

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

PUBLIC MEETING – SUMMARY MINUTES

LOCATION OF MEETING: Argenziano School, Somerville, MA

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: September 28, 2010 – 6:15 PM – 7:45 PM (5:30 PM: "Introduction to the Green Line")

ATTENDANCE: 82

PROJECT TEAM: Richard Davey, MBTA (General Manager); Kate Fichter, MassDOT (Project Manager); Matt Ciborowski, MassDOT; Mary Ainsley, MBTA (Project Manager); Marggie Lackner MBTA; Kristine Wickham, VHB; Mark Louro, VHB; Michael Boomsma, VHB; George Katsoufis, DHK; Regan Checchio, RVA; Nancy Farrell, RVA (Moderator);

PURPOSE/SUBJECT: This meeting, hosted by MassDOT and the MBTA, outlined the guidelines and requirements used by the MBTA to design successful stations. The meeting began at 5:30 PM with an "Introduction to the Green Line" presentation. The presentation of new material began at 6:15 PM.

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.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GREEN LINE:

Kate Fichter, Project Manager for MassDOT, reviewed the details of the Green Line Extension project to date. Other project team members were also available to answer questions from meeting participants who were examining the station concept displays. There were no questions after Ms. Fichter's presentation.

PRESENTATION:

Ms. Fichter opened the main portion of the meeting and introduced Richard Davey, General Manager for the MBTA. Mr. Davey explained that the MBTA is committed to seeing the Green Line Extension move forward. He noted that the project was being shifted from MassDOT to the MBTA because the MBTA will be responsible for the construction and running of the extension. He said that Ms. Fichter will still be part of the project and will continue to handle the civic engagement portion of it. He introduced Mary Ainsley, MBTA, who will be serving as the Project Manager.

Mr. Davey explained that the MBTA has moved ahead with a new procurement for Construction Management and Preliminary Engineering services. He hopes the new contract will be awarded

in January 2011. In the interim, he is personally working with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on a "letter of no prejudice" so the MBTA can move forward with purchasing additional Green Line vehicles for the Extension. Mr. Davey emphasized that this is the first major transit extension for the MBTA in 25 years and is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. He then introduced Michael Lambert, Director of Transportation and Infrastructure for the City of Somerville.

Mr. Lambert thanked all the participants for coming out to the meeting. He said the City of Somerville was committed to doing what it can to ensure there were no more delays on the project. He said the Mayor's goals were to maximize the environmental, economic and transportation benefits of the Green Line Extension.

Ms. Fichter invited any elected officials present to make comments. Representative Denise Provost, MA House of Representatives said she was glad the project was happening. Representative Carl Sciortino was also present.

Ms. Fichter reviewed the elements of the Green Line Extension, which includes seven stations; a vehicle storage and maintenance facility; a 3.4-mile Medford Line and a 0.9-mile Union Square branch; multi-modal connections; and the design of the Community Path. She noted that the project timeline has parallel tracks for the public process, including the Design Working Group, Informational Meetings, and Station Design Workshops, and a project development process. Ms. Fichter noted that the project team was currently working on the Schematic Design Report and the EA. She added that revenue service for the Extension is currently scheduled for 2015.

Ms. Fichter then introduced Nancy Farrell, the moderator for the meeting. Ms. Farrell introduced Marggie Lackner, Deputy Director of Design for the MBTA, and George Katsoufis, DHK (station architects and urban designers). Ms. Farrell asked attendees to hold their questions until the end of the presentation and to try to keep the questions on topic to the material presented.

Ms. Lackner reviewed the MBTA's key design goals for all projects, which she summarized as "being a good neighbor." These goals included accessibility; maintainability; safety/personal security; sustainability; and integration with the neighborhood. She noted that the MBTA's station program has five elements: passenger circulation; public spaces; station elements; MBTA rooms; and station priorities.

Mr. Katsoufis showed a graphic demonstrating the spatial ratio of different stations elements to each other. Mr. Katsoufis then reviewed these design elements in more detail, showing photos of the principles used.

Passenger Circulation

Passenger circulation includes areas like the sidewalks, walkways, escalator, elevators and stairs. For these areas, the MBTA wants to:

- Prioritize the accessible path
- Facilitate seamless mode transfers
- Minimize the length of the path to the platform
- Create clear sightlines

Public Spaces

Public spaces include the station plaza, entrance lobby, the paid lobby, and platform. For these areas, it is important to achieve:

- Easy navigation
- A design theme with individual station identity
- Long-lasting and quality materials
- Safety
- Sustainable design

Station Elements

The station elements include the fare gates, ticket vending machines, signage, benches, and canopies. Mr. Katsoufis explained that these elements must be user-friendly, weather-protected and achieve the right balance of lighting (sufficient for the station but not bothersome for surrounding neighborhoods).

MBTA Rooms

The MBTA rooms, including electrical, communications, signal, fire detection and protection, and plumbing, are critical to include in each station. Mr. Katsoufis explained they are part of the larger system infrastructure and have some dimensional requirements. He noted that the placement of the rooms at the station can be flexible and used in a variety of station headhouse layouts.

Ms. Fichter then reviewed the MBTA station priorities Ms. Lackner had presented. She emphasized those areas in which public input is most valuable in the overall station program: unpaid lobby area; paid lobby area; platform; general circulation; kiss and ride; and, entrance plaza.

Finally, Ms. Fichter presented a "wordle" that the project team had developed using the Community Corridor Planning report. The "wordle" is a visual depiction of the text that appeared in the report, given greater prominence to the words that appear more frequently. Ms. Fichter noted that this wordle gave prominence to the words "connections," "community," "sustainability," and "cooperation," for example.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Farrell then invited participants to ask questions. She noted that if attendees wanted to write down their comments, there were also post-it notes available so comments could be left.

Steve Mulder said it was very helpful to hear about the station elements and examples in the presentation. He asked how the stations would be integrated into the neighborhood, including sightlines to the stations. Mr. Katsoufis said that these sort of elements – like landscaping and the placement of the headhouse – are very site specific and would be discussed in more depth during the individual station design workshops.

Wig Zamore encouraged the project team to consider making vertical simplicity of the stations a design goal. He noted that at many of the stations, the rail and street are at different vertical levels, and there is the opportunity to integrate them much more closely, as was done in Pasadena. Mr. Zamore also asked the project team to consider looking at sustainability at all scales of environmental impact and influence, including global. He said that sound pollution should be considered as well. He also asked that the extreme weather conditions be considered as the stations are designed and encouraged the team to find a middle ground

between outdoor and indoor stations. Finally, he asked for more transparency during the process when the project is handed off to a new consultant team.

David Dahlbacka said he appreciated the opportunity to speak with MassDOT about the Lowell Street station. He encouraged the project team to include access to both sides of the platform and consider relocating the MBTA rooms on the bridge side. He also noted that when thinking about sustainability, the team should keep in mind that health effects are always local.

Steve Kaiser said that most of the stations appear to be well designed with the exception of the Brickbottom/Washington Street one, which needs additional locational design. He suggested that citizens could facilitate the design process since they know the community best and encouraged holding design charrettes in Somerville to inform the consultant work.

Representative Provost said the display materials make it hard for observers to locate the stations in context. She suggested better labeling of the cross streets, for example. She asked for more details about the "secondary egress" noted on the drawings, adding there would be a benefit to including extra turnstiles at the secondary egress of some stations. Ms. Fichter said that the secondary egress is for emergencies, and its design is still evolving. Ms. Lackner added that the Commonwealth has developed a brand new building code, which will interface with ADA and other Federal codes to help shape the definition of the secondary emergency egress.

A participant said she believes integration with the neighborhood means a minimal impact on local residents and suggesting using local hiring as well as working to minimize the negative impacts of construction on local businesses.

Sean Sullivan asked if doors could be placed between the lobby and the stairs to provide a passenger waiting-area that can be secured from the weather. Ms. Lackner said the team is considering all design approaches, but noted that exposing escalators and elevators to the weather can be a problem.

Lynn Weisman said she appreciated that the Community Path was included on the project maps. She said she would like to see the station design for Lechmere include an egress to the Community Path to improve connectivity to Boston. She also said that the bike parking seen in the drawings seems to be a very small area, and the community will need more than 200 square feet at each station. She said she supported Mr. Zamore's comments regarding including the new engineering contractors at the meetings. Ms. Fichter said that the team is very interested in input on bike parking. She noted that the current designs include the placement of the standardized MBTA bicycle lockers. She added that there is no new consultant team, at present, since the new contract will not be awarded until January. The consultant team that is in place until January is the VHB team, which has been staffing the project for several years. Ms. Weisman said the community may prefer more bicycle parking versus more secure bicycle parking (using lockers). Ms. Lackner said the MBTA has an interest in providing secure parking in order to minimize thefts.

Alex Epstein said that he was very excited about the secondary egress on first impression, but he does not know why it cannot be used as a second entrance as opposed to just an emergency exit. He also asked that the bicycle storage areas be represented on the station drawings. Ms. Fichter said that a secondary headhouse (not egress) must be fully accessible and must be justified by the amount of ridership at a station. She said the project team will be examining this issue closely, but noted that just because a customer must cross a street before

entering a station, it does not necessarily justify a second headhouse. Mr. Epstein said the busy-ness of a street as well as the sightlines to the station were also important factors.

Jeremy Mendelson said he believes too much attention is being paid to the "kiss and ride" area, which may not be necessary at all stations. He also said the platforms should include heated shelters and real-time train information. He also encouraged the MBTA to consider bicycle access on the trains themselves, as other cities do. Ms. Fichter said the project team as well as the federal government believe it is important and an obligation of the transit system to provide safe areas to drop off passengers. She added that all of the stations will have an indoor component that will be climate managed.

Aili Contini-Field said that attention must be paid to the bus lines and encouraged having an overlay on the displays to show how the current bus routes interface with the stations. Ms. Fichter said she completely agreed and noted it was important to place the busways close and have a good path of travel to the stations themselves.

Ken Krause said he appreciated the new information presented, but had concerns about the bicycle parking. He said the new community master plans show that the regional shared-use paths will help serve stations, and the current ridership projections will not hold but will increase. He said that the stations should be designed with the potential for expanded bicycle parking. He also asked about the current planning status for the Phase 2 of the project (Mystic Valley Parkway/Route 16 Station). Ms. Fichter said that the final scope and budget of the Phase 2 study with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is almost complete. She believes this study will be starting soon.

Ethan Contini-Field suggested that not opening up the secondary egress could be a public relations problem for the MBTA because a locked-up egress could spark frustration with the surrounding community.

Charlie Dennison said the station design is an opportunity to add greenery and landscaping in the area that could make the stations easily identifiable. He also suggested adding small retail outlets in the stations. Ms. Fichter said that the success of retail space in transit is very dependent on all-day foot traffic in the stations, but it has not been explored yet for the Green Line Extension. She said the issue of landscaping becomes a maintenance one for the MBTA and suggested there were potential opportunities to partner with the local community on this.

Ellin Reisner said that while a second headhouse may not be feasible at this time, the stations should be designed to provide the future flexibility to add them. She added that while Union Square is the current terminus of the line, it should be designed so as not to preclude an eventual extension to Porter Square. Ms. Fichter agreed.

Gabriel Holbrow asked about a timeline for including art at the stations. Ms. Fichter said the project team is just starting to think about this issue and noted it should be integrated station art (such as tiles) instead of object art, given the small size of the stations. She welcomed ideas from the community.

Mr. Kaiser said it was important to consider pedestrians in the design of the stations. He noted that the limits of pedestrian concern may vary from station to station. He added that because Lechmere Station is the most important pedestrian crossing the station design should include all the way to Cambridge Street. Ms. Fichter said it was the project's responsibility to provide a safe and accessible path of travel to the station.

Ms. Fichter thanked everyone for participating in the meeting.

WRITTEN COMMENTS:

- I agree with the comments on the need for secondary entrances – Lowell St. would benefit greatly from it on the Clyde St. side. It would be helpful to show the access from the MaxPak side of the station and to Lowell Street.
- Please devote attention (internally, and in clearly marked materials at community meetings) to bus infrastructure – especially in stations with multiple bus lines. Where will the crowds go? Will all buses pick up in one centralized location? How will bus traffic impact pedestrian and drop-off experience? Please try to avoid: different lines dropping on different sides of the block (no line of sight); no space for multiple buses lined up (e.g. Harvard Square at Holyoke Gate); long walk from bus stop to headhouse/preferential treatment for low-density "kiss and ride" users!
- Kiss and rides seem like they would increase traffic. Aren't these stations close enough for community walking? What about bus access instead of car access?
- Kiss and ride areas—3 big concerns: (1) pollution and CO2 from idling; (2) traffic congestion; (3) safety issues from cars pulling into and out of stop area.
- More attention to bus access shown on drawings would help the discussion.
- Local business often lost 40-60% in business during construction – which can be devastating and cause businesses to close. How will local business be supported?
- Take the ideas from the CCP workshops seriously and create architectural/engineering sketches of them.
- The very people who have been suffering from the environmental issues the Green Line is meant to mitigate may be forced from the community due to risky property values. Hiring construction workers from within the corridor can mitigate this.
- The community is affected not only by what gets built but by who does the building. Please create a venue to talk about this, preferably one that is more accessible (language, content, location, etc.) to those most affected by this issue.
- Would like all secondary egresses to be 2nd entrances. Seems a waste and bad PR to have all the infrastructure there going unused. Demoralizing to walk past a closed egress 1000 ft. to get to headhouse. Entrances from multiple sides of the street would reduce the number of people jaywalking—potential fatalities. Esp. true in Ball Sq.
- The Design Process should invite and welcome the local design process already done in the community via CCP.
- Union Sq. entries need to be visible from the Somerville Ave./Washington St. and from Prospect/Washington/Somerville Ave. intersection – connections to the neighborhood businesses.

- Bus routes/stops need rethinking during this process, not afterward. For example, consolidate stops in Union Square near the station.
- Pre-engineering contractors should have a presence at station design mtgs with community.
- Why no public restrooms? This is a universal design issue.
- Gilman Sq. – connectivity with high school? Unclear – please show.
- Are noise reduction/minimizing systems part of the design? What agency/group is responsible for this?
- Will the proposed stations require the MBTA to take private land? I live on Murdock Street.
- Ensure that egress and entrance connections to Community path are incorporated into all station designs, including Lechmere.
- Bike parking should be at least tripled at each station. "Secure" parking not required (see Porter Square, Davis Square, etc.).

Attendance

Ruth D. Alfasso	Mike Korczynski
Jarrold Alston	Courtney Koslow*
Susan Altman	Kenneth Krause
George Berry	Michael Lambert, City of Somerville*
Todd Blake	Betsy O'Neil Larkin*
Lisa Brukilacchio	Jen Lawrence
Robert Buchanan	Eileen Levett
Robert Button	Yun Luo
Alicia Byrd	James Madden*
Michael Camoscio	Robert G. Martel
Linda Carrubba	Leo Martini
Marc Chabot	Rob May
Kristi Chasse	Jennifer Mazer
Larry Chu	Jim McGinnis*
Aili Contini-Field	Lynn McWhood
Ethan Contini-Field	Jeremy Mendelson
David Dahlbacka	Andy Metzger
Stuart Dash	Karen Molloy
Bill Deignan, City of Cambridge*	Steven Mulder
Charlie Denison	Robert Nosal
Caroline Downing	Phil Peterson
Emily Earle	Rep. Denise Provost, MA House of Representatives
Erik Ebertson	Ceallaigh Reddy
Alex Epstein	Ellin Reisner*
Bob Fitzpatrick	Eddie Rivas
Adam Frank	Barbara Rubel, Tufts University*
Jim Gallagher	Jame Sauer
Diane Gerogopulos	Rep. Carl Sciortino, MA House of Representatives
Linda Gouler	Sarah Shugars
Kyle Greaves	Greg St. Louis
Enrique Guardia	Jesse Steadman
Jacob Haldorse	Sean Sullivan*
Cecily Harwitt	Rebecca Tapley
Maryann M. Heuston	Denise Taylor
Gabriel Holbrow	Bill Taylor
Teresa Jackson	Heather Van Aelst*
Michael Jaffe	Lynn Weissman
Steve Kaiser	Brandon Wilson
Michael Katz	Wig Zamore
Rami Kelath	
Kathy L. Kelley	
Jonathan Kilpatrick	

* member of the Design Working Group