

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

LOCATION OF MEETING: Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, 41 Second Street, Cambridge

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: June 18, 2013; 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

ATTENDANCE: 65 (see attendance list)

MBTA: Mary Ainsley, Senior Director, MBTA Design and Construction Department; Lydia Rivera; Jeff Sarin, MBTA Project Manager

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

AGENCY/ELECTED OFFICIALS: State Representative Timothy Toomey; Bill Deignan, City of Cambridge Transportation Manager; Hayes Morrison City of Somerville Director of Transportation and Infrastructure

PURPOSE/SUBJECT: This meeting is the fourth 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 Lechmere 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). 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, thanked everyone for attending and reviewed the meeting agenda and said that changes have been made to the design of Lechmere station based off community feedback and input. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer provided an update on the design schedule; the last round of station meetings had been held in February and March of 2012; the project team completed the Advanced Conceptual Design (ACD) in summer of 2012; AECOM/HNTB received a Notice to Proceed for the Advanced Preliminary Engineering (APE) and Final Engineering on the project in September 2012. The Project Team completed Value Engineering on ACD in the fall of 2013 and the APE is scheduled for completion in September 2013. She said there will still be opportunities to enhance or change the design after this process.

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer 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.

The MBTA is currently 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, and the selected contractor will be at the next series of meetings.

#### *Lechmere Station*

Greg Yates, Project Manager for AECOM/HNTB, discussed the design development and community input. Mr. Yates showed maps of the current station location and the extension route. The engineering firm (AECOM/HNTB) has received the Advanced Conceptual Design (ACD) from the HDR/Gilbane team, and has now participated in the Value Engineering effort, performed a separate Design Validation and will now progress the design from ACD through Advanced Preliminary Engineering (APE).

Mr. Yates said the team has responded to concerns they've heard at previous public meetings by enhancing or changing the design to address the concerns. They include entrances and orientation; pedestrian access across Monsignor O'Brien Highway; renaming O'Brien Highway to O'Brien Boulevard; coordinating the concerns of Glass Factory residents; station parking; neighborhood planning studies; pedestrian experience at Water Street; and busway and shelter designs. He said the details tonight will show the improved conditions based on these initial concerns raised.

Randy Henke, AECOM/HNTB, presented the station site design. He said this is a unique station compared to the others, and the team has been working closely with City of Cambridge and private developers. He showed a map of the study area outlining possible pedestrian routes to and from nearby neighborhoods and Lechmere Station. Mr. Henke showed site maps to help orient the station location including aerial views and photos of current conditions. He then compared maps of the proposed location in the ACD site plan and the current proposed site plans. In ACD, the South Headhouse only had an exit, and has since been refined to be an entrance and exit to better accommodate passengers coming from neighborhoods to the south and better manage capacity; additional bicycle storage near the South Headhouse has been added; and the new platform can accommodate four cars (originally three).

Mr. Henke said during the traction realignment of the construction phase, parking will be relocated to an interim location. While the station is not in service due to construction, passengers will be bused between Lechmere and North Station. Lot A parking will be built early to replace the existing parking lot, and the existing lot will then be used as a laydown area during construction. Mr. Henke showed a map of Lot A parking which also shows the station, Lot R, Lot Q, pedestrian/bicycle path connection and the viaduct. The Red Bridge crossing of the Community Path Extension will follow the rail viaduct will and will tie in at the HYM development. A bike path will run along a portion of the Green Line connection from Washington Street to Lechmere Station.

Elton Elperin, AECOM/HNTB, discussed station design. The design development includes extended platform for future four car service. The relocated South Headhouse becomes an entrance (to make space for the platform), and a separate space is provided under the viaduct

with increased bike parking. Mr. Elperin showed the major connections to the station, including the buses, pedestrians from the west (O'Brien Highway) and bicyclists from the community path. There is continuous accessibility between the North and South Headhouses. Bicycle parking will consist of 338 spaces, 304 of those are enclosed. This is an increase from the 250 spaces required by the commitments outlines in the project Environmental Assessment.

Mr. Elperin showed simulated views of the station from different locations, including South Headhouse from East Street, South Headhouse from O'Brien Boulevard, North Headhouse from across O'Brien Boulevard, North Headhouse from the busway, ground and platform levels of the Headhouses, entrances at the North Headhouse, platform view towards Boston and Lechmere Station view from the west. Details included a glass wind screen the entire length of the platform; a highly visible and distinctive Headhouse with significant height, steel, glass and roof overhang; simplicity, clarity and safety for indoor navigation; indoor glass walls; and modern benches, canopies and lighting.

#### *HYM Presentation*

Tom O'Brien, HYM Investment Group said the company acquired ownership of the North Point (at Lechmere) building in August 2012 and his company is responsible for streetscape and pedestrian improvements in the area. He said the concept of the proposed design is that Lechmere would become a "Square" and O'Brien Highway would become a "Boulevard" and be considered an attractive destination and will include much improved pedestrian conditions. Mr. O'Brien introduced John Copley of Copley Wolff Design Group, the landscape architects hired by HYM.

Mr. Copley showed a map of the existing conditions of the Lechmere area. He said the team's tasks include improvements at the First and Water Streets intersections, how to transform the space into a "Square" with the station and O'Brien Boulevard and incorporate mixed-use retail. Mr. Copley showed a drawing of the site master plan and said materials will be carefully selected. The improvements include high quality paving, large trees, special lighting and improved pedestrian crossings will be incorporated. The "highway" feel will be transformed into a Square and include retail, markets and public events. Mr. Copley showed the conceptual lighting plan, pedestrian circulation plan, overall site plan, Water Street and First Street intersection, Water Street concept sketch, First Street concept sketch, First Street intersection sketch and Boulevard precedent.

#### *Schedule/Upcoming Meetings*

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer summarized the meeting. She thanked the attendees for their valuable input and listed the other communities meetings held during the phase. The College Avenue Station meeting will be held on Thursday June 20 at St. Clement School in Medford. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said the team can hold smaller neighborhood meetings in the fall to discuss any outstanding issues with residents or local stakeholders.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Dennis Carlone, a local architect, said he is pleased with the evolution of the plan, but does not believe the space next to the North Headhouse should be used for parking in an urban design, and the space is now a lost opportunity. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said the use of the space is not flexible because there are buildings that would be impacted and deeded condominium parking spaces.

An attendee asked when the current service would shut down and transition to the new service. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said the new station is scheduled to open in July 2017, with a 6 month testing timeframe (track, viaduct) before the opening.

Jason Stockman of 103 North Street asked how many lanes pedestrians will cross on O'Brien Highway, applauded the thoughtful pedestrian design and voiced concerns about elderly and children crossing. Mr. Stockman said the public will continue to recommend two lanes only in each direction. Mr. O'Brien said the traffic counts were lower than expected, and can be used to advocate for better pedestrian accommodations (less lanes, perhaps). The O'Brien Boulevard will be three lanes southbound and two lanes northbound, eliminating one right hand turn lane under the current condition. Mr. O'Brien said a series of community meetings will be held in conjunction with the City to discuss street design, light cycles and other elements that affect the pedestrian experience.

Shana Sarvich, a Glass Factory resident, asked if the name of O'Brien Highway will change officially to "O'Brien Boulevard." Mr. O'Brien said he has been told it will change, and that officially it can be called Monsignor O'Brien Boulevard, but doesn't know about signage changes.

Richard Tweedy, Building Manager for the Glass Factory Condominiums, asked about the track height. Mr. Yates said it is approximately 15 feet from the roadway and 25 feet to the top of the train. Mr. Tweedy asked if there is parking for unloading between the North and South Headhouses, Mr. Yates replied yes. Mr. Tweedy asked if consideration was given to making Water Street a one-way, with the new 390 unit development and narrow condition. He said buses could exit on East Street. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said buses destined for Somerville cannot because of congestion at other intersections, and a goal of this project is to shift people's transportation choice from single occupancy vehicles to transit.

An attendee asked if noise and light mitigations have been considered. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said the environmental review monitors noise and light impacts to area residents; there will be noise walls/sound walls and vibration mitigation devices used; and a noise consultant works closely with the project team. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said the team is committed to the environmental processes and documents and consistently tests practices against these commitments. There will be neighborhood meetings in the late fall (at 60 percent design) about sound wall options and locations. Platform lighting will be designed to eliminate light spills in the evenings, including multiple units at smaller volumes, elevation of platform, less glass in areas facing neighborhoods and selecting light fixtures that direct down.

An attendee asked if the project team is comfortable with the level of safety for children and elderly crossing O'Brien Highway. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said she will feel safe when the design is completed. Mr. O'Brien said the objective is to make the location pedestrian friendly and will include careful choosing of stone, color and materials, improved lighting and tweaking the timing of the stoplights.

Heather Hoffman of Hurley Street said the proposal eliminates bus service on Cambridge Street, and buses no longer service popular destinations in the area including the Probate Court, Registry of Deeds and Post Office. Ms. Hoffman said the buses stop at a dimly lit corner of O'Brien Highway and the neighborhood is not being properly served, and the surrounding neighborhoods are losing as a result of this project. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said the MBTA does not change bus routes without a public process and the bus routes can be adjusted or added to stop as close to the station as possible. There is a GLX info email address ([info@glxinfo.com](mailto:info@glxinfo.com))

where specific issues can be addressed one-on-one, and the team can work with MBTA bus operations regarding the route concerns.

An attendee said she is excited about the opportunity and pleased to hear the project team acknowledges that the area is not pedestrian friendly. She would like to see the design look less like an airport, incorporate a Hubway station and have sidewalks two or three times larger than proposed.

Elaine Krohn, a Glass Factory resident, inquired about privacy walls and lighting from the backside of the station. Ms. Krohn said the new station will be extremely crowded, and her blinds will have to be closed at all times as a result. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said the material and colors of the privacy walls are still being finalized and will be presented at the next series of meetings. She said the lighting is necessary for safety but will be chosen with consideration to the neighbors. The lights will aim down to light the floors and not illuminate the neighborhoods; plantings, walls and canopies are also designed to protect abutter privacy. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said the team will meet with the Glass Factory neighborhood and other buildings in the right-of-way shortly to discuss these details.

An attendee asked if the station is opening in 2017. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer confirmed it was.

Karen Molloy, a Somerville resident, asked for more details about the building and streetscape design. Mr. O'Brien said there will be a residential development, park, café/sandwich shop, retail opportunities, open space, increased pedestrian activity and traffic calming.

An attendee said they are concerned about way finding with the new development in way of the line of site to the station. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said you can look straight down First Street and see the station and the landscaping, lighting and design will create easy way finding. The space created under the plaza could be a marketplace.

A Glass Factory resident asked if the 65 foot development was finalized. Mr. O'Brien said it has to be approved in final design process, slated for 2018.

A Glass Factory resident asked which floors are blocked by walls or structures on the back side of the station. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said the team will develop a 3-D model showing what floors and locations would be impacted, and the team will begin to have discussions with the condominium and the MBTA. The model would show a simulation of people at different locations showing the view at the given location. The resident asked what the highest floor impacted is and Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said that information is not yet available.

An attendee asked if the meetings with Glass Factory residents would be a dialogue and opportunity to make changes or finalized information. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said it would be a dialogue with the possibility to make changes, although some things are fixed by the realities of track alignment and other elements. If the requested design change is possible, it will be considered.

An attendee asked who should be contacted to coordinate a meeting with the Glass Factory residents. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said there has been correspondence and the team is currently waiting to hear potential meeting dates. Ms. Ainsley said a letter was sent by Jeff Sarin and he can be contacted for times and dates to set up the meetings. The attendee said the letter was about noise impacts, not view.

## Green Line Extension Project

An attendee asked about the MBTA's bus idling policy and where the buses will be stored. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said she doesn't know the specific policy, but it will be available at the next meeting.

A Somerville resident said she is concerned about snowfall on the viaduct and crossing O'Brien Highway; she would like to see the O'Brien Highway median wide enough accommodate a cycle track; asked if the brick shown in the renderings is the actual material, because brick is challenging for people using canes and wheelchairs and maintenance is expensive. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said brick will not be the material used; showed the bike path connection with the community path and station entrance and said the pedestrian circulation details are not fully worked out yet but will be available in the final design details. Mr. Yates said the viaduct has a drain system and the curbing will collect water, snow and ice.

There were no further comments or questions and the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

### **GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT PUBLIC MEETING – ATTENDANCE**

Derek Aldridge	Andrew Morrison
John Alves	Hayes Morrison
Jason Amos	Tom O'Brien
Chandace Arledge	Brock Pech
Darrin Ball	Charles C. Poirier
Greg Browne	Ellin Reisner
Jeremy Bowman	Ben Refah
Robert Buchanan	Lynn Sahaida
Jason Burrell	Vesna Saneva
Dennis Carlone	Jeff Sarin
Marc Chabot	Jo Seidler
Russ Deason	Bette Skanbais
Bill Deighem	Susan Sloane-Rossiter
Michael Epp	Babs Soller
Charles Fineman	Nancy Steck
Stephen H. Gardner	Barry M. Steinberg
Nina Garfickle	Jason Stockmann
Andrew Herbert	Will Sutton
Heather Hoffman	Paul Tahhar
William Horne	Steve Taylor
John Hurley	Sam Tinsley
Mark Jaquith	Representative Tim Toomey
Bill Johansen	Richard Tweedy
Susan L. Johansen	Bonnie Vanzler
Lyn Kardateke	L. Walker
Ken Krause	Barbara Weir
Elaine and Bill Krohn	Lynn Weissman
Heidi Lyne	Brian Williams
William McGuinness	Yee
Karen Molloy	Douglas Yu
Junji Morokuma	Barry Zeoin
Yoshie Morokuma	Wig Zigamore