

GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT
PUBLIC MEETING – SUMMARY MINUTES

LOCATION OF MEETING: Center for the Arts at the Armory, Somerville, MA

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: June 4, 2013; 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

ATTENDANCE: 100 (see Attendance List)

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

PROJECT TEAM: Karen Arpino-Shaffer, HDR/Gilbane; Michael McBride, HDR/Gilbane; David Farmer HDR/Gilbane; Joe Sgroi, HDR/Gilbane; Greg Yates, AECOM/HNTB; Randy Henke, AECOM/HNTB; Caroline Downing, AECOM/HNTB; Deborah Fennick, Fennick McCredie Architecture; Chris Ingersoll, Fennick McCredie Architecture; Regan Checchio, Regina Villa Associates; Nicole Richter, The Compliance Mentor Group; Josh Burgel, CSS; Michael Epp, Kleinfelder

AGENCY/ELECTED OFFICIALS: Representative Denise Provost, State House; Hayes Morrison, City of Somerville; George Proakis, City of Somerville; Brad Rawson, City of Somerville

PURPOSE/SUBJECT: This meeting is the second in 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 Gilman Square and Lowell Street stations.

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 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 provided an update on the design schedule. She noted that the last round of station meetings had been 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 the fall of 2013. She noted that the APE is scheduled for completion in September 2013.

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer then discussed the Phase 1 work. The MBTA has engaged Barletta Heavy Division to perform the Phase 1 construction. 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.

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer also noted that the MBTA was 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.

Gilman Square station

Greg Yates, Project Manager for AECOM/HNTB, then provided an update about the design development process. He explained that the project team examined the ACD plan that had been developed by HDR/Gilbane and then moved it through Value Engineering, Design Verification and Design Development. He noted that the Value Engineering process included taking into account community concerns and issues. He added that there have been no changes to the functioning of the station.

For the Gilman Square station, he noted that the community was concerned about the station entrances and orientation to surrounding neighborhoods, pedestrian connections and safe, accessible routes to the station, intermodal (transit/bus/bicycle) connections, and lighting.

Randy Henke, Director of Design for AECOM/HNTB, then reviewed the differences between the ACD plan and the current proposed site plan. These included enhancement of the station connection to the accessible path and the size reduction of the Medford Street Headhouse. He noted that this design has been coordinated with the City of Somerville and the *Somerville by Design* process. The traction power substation (previously designed as a two-story building) has been buried at track level behind a retaining wall and covered with the accessible path from School Street and a sloping green space. An existing NSTAR substation will be removed.

Deborah Fennick, Fennick and McCredie Architecture, then gave an update on the station design development. Ms. Fennick noted that she is a 20-year Somerville resident and said the goal of the new station is to re-establish Gilman Square as a transit-focused commercial, residential and civic location.

She noted that the station would have two entrances, one from a headhouse on Medford Street and one from an accessible path from School Street and the future Community Path. The Medford Street headhouse would have a lower plaza and an upper plaza. The upper plaza would be reached by a pedestrian bridge attached to the reconstructed Medford Street Bridge. A raised intersection would be added at Pearl Street at the entrance of the Medford Street headhouse lower plaza. A U-shaped drop-off area for The Ride is located at the lower plaza at Pearl Street. The Medford Street headhouse was reduced in size and the entrance on the accessible path was increased.

Ms. Fennick noted that the enclosed bicycle parking includes 124 spaces plus an additional 22 at the upper and lower plaza entrances. This is six more than what were committed under the Environmental Assessment (EA) document. She also noted that granite blocks from the foundation of the historic Gilman train station will be repurposed.

Ms. Fennick described the visual cues for passengers that would be present using this station design. She also chronicled the approach to lighting and customer assistance.

Lowell Street Station

Mr. Yates then noted that the project team went through a similar process for the Lowell Street station. He noted that community concerns with the ACD for that station included fitting the station design into the neighborhood context, community connections to the station and over the Bridge, station accessible drop-off and pickup, bicycle parking, lighting, and area traffic.

Mr. Henke reviewed the current site design, noting there were fewer changes than were presented at Gilman Street station from the previous design. Changes included the lowering of the roof of the station, which was achieved by relocating mechanical activities under the bridge instead of a penthouse.

Ms. Fennick noted that unlike at Gilman Square, which is near a mixture of residential, commercial and institutional properties, Lowell Street station will serve a mostly residential area featuring traditional houses and multi-unit complexes. Like at Gilman Square, the functionality of the station remains the same.

This design shows a single headhouse, which would be accessed from a plaza on a reconstructed Lowell Street bridge. The plaza has been opened, enhancing the visibility of the plaza and the station. Drop-off for The Ride would also be at this location. Bicycle parking is now adjacent the station and integrated with the lobby. There will be 78 spaces (60 enclosed, 18 on the plaza). This is 28 more spaces than the EA commitment.

Update from the City of Somerville

George Proakis, City of Somerville, then gave an overview of the *Somerville by Design* community process. He discussed how these development concepts have been integrated with these new station designs. Updated draft plans will be released for public comment in June for Gilman Square and in July for Lowell Street/Magoun Square. He noted that there will be similar processes this fall for the Davis Square and East Somerville areas. 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 second in a series of five public meetings in June. She noted that the upcoming meetings focused on Washington Street and Union Square stations (June 11), Lechmere station (June 18) and College Avenue station (June 20).

DISCUSSION:

An attendee asked if the egress path at the Lowell Street station went into the parking lot at Maxwell's Green. Mr. Henke said that it goes into another parking lot, but that it was still a little under designed. He noted that this path would be only used for emergency access.

A participant asked if there would be access to the Community Path from Lowell Street. Mr. Henke said that it ties back in to the Path.

An attendee first asked for confirmation that the existing Lowell Street Bridge does not meet MBTA standards for clearance. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer confirmed that it did need to be rebuilt, although it had been reconstructed in 2006. She noted the CM/CG will begin working on bridge issues this summer and discussion timing, technology and how to maintain traffic flows. The

attendee then asked about the location of the drop-off at the Lowell Street station. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer noted that MBTA's The Ride must be located within 100 feet of an enclosed entrance to the station. She added that the team was considering restricting automobile drop-off in this location to help traffic flow since there were many other Green Line stations in the vicinity.

Steve Nutter asked if the design for Gilman Square station is compatible with the concepts proposed by *Somerville by Design*. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer noted that the MBTA is responsible for the station and intersection improvements, but is working with the City to make sure the plans do not preclude one another should one project be advanced first. She said that the next series of meeting will feature drawings that show the *Somerville by Design* concepts. Brad Rawson, City of Somerville, added that the partnership between the MBTA and the City has been a productive one, and they will continue to coordinate.

Alan Moore said there have been great improvements to the bike storage proposed since the previous designs. He asked if the emergency egress at Gilman station goes back to the Community Path. Mr. Henke said that portion of the path will be built as part of the station since it is part of the egress.

Wig Zamore said that the Value Engineering had improved the station designs. He looked forward to more complete descriptions in future meetings about how the two stations connect with the Community Path. He also encouraged the project team to go to the ArtBeat festival in Somerville to informally share the station designs. Mr. Zamore asked about shelter in the stations during winter or during poor weather conditions. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said that at the bottom of the stairs and escalators inside each station, there is an enclosed space before exit to the platform. Although the space is not heated, it can provide shelter for people to wait for trains.

Ken Krause asked if the Nstar power station currently at Gilman was being relocated to another location. Mike McBride, HDR/Gilbane, said that it is not being relocated. The project team has been working with Nstar to develop a three-year plan to offload the power to other substations. Mr. Krause also asked if there is any consideration to burying power substation at Ball Square, similar to what is being done at Gilman. Mr. Henke said the substation is able to be depressed at Gilman because of the existing retaining wall. He noted that it was being moved against the wall, but it was still located 4-5 feet above the tracks; and that this was not the case at Ball Square.

An attendee asked if all of the bridges were going to be removed. Mr. Henke said that the right-of-way varies through the corridor. He said that 5 bridges including Medford Street, Lowell Street and Broadway will need to be completely rebuilt. Two additional bridges will need some modification. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said that the advantage of completing some of the Phase 1 work now is that all the roadways will be fully opened before the bridge construction begins.

A participant said she was concerned about pedestrian access at Gilman Station because the intersection at Medford and School Streets can be gridlocked during rush hour, and the stairway up from Pearl St. creates a desire line to the upper entrance on Medford St which will cause people to jaywalk. Mr. Henke said the intersection will be signaled with "pedestrians only" as one of the cycles. He said that there are currently no plans for a pedestrian crossing on the approach to the bridge, but suggested coordinating with the City of Somerville on this. Mr. Rawson agreed, noting that the current station design meets MBTA codes, but the City process has already identified this issue and is planning to work on it.

Green Line Extension Project

An attendee asked about accessing the platform in an emergency at Gilman. Mr. Henke noted that for all MBTA stations, access is through the station and via the elevators. He added that at Gilman, there is a very wide road (18 feet) needed for other services. He suggested the platform could also be accessed from that direction.

An attendee asked if there were plans to address the increased noise levels near Lowell Station. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said the project team will be back in the fall, once the 60% design drawings have been finalized, to have meetings on noise walls and other mitigation. She noted that the current plans show a retaining wall (with a noise wall on top) between Lowell Street Bridge to Broadway. She said these meetings might be smaller ones and very neighborhood specific.

A participant thanked the project team for holding the meeting, noting that she was a new resident to the neighborhood. She asked about the timing of the project and what assurances MassDOT has to ensure that the contractor would meet deadlines. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer noted that the construction is planned to be phased, with new Lechmere, Washington Street and Union Square stations scheduled to be completed in mid-2017. Under this plan, heavy construction will begin in 2015. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said that the remaining four stations are scheduled to open in mid-2019. She added that much of the construction work will be done simultaneously though. The opening of the maintenance facility will occur at the end of the project. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said the CM/GC will be discussing the construction techniques when the team comes on board this summer. She also said that the contractor meeting their responsibilities was not a concern on meeting these dates but rather that some of the timing will be based on the availability of federal funding through the New Starts program, but noted that this is a court-mandated project.

A resident near Gilman Square said she liked the new design and asked how someone would access the station near School Street. Mr. Henke said it would be accessed via the Community Path. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said this option which included an additional fare collection area was in response to community feedback.

Joe Lynch asked the project team to consider implementing the retaining walls before the commuter rail tracks are shifted closer to the neighborhoods. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said this issue had been recently brought to the team's attention and they were exploring it. She said the only concern was that too much major construction early in the process could prejudice the funding application.

An attendee voiced disappointment that Community Path access to Lowell Street required going under the bridge and was not accessible from both sides. Mr. Henke explained that this was due to accessibility requirements that could only be met from the one side. Mr. Burgel pointed out that access to the station (north side of Lowell St.) could be gained through the Maxwell's Green access that is designated for this purpose.

A participant asked about pedestrian access at Lowell Street station from the west side. He noted that it appeared the sidewalk disappears into the plaza stairwell. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said this design draws people into the plaza instead of a direct route and is more sensitive to area properties. She said it makes the area around the station more lively and safer.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM.

GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT

PUBLIC MEETING - ATTENDANCE

Jonathan Adams	Laura Lucas
Ahmed Al	Joe Lynch
Daniem Alemud	Steve Mackey
Kyann Anderson	Mashaël Majid, Somerville Community Corp
Matthew Bear	Karen Malloy
Therese Beek	Lisa Mancini
Elizabeth Boskey	Mary Mangan
John Broderick	Matthias Machowinski
Michelle Callincen	William McGuinness
Alan Carrier	Paul Morgan
Linda Carrubba	Alan Moore, Friends of the Community Path
Donald Cheney	Melissa Nelly
Ilana Cohn	Steve Nutter
Silvia Cuervo	John Oresz
Teresa Czarcinski	Chris Otey
Blu Dearn	Cador Pricejones, Friends of the Community Path
Kate DeLisi	Cussia Piuma
Mike DeLisi	Matt Piuma
Chis Desjardins	Jeff Quateman
Anil Divvela	Tim Reardon
Linda Doherty	Ellin Reisner
Paula Dowd	Josh Reynolds
Joanah Etgart	Lisa Rochester
Sheila Fay	Charles Roderick
Liz Foate	John Rodriguiz
Heather Fuller	Izak Shapiro, Somerville News
Leah Gallant, Somerville Journal	Naomi Slagorski, STEP
Karen Gardner	Janet Steine
Stuart Goldman	Pete Sutton
Gary Griffin	Erika Tarlin
Phoebe Hachett	Lynn Weissman, Friends of the Community Path
Steve Handy	Marina Winkler
Jahadul Islam	Paula Woolley
Steve Jayum	Wig Zamore
Harper Kaminski	
Marisa Kelatta	
Ram Kelatta	
Jonathan Kilpatrick	
Aaron Kless	
Ken Krause, MGNA	
Mike LaChapelle	
Brett LaFlamme	
Tanya LaFlamme	
Tom Lamar	
Daniel Loss	
Ed Lucas	