

**GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT**  
**PUBLIC MEETING – SUMMARY MINUTES**

LOCATION OF MEETING: St. Clement School, Medford

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: June 3, 2013; 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

ATTENDANCE: see list, attached

MBTA: Mary Ainsley, Senior Director, MBTA Design and Construction Department; Jeff Sarin, MBTA Project Manager; Margaret Lackner, MBTA Director of Design

PROJECT TEAM: Karen Arpino-Shaffer, HDR/Gilbane; Michael McBride, HDR/Gilbane; David Farmer HDR/Gilbane; Joe Sgroi, HDR/Gilbane; Caroline Downing, AECOM/HNTB; Greg Yates, AECOM/HNTB; Randy Henke, AECOM/HNTB; Elton Elperin, AECOM/HNTB; Heather Gilman, AECOM/HNTB; Deborah Fennick, Fennick McCredie Architecture; Chris Ingersoll, Fennick McCredie Architecture; Kerri Chace and Nancy Farrell, Regina Villa Associates; Nicole Richer, The Compliance Mentor Group; Josh Burgel, CSS

AGENCY/ELECTED OFFICIALS: Mayor Michael McGlynn, Medford; Hayes Morrison, City of Somerville; George Proakis, City of Somerville; Brad Rawson, City of Somerville

PURPOSE/SUBJECT: The first of a series of five public meetings to provide the Cambridge, Somerville and Medford communities with updates on station designs for the Green Line Extension project. This meeting focused on the Ball Square Station.

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). The project will extend existing MBTA Green Line service from Lechmere Station through the northwest corridor communities of Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford, with an extension of the rail 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.

**PRESENTATION**

*GLX Project Update*

Karen Arpino-Shaffer, Deputy Program Manager, HDR/Gilbane, opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda. Design of the Ball Square Station has progressed since the last meeting, and the goal of the presentation is to update the community on changes. This station is unique, since it is half in Somerville and half in Medford. The project team has been meeting regularly with both cities to discuss issues, such as traffic, crosswalks, and other local and safety concerns. Somerville will join the team in updating the community on issues related to Ball Square Station.

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer provided an update on the design schedule. She noted that the last round of station meetings was held in February and March of 2012. In the summer of 2012, the project team completed the Advanced Conceptual Design (ACD). In September 2012, AECOM/HNTB

received a Notice to Proceed for the Advanced Preliminary Engineering (APE) and Final Engineering on the project. The project team completed Value Engineering on ACD in fall 2013. She noted that the APE is scheduled for completion in September 2013.

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer outlined the three elements of Phase 1 construction. The MBTA has engaged Barletta Heavy Division for the Phase 1 work. The firm received a Notice to Proceed on January 31, 2013. Construction is anticipated to last until March 2015 (26 months), with demolition of 21 Water Street to occur between April 2013 and August 2013; work on the Medford Street Rail Bridge to occur between March 2013 and March 2014; and work on the Harvard Street Rail Bridge to occur between February 2013 and November 2014. The community has been very cooperative with any impacts of the work. She showed a series of photos of the work in progress.

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said that the MBTA is in the process of selecting a Construction Manager/General Contractor (CM/GC) for Phases 2-4. The Notice of the Award is expected to be announced this summer, hopefully after July Board approval. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said that the teams have co-located to an office in Boston and held an Open House there in May. The CM/GC will join the other firms in co-locating to the office this summer.

#### *Ball Square Station*

Greg Yates, Project Manager for the final design team of AECOM/HNTB, provided an update on the design development process. He explained that his team began with the Advanced Conceptual Design site plan that the community had reviewed. Mr. Yates said the team understands community concerns around the neighborhood context in and around Ball Square; the importance of community connections and neighborhood safety; traffic moving through and around the neighborhood; and lighting. AECOM/HNTB examined the ACD plan developed by HDR/Gilbane and moved it through Value Engineering, Design Verification and Design Development. This process looked at ways to contain cost while meeting safety and operations concerns. The independent reviewers look at such issues as passenger flow, ridership, and use of stairs and elevators; and the Value Engineering process considers community concerns and issues.

Randy Henke, Director of Design for AECOM/HNTB, reviewed the differences between the ACD plan and the current proposed site plan. He showed a diagram of the neighborhood access to the station, a circle with a half mile radius. The proposed College Ave. Station is to the north and Lowell Street to the south. Mr. Henke also showed a series of photos of the existing site to orient the audience, looking from a variety of directions, to understand the existing conditions and site constraints. In the Advanced Conceptual Design site plan, the station is up against the street with accessible access provided at the upper plaza entrance. The site grades provided some challenges to the design team.

Mr. Henke showed a diagram depicting a major utility beneath the site that the team was not previously aware of at the time of the prior public meetings. Because it is a major NStar distribution line for New England, it would cost millions of dollars to move, and the team had to step back and take another look at the site with its community partners. Moving the station back 20 feet from the street left a dark alley; a 40 foot setback interfered with an easement on the site. So the final decision was to set the station building 60 feet back from the road, leaving room in front of the station for a plaza and potential space for future transit oriented development. This plan does not change the accessible entrance, which remains at the upper plaza entrance. The accessible pickup and drop-off, however, was moved to the center of the bridge. The design includes a covered walkway leading into the station from this location on the

Broadway Bridge. The redesign also includes relocating the platform to make room for future four-car operation and required emergency egress.

Mr. Henke showed a bird's eye view of the station with an open plaza and with potential future development in the plaza area. The renderings show a box/space for a required power substation; the substation was moved along the tracks, also to provide space for future development.

Elton Elperin, AECOM/HNTB, addressed the development of the station design. He also highlighted the accessible pickup and drop-off location on the Broadway Bridge and explained that the site grades provided a number of challenges. The solution was to incorporate a series of gentle, grassed transitions in the plaza, combined with a sloping roof for the station that follows the terrain of the site and carries the eye down from the Broadway Bridge to the lower entrance and plaza. Mr. Elperin also showed a view of the site with boxes positioned to indicate places for future development.

Mr. Elperin showed floor plans for levels one and two. There would be a double height entry from the plaza and the elevators, stairs and escalators. The accessible route from the Broadway Bridge lobby would be along a walkway to the elevator (a no fee trip). Because this level is higher and there is a lot of glass in the building, it provides a lot of light, helps people to orient themselves as they enter the building, and will offer 360 degree views of the surrounding neighborhood.

On the plaza level, the service areas will be tucked away. Bicycle storage will be on this level, with two areas providing for 86 bicycles (one with 16 slots on the plaza and another with 70 enclosed slots). Mr. Elperin showed renderings of the platform looking east; the entry from Broadway east; and the Broadway pedestrian bridge entry; the view from Broadway west; looking at the plaza and station across Broadway; and the plaza and station view along Boston Ave. The latter is a pleasing civic space. Mr. Elperin described the design as clean and light, providing views and incorporating masonry and pillars.

Greg Yates said he hoped this information is helpful to the community. The team will be back to present further details on lighting and aesthetics as the work advances.

### *Update from the City of Somerville*

George Proakis, City of Somerville, gave an overview of the *Somerville by Design* community process, which includes a Station Area Planning Series. These meetings focused on issues such as transportation, walkability, and neighborhood improvements. Neighborhoods at each station were invited to participate and brainstorm. He listed a number of meetings related to Ball Square: October 17, focused on walkability; October 18, on issues such as height, context and how the stations would fit into each area; and November 28 and 29, a two-day event in which lots of ideas were exchanged about stations, biking, safety, connections and public art. The city then pulled all of these goals into a list.

Mr. Proakis showed a variation of a plan for Ball Square that included rerouting the streets and traffic. Unfortunately, the grades at the site (16%) make the proposal impossible. On January 8, the city presented a new concept despite the fact that the station is undergoing redesign due to the power line. Mr. Proakis said that the city aims to release a new plan for Ball Square in September with more ideas to be sketched out. He plans to circulate the new plan over the summer and looks forward to gathering community input. More information about Somerville by Design including city presentations can be found here: <http://www.somervillema.gov/bydesign>.

*Schedule/Upcoming Meetings*

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer noted this meeting was the first in a series of five public meetings in June. She noted that the upcoming meetings will focus on Gilman Square and Lowell Street stations (June 4), Washington Street and Union Square stations (June 11), Lechmere station (June 18) and College Avenue station (June 20).

DISCUSSION

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer invited questions and discussion.

A resident asked if all of the Green Line trains will go through Ball Square. The team responded that two of the GL lines will pass through Lechmere, and one will go toward Union Square (E Line) and one through Ball Square to College Ave (D Line).

What kind of budget does Somerville have for Somerville by Design? Mr. Proakis said the city has a federal sustainable communities grant from HUD.

A resident asked for an update on noise walls that are planned as part of the project. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said that the contractor will be on board in the fall, when there is a 60% design, and the MBTA wants the contractor to have input on the best way to build the noise and retaining walls. There is some work on noise and retaining walls in Phase 1. The team is talking with the city about issues such as aesthetics, graffiti resistance and other topics. It is entirely likely that this work will be done in many segments, blocks or groups of blocks because it is such a long corridor. More information will be available in the October-November time frame.

There was a comment that the proposed transit oriented development makes sense on the left side of the station along the substation along Boston Avenue, but the civic space in front of the station along Broadway should be left open, not cluttered with a building.

Carolyn Rosen asked about access issues. How long is the walk to the elevator from the drop-off point? Is there a redundant elevator? Where is the bus drop-off? Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said that the drop-off will be within 100 feet of the station entrance. The grades at this site make any other location unlikely to be successful. The walkway will be covered and there will be two elevators, oversize, with pass through access. There will be redundant elevators in each station so if one is down for inspection or repair, there is another alternative. The team continues to work on traffic issues, bus stops and other details.

Will there be seating in the public plaza? The plan includes nine benches, but the design is not far enough along to say much more.

Will community or public art be included in the station? Margie Lackner responded; she leads the MBTA's design department. Ms. Lackner said the MBTA is in the process of drafting a policy for art in public spaces. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said the design includes spaces for such art, keeping these areas open.

Will the roof be green or include solar panels? Mr. Henke said the team is looking at blue roofs which would hold water/stormwater at the maintenance facility. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said there are more opportunities for these approaches associated with the maintenance facility. The team is looking at the issue of cost versus savings, so these issues are being explored.

A neighbor expressed concern about privacy since she lives across from the station. She also asked about the crosswalk position and safety given the speed with which some vehicles pass through the area. There were other questions about the crosswalk and safety. The current design provides for all vehicle stops at this location. The city is looking at these issues and more information will be presented at the next meeting. Similarly, the MBTA does not have control over bike lanes and other roadway concerns. There were other suggestions from those who like the crosswalk position. Another speaker expressed concern about people being dropped off across the street from the station and dashing into traffic.

A neighbor asked how high the station will be. The station building height will be approximately 14 feet from floor to ceiling at the main entrance. The traction power substation is actually lower than it was before and the building is set into the grade which drops about five or six feet from Boston Ave.

Will there be any additional property taking on Boston Ave.? There is one additional building to be taken over what was shown previously and the owner is aware of the proposal and the team is talking with the owner.

Will the bridge be affected by the widening for the pickup and drop-off? The bridge will be rebuilt and will include the drop-off.

Would the MBTA consider an elevated walkway over Boston Ave.? The cost and aesthetics and the length of the ramp that would be required to get to grade make a walkway very unlikely.

Ken Krause commented on traffic functioning in the area and suggested looking at crosswalks on the other side of the bridge to permit safer crossings. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said there has to be space for NStar to access its line and the walkway can be built over the building but not on it. In addition, the grades would not work.

Wig Zamore said the site plan looks good. He suggested using the turnaround now owned by the dialysis service. He is concerned about getting more specific information about the potential envelope of the transit oriented development areas identified. About 15,000 people will use the station and the building has to work for them. He is not particularly thrilled by the design presented tonight. Mr. Yates said there will be more details on the aesthetics and finishes when the team comes back. There is a lot of work left to do, and tonight's presentation was more focused on the site plan.

A meeting participant suggested that there was not sufficient notice of the meeting; she learned about it just the Friday before. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said the meeting was noticed more than two weeks ago, was on the website, on the city websites and the Design Working Group members also publicize the meeting information. Information is posted on MassDOT's blog. The speaker asked if there is a place to post comments on line. There is a place to send comments (info@glxinfo.com) and if there are enough comments on a topic, the MBTA can post the question and response.

Ms. Rosen expressed concern about how the project might affect small businesses especially in light of the fact that there is no construction budget for the project. She asked if the MBTA is misleading the public; if the Governor does not get the tax package he wants, what will happen to the project? Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said that the plan is to secure federal funds to support part of the project, but the project is court mandated and the MassDOT Secretary has made clear that it is a priority, so the project is likely to go forward, even if it is in phases. The team's directions are to move forward, solving problems and completing designs.

## **GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT**

### **PUBLIC MEETING – ATTENDANCE**

Maureen Liberators	Hayes Morrison	Klemens Meyer
Jessica Kidd	Sue Watts	Brian Brady
Jeffrey Leclair	Elizabeth Cox	Eric Brown
Peter Ghiloni	Brendan Cox	Ken Santial
Andrew Plotkin	Anorta Gannino	Kelsey LeBeav
Le Chauncey-Allen	Reid Squier	Lydia Rivera
Benjamin Meller	Dave Garrity	Jon Crowe
Jeff Sarin	Steve Tayler	Lori Pino
Ned Coffey	Kate Zebroze	George Proakis
Ruth Alfasso	Alan Caplin	John Field
Adam Whelan	Ken Krause	Ellin Reisner
Elisabeth Bayle	J. Elliott	Philip Molander
Jeanine Farley	Chip Olson	Mary Anne Lynn
Anthony S. Orecchio	Chris Ingersoll	Joe Capuano
Dan Belknap	Anne Campbell	Thomas Bahn
Brian Olson	Bob Chevrier	John Civillo
Henry P. King	Colin Macdonald	Sandra Resnick
Time Silva	Darrin Ball	Amanda Nicholson
Carolyn Rosen	Mary Anne Adduci	Pat Cornelison
Andy Hoffman	Josh Marcecu	Esther Kim
Alex St. Angelo	James Hines	Kristen Mailler
Susan Berstler	Bill Dearinn	Lisa Raviez
Brendan Driscoll	Clodagh Stoker-Long	Maren Love
Carol Ghiloni	Bill Mark	Kathleen Hogan Knisely
Bill McClellon	Steve McDonald	David Knisely
Barbara Weir	Kathryn Kanter	Josh Burgel
Kate Delisi	Colin Roald	Nicole Sotirion
Mike Delisi	Meagan Earher	Brian Ciccarrello
Beth Bellow	Trish Darrigo	Stephan Mackey
Mayor Mike McGlynn	Bob	Wig Zamore
Mary Mangan	Jane Max	Deborah Fennick