

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

PUBLIC MEETING – SUMMARY MINUTES

LOCATION OF MEETING: Medford City Hall, Medford, MA

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

ATTENDANCE: 89

PROJECT TEAM: 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.

Laurel Ruma asked about the procurement process. Ms. Fichter explained that the MBTA has moved ahead with a new procurement for Project Management/Construction Management/Preliminary Engineering services. She hopes the new contract will be awarded in January 2011. In the meantime, the current consultant team will be working on the Schematic Design Report and the Final Environmental Assessment (EA), as well as other project-related tasks.

An attendee asked if the right-of-way for the future Green Line Extension becomes too narrow near College Avenue to allow for two additional tracks to be constructed. Ms. Fichter said that the right-of-way does narrow, but it is still feasible to have four tracks (Green Line and Commuter Rail) through to College Avenue.

A participant asked whether the construction of the stations will be sequential or concurrent. Ms. Fichter said that while the exact details still need to be worked out with the construction

contractor, the staging and construction of the various project elements will be concurrently. It is the policy of MassDOT and the MBTA to open the Extension for public use all at once.

Melissa Bennett asked about the current schedule for the Route 16/Mystic Valley Parkway extension, as well as the process for applying for federal funding. Ms. Fichter said that for financial and other reasons, the Route 16 station will not be built during this phase of the project. It will be subject to a separate environmental review process, and it is hard to estimate the schedule for that. MassDOT and the MBTA are not seeking federal transit funding for that phase, although state funds have been identified for the 2016-2020 timeframe.

Paula Cook, Brickbottom, asked if the Commonwealth will still be committed to this project if there is a new governor. Ms. Fichter noted that the project was a legal commitment of the Commonwealth, embedded in state and federal regulations. She said the Commonwealth will suffer sanctions if the project is not built.

A participant asked for details regarding the proposed extension of the Somerville Community Path. Ms. Fichter said that MassDOT is funding the design of the Community Path from Lowell Street to Inner Belt Road. Mark Louro, VHB, added that for the most part, the Path runs along the west side of the corridor and crosses over Washington Street on its way to Inner Belt Road in east Somerville. The Path is at-grade from Walnut Street south.

William Wood, Medford, said the Community Path needs to be built correctly or it won't be used. He asked Mr. Louro if he had read a recent study on this issue. Mr. Louro said he had not. Dr. Wood said the Community Path needs to be fully accessible. Ms. Fichter said that MassDOT and the MBTA would be using the regulations associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), state building and fire codes, and the recent Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL) agreement with the MBTA as guidelines for designing the public facilities associated with the Green Line Extension.

Ken Krause, Medford, asked if the consultant team in place between now and January will be working on the federal New Starts application as well as the Final Environmental Assessment. Ms. Fichter said the team will be working on the Final EA (including a public hearing on the EA), the New Starts application, boring and geotechnical analysis, advanced conceptual engineering, and the Updated Schematic Design.

An attendee asked for the timeline for start of service. Ms. Fichter said the current timeline has passenger service beginning in October 2015.

A participant asked how long construction will take. Ms. Fichter said the project team is estimating a 2 ½- to 3-year construction window.

Carolyn Rosen, Green Line Advisory Group of Medford (GLAM), said that the project team should focus on mitigation as well as station design. She noted that some businesses will be displaced by the project as the MBTA may require land around the tracks. She said that the mitigation discussed in the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) is too vague. She said a similar process occurred during the Rivers Edge project, causing a lengthy and expensive court case. Ms. Rosen also requested that all members of the Design Working Group have to file Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form because they should be considered "special state employees." She said these forms should be posted on the project website. Ms. Fichter said that the purpose of this meeting was to focus on station design, and a project goal has been to limit property acquisition wherever possible. She noted that if the MBTA has to displace a

business, it is obligated to purchase that business and relocate it. She clarified that the Design Working Group has been established to help outreach to the communities and inform the MassDOT and MBTA processes, and MassDOT counsel does not believe the members are "special state employees." She added that members are encouraged to check with the State's Ethics Commission if they want to clarify their individual status. The next meeting of the Design Working Group will be in November.

PRESENTATION:

Ms. Fichter opened the main portion of the meeting and introduced Mayor Michael McGlynn. He first noted that in the Rivers Edge project, the Commonwealth did not set the values of the properties, and there was only one court case out of the 26 properties acquired.

Mayor McGlynn said that the design of the Green Line Extension stations is critical to the project, and it is important that the local neighborhoods be part of the process. He said that stations should be accessible to the community, aesthetically-pleasing and consistent with the overall neighborhood.

Mayor McGlynn also announced that MassDOT, the City of Medford and the City of Somerville were partnering to give the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) a \$209,000 contract to study the impacts and transit-oriented development opportunities at a future Route 16 station. He said this study will be paid for by MassDOT and is critical to figure out the benefits and impacts of the project.

Ms. Fichter invited any elected officials present to make comments. Representative Sean Garballey, Massachusetts House of Representatives, said he agreed with the mayor and thanked MassDOT for funding the study. He said that this study will be an opportunity to hear from constituents and he encouraged attendees to ask questions during this process. Mayor McGlynn added that it will be at least two years until there are more details about possible land takings in the area between College Avenue and Route 16.

Representative Carl Sciortino, Massachusetts House of Representatives, noted that he had been at every major Green Line Extension project meeting since 2004, and this meeting was a major milestone in the project, moving into a more intense design process. He said that users and neighbors are excited to see the project moving forward since they have been frustrated by the delays. He added that he was very pleased about the study of the Route 16 station, noting that this project represents the first time in 25 years there has been major transit expansion in Massachusetts.

Bob Fitzpatrick, Office of Senator Jehlen, said he was pleased to see the turnout for the meeting. He expressed confidence in MassDOT and was pleased to see the project move forward.

William Wood, Medford, expressed his reservations about the project, citing concerns about gentrification of neighborhoods and people being displaced. He said that in the past there has not been any representation on MBTA projects by African-Americans. Ms. Fichter thanked him for his feedback.

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 Marggie Lackner, Deputy Director of Design for the MBTA, and George Katsoufis, DHK (urban designers and station architects). Ms. Farrell asked attendees to hold their questions until the end of the presentation and to try to keep the questions relevant 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 include 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 these design elements to each other. He noted, for example, that the main stairs area (part of the public spaces) is quite small, approximately 200 square feet of the entire area. 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 these elements must be user-friendly, weather-protected and achieve the right balance of lighting.

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 to achieve a variety of station headhouse layouts.

Ms. Fichter then reviewed the MBTA station priorities Ms. Lackner had presented. She showed which areas where 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.

DISCUSSION:

Nancy Farrell, Regina Villa Associates, explained that she would be moderating the discussion portion of the meeting. She 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.

Christine Bennett, Medford, said that she found the material that was presented difficult to envision. She expressed her concern about the College Avenue and Route 16 stations because of their proximity to the local neighborhoods, specifically noting the current traffic problems. Ms. Fichter said that the station program presented was designed to be general and apply to almost any station in the MBTA system. She said the goal was for the stations to work for neighborhood residents, as well as riders. Ms. Fichter said the Greenbush Commuter Rail line is a good example of a successful MBTA project with close proximity to a neighborhood, as is the Green Line D Branch.

Iris Davis said that having 7 stations in 3.4 miles seems like too much in these difficult economic times. She said that having stations too close together will make the line slow and inefficient. She also expressed concern about existing traffic congestion in the area. Ms. Fichter said that there is actually more space between the stations than it sounds because of the Union Square spur and the relocation of Lechmere Station. She added that the station locations are sites of historic transit and existing civic centers. She said that as part of the project, the project team will be making improvements for local traffic flow.

An attendee said that in an early Lowell Street station design, there was a 16 ft. ramp, which yielded some accessibility concerns. Ms. Fichter said that was an old design, and the current design features two elevators plus an escalator at each station (in addition to stairs). The attendee added that he was concerned about navigating the intersection at the College Avenue terminus. Ms. Fichter agreed it was a challenging intersection, but noted there would be a "kiss and ride" for dropoff provided, as well as traffic improvements.

Joseph Amarillo, owner of a gas station and car wash on Park Street, asked when MassDOT will be announcing the final land takings. Ms. Fichter said that the project team is currently finishing the boundary survey, but that the process will be a long one. She added that an overall goal of the project is to reduce property acquisitions.

Doug Carr, Medford, noted that the station drawings shown were very early, but said the kiss and ride area is very different at each station. He encouraged MassDOT to keep them as minimal as possible, to make driving less attractive. Ms. Fichter said the areas shown may reflect the type of vehicle traffic expected for the station, as well as the land available.

Brian Lever said that currently the Green Line vehicles at North Station were often full and asked how the extension would affect the number of cars in the MBTA system. Ms. Fichter said that the "D" and "E" lines will be extended as part of the project. More Green Line vehicles will be added to the system, and headways will be improved. She said that all of these measures will increase the capacity of the system.

Ms. Bennett said that having kiss-and-rides is a reality because drivers from Winchester will drop-off passengers, increasing the pollution in the local neighborhoods. She said she lives off of Winthrop Street, and the current traffic conditions are so bad that it takes a half-hour to reach the high school in the morning. Ms. Fichter said she understands the traffic concerns. She said the project is intended to take cars off the road regionally and reduce the number of miles driven in the region.

Jacqueline Vitano asked if the project is funded in the current budget. Ms. Fichter said that MassDOT is applying for federal funding to support the project, and is hoping that it will be 50% by the federal government and 50% by the Commonwealth. She said that projects like these are paid for by bonds, and this project is part of the bond budget. She added that the traffic improvements were included in the total cost of the project.

Rob Kassel, Brickbottom, noted that the community input on the stations has a specific process, but wondered if there would be opportunities to provide feedback on other parts of the project. Ms. Fichter said the team plans to have a workshop on the Community Path as well as a meeting about the maintenance facility. She said there were fewer opportunities for public comment on issues of power stations and signaling, but there may be smaller opportunities for this.

A participant asked if bus stops will be incorporated into the designs. Ms. Fichter said that bus connections are very important to the project, and MassDOT wants to see the bus stops close to the stations, but don't want idling buses too near riders. She said she doubted that the buses used would be the articulated buses because they are difficult to navigate through local neighborhoods, and the ridership would have to justify it.

Ms. Ruma said she is a project abutter from Burget Avenue as well as a member of the Design Working Group (with Mr. Carr). She encouraged participants to reach out to her and Mr. Carr with any comments and questions. She added that the Design Working Group will be meeting in November as well as having subcommittee meetings on specific topics of concern.

Ms. Fichter thanked the participants for attending the meeting.

WRITTEN COMMENTS:

- College Ave. as a terminus does not work. Please think outside the box on fixing traffic and pedestrian safety here.
- Plan/build to Rt. 16 in one phase. Will save \$50 million.
- Please allow for working community design sessions for the tracks and for mitigation in each area, just as you are doing for each station. Thank you. Polly Pook - Brickbottom.
- 90% of users will be coming via walking, biking and bus – non-cars. An equal amount of attention should be placed on this aspect of station design.
- Good presentation. Well done!

- As part of public outreach – could/would there be an art contest for interior design elements? e.g. photos, art, etc.?
- For many years, freight side-tracks ran parallel with the Lowell Line. These rights-of-way still exist, I think. Use these rights-of-way and there should be little or no need to take adjacent property by eminent domain.
- You talk so much about mitigation, you have an enormous budget, DO SOMETHING WONDERFUL with the stations and people will want to live near them. Pat Cornelison.
- My main concern is the future of my business. It is difficult to plan ahead without a clear plan of what the railroad intends to do with the abutters on Boston Ave.
- At the College Avenue Station, if a Commuter Rail Station was also built (there was one there at one time), then the suburbanites from Winchester and Woburn would not need to drop off commuters at these stations.
- Remember that not all bicycle traffic will be via the community path. Please be sure to accommodate bicycle arrivals and departures via the surrounding street. Curb cuts near bike racks.
- Please count the # of trees on the banks and replace them as close to that number as their original and as close to their original locations as possible. Native shade trees.
- At one time it was stated that trains on the tail tracks past College Ave. would warm up in the morning hours on those tail tracks. I recommend they warm up in the station or at the other side of the station which is more educational/industrial than in our neighborhood. (Non-sleeping vs. sleeping communities.) Thanks, L. Kvieger.
- Kiss and ride should be eliminated at Ball Square and College Avenue stations as they will create traffic congestion nightmares. College Avenue Station is really Boston Ave.
- No station at Rte. 16 please. Too crowded and too much traffic now. When was a traffic study done of the entire city of Medford?? College Ave. is too crowded, also. Why take land and homes? And why take businesses for something that is not needed?

Attendance

Mary Anne Adduci
Brian Ahearne
Angela Antidormi
Richard Ariari
Cindy Baires
Juana Baires
Florence Bairn
Don Banhorn
Elisabeth Bayle
Sarkis Bazarbachian
Jon Benjamin
Christine Bennett
James Bennett
Mellissa B. Bennett
Michael Bernstein
Gwen Blackburn
Felix Blackburn
John Boll
Eric Bourassa, MAPC
Christine Brown
David Carnerale
Doug Carr*
Shih Cheung-Huo
Pat Cornelison
George Cushing
Chris D'Aveta
Iris Davis
Mona Deangewo
Emma Desau
Jacklyn DeVore
Laruen DiLorenzo, City of Medford
Andrea Diiorio
Jim Dunlam
Carey Duques
John Roland Elliott
Kristin Feierabend
Bob Fitzpatrick
Jacqueline Furtado
Rep. Sean Garballey, MA House of
Representatives
Rachel Gordon
Rui Gruo
Craig Hastings
Jerry Hershkowitz
Rob Kassel
Kavita Koppa
Mike Korczynski

Kenneth Krause
Laurie Krieger
Bruce Kulih
Brian Lever
Councilor Breanna Lungo-Koehn, City of
Medford
Joseph Lynch
Mary Ann Lynn
Bill Lyons
Joseph Marie
Jeff Marotta
Joan Marshall
Edward Martin
Nuala McGowan
Henry Milorin
Robert Minchielco
Alan Moore*
Paul Morrissey
Jim Morse
Curtis Mulibury
Barbara Murphy
Evelyn Murray
Frank O'Callaghan
Idelena O'Neil
Gail Onubayh
Polly Pook
Melene Ragovin
Javed Rahlman
Ashling Reilly
Karen Roberto
David Rose
Karen Rose, City of Medford
Carolyn Rosen
Laurel Ruma*
Mark Rumley
Allison Sacco
Norman Shacat
Erin Shanley
Laurel Siegel
Helen Silver
Clodagh Stoker-Long, City of Medford
Maureen Tardelli
Chris Van
Daniel Velasco
Yuan Wang
Sue Watts
Barbara Weir
Kathleen Ziegenfuss, City of Somerville

*member of Design Working Group