resident, agreed with the need for parking and traffic control for West Medford. He said these problems need to be fixed now by the City of Medford before the Green Line Extension is built. He said the extension will allow good people

opportunities they do not currently have. He added that this is an environmental project, but the community will need to come together to do whatever is needed for reasonable mitigation.

Rita Donnelly, Advisory Group, said the Green Line is very clean, but properties also abut commuter rail tracks, and the commuter rail tracks are going to be moved closer to residential properties. She said she recently visited the EPA website and reviewed the health effects of diesel emissions. She said the studies presented at Green Line meetings describe properties as being 50 feet from Green Line tracks, but her property is within 27 feet of the tracks. She added that she cannot believe tunnel construction would cost \$1 billion.

Jude Stell, Medford resident, compared this project to the Red Line extension to Alewife. She noted that the project was originally supposed to extend to Arlington, but because of “nimbyism” and lack of will, it did not happen.

Lee Auspitz, Advisory Group, said based on his experience in the 1980s with the Davis Square extension, the noise and vibration impacts were not as planned. At that time, funds were set aside for monetary compensation for mitigation. Mr. Woelfel said there are strategies for addressing impacts, once cost figures are developed with federal partners. These cost estimates will include costs for mitigation, but it is too early to discuss cash allotments.

Rachel Stark, Arlington resident, said she is delighted by the Green Line Extension project. She said there will be a need for direct bus service and pedestrian access to make the stations practical for surrounding communities. Service needs to be good, frequent, and direct to avoid an increase in auto traffic, as is seen at Alewife. She also suggested experimenting with bus rapid transit (BRT) between Route 16 and Alewife.

Joyce Paul, Medford resident, said her street just received signs noticing the need for parking permits. She urged residents to go to the police station, and they can help put these signs in place.

Ben Patterson said funding should be set aside for mitigation, and he would like to see more information about the “sliver” or other landtakings. He also was worried that the MBTA would be taking the property at historic price lows.

Amy Sans said she is a strong supporter of the project and would like to see an increased focus on safe pedestrian access across the Route 16 overpass.

Carolyn Rosen, GLAM, said she requested a mitigation report from EOT a year ago. She encouraged EOT to start now in doing studies on neighborhoods around transit. She also asked EOT to guarantee the buses used to feed the stations be CNG buses. She also said that more information about the landtakings is critical for all residents. Ms. Farrell said there will be a list of landtakings in the DEIR/EA.

Andrew Catagnetti said the only sensible way to get from College Avenue to Medford Square is via a tunnel. This approach could make the whole City Square area viable. He asked for more information about the tunnel study. Ms. Farrell said the study is available on the project website, under Current Materials.

Phil Platt, Medford resident, asked if there is a definitive date for the Route 16 terminus station. Mr. Woelfel said he hoped to have an approved DEIR/EA soon and be in Preliminary Engineering (PE) by the summer. He noted that every year, the Commonwealth would need to file new documentation to remain eligible for New Starts funding.

Hope Sanders asked if the project would cause any demographic changes to Medford. Mr. Woelfel said the project helps low-income and minority residents by providing them with greater mobility, and EOT will work with the communities to make sure that houses remain affordable and avoid gentrification.

Laurel Ruma said her entire neighborhood is located behind College Avenue and encouraged residents to follow up with the City of Medford for signs for parking permits. She noted that the parking issue is under the City's purview. She expressed her thanks for the mailings noticing the public meetings and encouraged more transparency on the project. She suggested creating a dashboard similar to the [recovery.gov](http://recovery.gov) and [stimuluswatch.org](http://stimuluswatch.org) websites that would account for all money spent on the project.

A participant said he favored ending the extension at Route 16. He said the project, if done correctly, would help long term global warming, transportation and the environment. He said the City of Medford would have to partner with EOT to contribute to the success of the project, noting that current parking enforcement in the city is bad. He suggested using foldable panels on the roof of the maintenance facility to make it "greener."

Noah Webber, Somerville resident, said that Massachusetts should consider electrifying commuter rail, like other cities.

Bill Wood, Advisory Group, said that many issues have been brought up since the beginning of this process one to two years ago that has brought this meeting to fruition. He said it was still impossible to support the project because only 10-20% of the data is available in written documents at this time. He said the document will need to be read in the entirety before he could commit to a side. He asked those present to appreciate critics of a project who are often fighting to make a project better.

Chip Olson, Somerville resident, noted that a number of the bridges that need replacing were replaced within the past five to ten years. He asked that EOT think long-term when doing this type of work. Mr. Woelfel said EOT certainly does not want to repeat this process. One of the reasons for the proposed transportation reform is to bring the highway and transit planning together.

Craig Mullenmeister said he supported the project, and it has been a long time coming. He said he is a retired taxpayer with kids and wants the Commonwealth to make careful decisions about its infrastructure.

A participant said there is plenty of transportation in Medford between the Orange Line and the buses. He said the project should stop at College Avenue, adding that the MBTA is terribly managed and is \$5 billion in debt.

Ms. Farrell adjourned the meeting and encouraged participants to stay and ask questions of the project team.

**Attendance**

Scott Accetta	Mona Deangewo
Mary Anne Adduci	Frederick DelloRusso, Medford City Council*
Trey Agnew	Jennifer DeNisco
Ruth Alfasso	Ralph DeNisco
Chris Allen	Christopher Des Autels
David Anderson	Christy DiBartolo
Allison Andrews	Andrea Diiorio
Mark Arcna	Barbara Dorritie
Denlyn Atherton	Dave Dunbar
Lee Auspitz*	Stephen Dyer
Jamillah Bakr	Chuck Donnelly
Eftechios Ballas	Rita Donnelly*
Patrick Barber	John R. Elliott
Elizabeth Bayle	Linda Faldetta
Jack Bazarbachian	Bob Fitzpatrick
Christine Bennett	Sarah Florenz
Loren Bernardi	Suzette Fraser
Michael Bernstein	William Galanes
Felix Blackburn	Ann Gallagher
Gwen Blackburn	Sean Garballey
Sylvia Bolden	Dave Garrity
John Boll	Mary Anne Gatto
Helen Bragdon	Lindsey Gaudet
Ed Brown	Valerie Washburn Geiselman
Marielle Cadwalader	Paul Gerety
Evan Caibon	Len Glionna
Ellen Cantarow	Maria Gonzalez
Megan Carey	George Gourgoumis
Doug Carr	John Greco
Clay Casso	Andrew Griswold
David Castine	Gabrielle Gropman
Andrew P. Castagnetti	Maurice Haddon
Gregg Ceevagh	Victoria Halal
Adria Chamberlain	Christine Hamilton
Brian Chamberlain	Richard Hamilton
Carol Chapman	Jean Hannafin
Jan Chen	Tony Hartman
Noah Chesnin, Conservation Law Foundation	Theodore Hatzis
Doris Cheverio	Matt Harutunian
David Chia	David M. Haynes
Jeanette Ciampi	Carolyn Heald
Matt Ciborowski	Jerry Hershkowitz
Pat Cleary	Polly Hertiz
Donna Clifford	Rhonda Hodges
Ann Marie Clinton	Rowena Hodges
Patricia A. Clinton	Lisa Hodsdon
Claire Colintins	Jana Hollingsworth
Lau Coleman	Todd Horowitz
Joe Cosgrove, MBTA	Don Hughes
Linda Coultas	Dan Hurley
Jimmy Crott	Chun-Hsin Hsu
Richard Cuddeback	Jared Ingersoll
Chris D'Aveta	Erik Jacobs

Jenny Jager  
Greg Jamial  
Sen. Pat Jehlen, MA State Senate  
Nancy Johnson  
Richard Johnston  
Hamilton Jones  
Robert Kangas  
John Karneth  
Judy Kaplan  
Louise Kearns  
B. Kennedy  
Sharon Kennedy  
Tim Kelly  
Michael Kim  
Henry King, Jr.  
David Kolowitz  
Lauren Kopec  
Mamye Kraft  
Ken Krause  
Laurie Krieger  
Cynthia Meagher Kuhn  
Jon Lannan  
Dan Lasko  
Alain Lauerdure  
Poynne Ledy  
Chung Lee  
Jay Levin  
John Lewis  
Tom Lincorn  
Jackie Linnane  
Suzanne Lipsky  
Geroge J. Logawich  
Leslie Loret  
Natalie Lovett  
Breanna Lungo-Koehn, Medford City Council  
Joe Lynch Jr., Magoun Sq. Neighborhood  
Association  
Robert A. Maiocco  
Rita Maneini  
Anita Marquard  
David Marquis  
James W. Martin  
Edward Martin  
Gareth McFeely  
Patrick McGloin  
Charles McKenzie  
Barbara McLean  
Todd Mcinnis  
Thomas Meagher  
Antonio Medeiros  
Adam Messom  
Scott Miller  
Nancy Meagher Millis  
Bill Momtsios  
Paul Morrissey  
Jim Morse

Brooks Mostue  
Howard Muise  
Cheryl Mullan  
Craig Mullenmeister  
Angela Murphy  
Barbara Murphy  
Brian Murphy  
John Murphy  
Ken Murphy  
Brad Mozuch  
Margaret Nagel  
Anita Nagem  
Tony Nenopoulos  
Kevin Nice  
Richard Orlando  
Ben Patterson  
Nicole Patterson  
Sarah Payne  
Katrina Peterson  
Michael Pacious  
Chris Papkee  
Phil Platt  
Frank O'Callaghan  
Bill O'Keefe  
Kathryn O'Leary  
Chie Olson  
Andrew Oswald  
Paul Overgady  
Carol Pappalaidu  
Sarah Pascarella  
Joyce Paul  
Paul Pichetti  
Javed Rahman  
David Rajczewski  
Christina Raymond  
Juliette Reiter  
Carolyn Rosen, GLAM  
Tiffany Reenor  
Jefferey J. Reese  
Walter Regan  
Patricia Reilly  
Jill Richard  
Julie Roberts  
Barbara Rubel\*  
Laurel Ruma  
John Rutledge  
Hope Sanders  
Matilde Santos  
Kathleen Sayre  
Marilyn Schachter  
Rep. Carl Sciortino, MA House of  
Representatives  
Fred Schlicher  
Tom Schuneman  
Amy Semmes  
Charlotte Sewell

Robert Sewell  
Gavin Schnitzler  
Laurel Siegel  
Michael Simon  
Andrew Sluz  
Cathlene Smith  
Shawn Smith  
Rocio Soto  
Audrey Stanwood  
Susan Specter  
Clarenda Spinnelli  
Rachael Stark  
Carolyn Stevens  
Mary Streeto  
Clodagh Stoker-Long, City of Medford  
Karen Sturniolo  
Alex Suiz  
Karen Suttle  
Joel Swets  
Brian Sylvain  
D. Tamplini  
Chenier Themistocle  
Odelaine Themistocle  
Mario Ulloa  
Peter Ungaro  
Ruth Unger  
Joseph Varanoske  
Donald E. Walker  
Andrew Wagner  
Joel Weber  
Judy Weinstorl  
Barbara Weir  
Debra Wisberg  
Rich Whelan  
W. Williams  
Ann Wilson  
Henry Winter  
William Wood\*

\* denotes Project Advisory Group Member