

Memo

Contract No. E22PS02
Task No.: 11.2

Date: June 27, 2011
To: Mary Ainsley – Director of Design and Construction
From: Karen Arpino-Shaffer – Deputy Program Manager
Beverly Johnson – Public Involvement Consultant
Subject: Union Square Station Workshop – Cummings Elementary School, Somerville –
June 22, 2011
cc:

LOCATION/DATE OF MEETINGS:

Cummings Elementary School, Somerville, MA June 22, 2011, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: See attached attendance list sheet.

PROJECT TEAM: Mary Ainsley – MBTA; Karen DeSpirito – MBTA; Margaret Lackner – MBTA; Michael McBride – HDR/Gilbane; Karen Arpino-Shaffer – HDR/Gilbane; Bob Cone - HDR/Gilbane; Gloria Son – HDR/Gilbane; Michael Izzo – HDR/Gilbane; Vanessa White – HDR/Gilbane; Melissa Farrell – HDR/Gilbane; Beverly Johnson – Bevco Inc.; Deneen Crosby – Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge LLC; Josh Burgel – Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge LLC; Scott Bosworth – Fort Hill Infrastructure Services LLC; William Lyons – Fort Hill Infrastructure Services LLC; Jason Ross – Harris Miller Miller & Hanson Inc.; Mike Epp – Kleinfelder/SEA; Arthur Spruce – Kleinfelder/SEA; Matt Morong – Kleinfelder/SEA and Tom Jin – Kleinfelder/SEA

PURPOSE OF MEETING: A Union Square Station Design Workshop Meeting was held with the public, providing them the opportunity to give input on the Union Square Station: design; site circulation; traffic impacts; and general urban design context. The goal of the meeting was to hear community concerns and gather feedback to help guide the Design Team on the future station design. The workshops were advertised on the Green Line Extension Project Website; electronic mail blasts; meeting flyers; and press announcements.

The Design Team will incorporate many of the comments received into the architectural design plans and present an update of the new station design to the community in the fall of 2011.

PROJECT BACKGROUND: The MassDOT/MBTA Green Line Extension Project will extend the existing Green Line service from Lechmere Station to the northwest Boston corridor communities of Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford, with an extension of the main line to Medford and a spur line to

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Union Square in Somerville. The project will improve transit service, mobility, and regional access for residents and visitors in Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford.

Bringing light rail service to these densely-populated cities will address longstanding transportation inequities, result in fewer automobiles on local roads, and help to combat greenhouse gas emissions and other components of air pollution. The Green Line Extension will also support municipal plans for local economic growth and provide residents of environmental justice communities with faster rides to jobs, schools, health care, and other destinations.

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW: The station workshop focused on three key areas: (1) Station Design; (2) Urban Design; and, (3) Community Concerns. A summary of comments received by the community, workshop photos, and the attendance register are attached at the end of this memo.

The workshop format included three major segments: (1) Project Overview Presentation; (2) Breakout Groups; and (3) Reconvene, Wrap-Up and Next Steps.

1. **Project Overview Presentation** – A Power Point presentation that included: Team Introductions; Green Line Extension Overview; Workshop Goals and Objectives; and Station Presentation. Following the presentation, the meeting attendees were separated into “Breakout Groups.”
2. **Breakout Groups** – Each breakout group had a Design Team moderator, a meeting note scribe, and a technical expert to listen, document, and address concerns raised in the breakout groups. The Design Team technical expert answered design questions and concerns relating to the following subject matters: (1) Station Design; (2) Urban Design; and (3) Community Concerns. At the end of the breakout group session, one group member (Team Captain) was asked to recap the group’s concerns and issues, and all attendees reconvened into the larger group.
3. **Reconvene Into Larger Group, Wrap-Up and Next Steps** – The attendees reconvened and the designated Team Captain shared their group’s thoughts and ideas. A Wrap-Up and Next Steps was presented to the audience.

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Union Square Station beginning of presentation



Community listens to the opening presentation

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Mike Epp answers questions on the Station Design.



Neighbors discuss the Urban Design with Deneen Crosby with CSS.

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SPREADSHEET OF COMMUNITY CONCERNS/ISSUES (see attached)

**GREEN LINE EXTENSION
COMMUNITY COMMENTS
UNION SQUARE STATION DESIGN WORKSHOP**

	A	B	C
1	STATION DESIGN	URBAN DESIGN	COMMUNITY CONCERNS
2	Clarify if the proposed station platform can accommodate four cars.	The crosswalk design proposed for both intersections along Webster are "spectacularly unsafe." Crossing over Newton Street would be safer.	Clarify what the MBTA plans to do about Iron Steel/Property Acquisitions.
3	Clarify if the project scope extends into Porter Square.	The poor visibility of pedestrians coming over the hill/bridge given their steepness is a great safety concern.	The MBTA should have discussions with the City about the development of the adjacent area.
4	The turnstiles need to be farther away from the platform to leave room for waiting.	Make sure signage is easily visible to and from shopping center.	Iron Bus is a brownfield, could new soil be brought in to regrade the current elevation?
5	Increase the size of the station upstairs, and break away from the rectangular feel of the downstairs.	Safety under the bridge is a concern.	Prospect Street is bleak. What can be done to enhance this area?
6	Make the station entry way look really nice, since there was talk of eliminating the outer edges of the station.	A Allen/Charleston Street path to connect that area of the neighborhood would be easier.	
7	The station upper level should have a more interesting architectural make-up: Less rectangular.	Neighborhood residents should be consulted before opening the area up to more foot traffic.	
8	Make sure the station fits the context of the neighborhood and is a more definitive part of the neighborhood.	Clarify the cost of moving the station to the other side of the bridge.	
9	The station will need good signage for access and egress.	Evaluate the access from Union Square and visibility much more thoroughly.	
10	The station should be an "easy to see" landmark.	The vehicular traffic on Washington Street or Somerville Avenue creates unsafe conditions for pedestrians cutting through Union Sq.	
11	The station needs more of a civic presence.	Clarify the cost of a Prospect/Webster walking bridge.	
12	Clarify the station bus connections and how they will operate.	Due to heavy traffic in the area, the routes along Washington Street towards the station need more consideration and evaluation.	
13	Clarify if there will be a turn-around on the bridge and a bus/car dropoff at the bridge.	Clarify the bus pick-up area?	
14	The 3-D models and animation are much appreciated.	Clarify if the only access will be from Prospect Bridge, and if a pedestrian, bike, and bus loop is possible.	
15	Explore if a ground level entry under the bridge is possible.	Clarify if the station will be staffed.	
16	Pedestrian crossings at Prospect Street are very scary.	Fully explore the integration of bus stops with the station-can there be a bus stop right at the station?	
17	Evaluate putting a bus drop-off on Prospect Street at the upper level of the station.	Clarify if stairs can be installed at Webster and Newton so people from Webster do not have to go up and around to get to the station.	
18	Clarify if the drop-off zone is a new requirement and if it is necessary.	Since the station will be located far from the heart of the square, there is concern about sight lines and pedestrian safety.	
19	The initial vision was to locate the station in Union Square.	Pedestrian access from Block 11 is poor.	
20	Linking the buses to the station is critically important.	The section of Prospect Street over the bridge is not ADA-compliant.	
21	Explore installing a covered walkway to support economic development on Prospect Street from Somerville that could be connected with a future building.	If the station is pushed back, why not include a bus lane right on Prospect Street?	
22	Clarify if the existing grade will remain once the drop-off is built.	Explore using the existing ROW between the bridges at Prospect St. and Webster as space for a drop-off/bus stop.	
23	The station should be designed to be set up for future development.	Make the upper level more inviting, especially considering that the lower drop-off will become cut off.	
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**GREEN LINE EXTENSION
COMMUNITY COMMENTS
UNION SQUARE STATION DESIGN WORKSHOP**

	A	B	C
25	STATION DESIGN	URBAN DESIGN	COMMUNITY CONCERNS
26	Clarify the plan for Bennet Street, which is currently unpaved.	The lower entrance should be more inviting and fit with the future vision of the area.	
27	Wayfinding signage is critical to increasing station visibility from a far distance.	Clarify if the wall and fence along the bridge is necessary.	
28	Explore having an outdoor room and/or canopy on the upper level of the station.		
29	The size of the proposed signage is good. Clarify if there is an opportunity for additional signage.		
30	Evaluate the possibility of having a glass walkway for the Webster Street access.		
31	Create pedestrian access from the heart of the square.		

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ATTENDANCE LIST

Betsy Larkin
Eamon McGeady
Cecily Harwitt
Robert Buchanan
Margaret Sanfilippo
Ellen Reisner
Stephen Houdlette
Karen Molloy
Mike Kayser
Marc Chabot
Khalid Shaker
Danielle Dreilinger
Chris Braiotta
Mike Stoffer
Robert Merter
Jim McGinnis
Brad Rawjon
J.F. Pinto
Sonia Lipson

Pat Larkin
Joe Capuano
Harvey Phiterp
Justin Kearnan
Steve Taylor
Steve Mulder
Kristi Chase
Mark Hiedergang
Mimi Grandy
Kristen Stelljes
Steve Avar
Jonathan Barnardo
Dori Peleg
Rachel Fichterbaum
Meredith Levy
Charles Fineman
C. Pinto
Joe Samaro