

GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT
PUBLIC MEETING – SUMMARY MINUTES

LOCATION OF MEETING: Holiday Inn, Somerville

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: June 11, 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; Nancy Farrell, Regina Villa Associates; Nicole Richer, The Compliance Mentor Group; Josh Burgel, CSS, Michael Epp, Kleinfelder

AGENCY/ELECTED OFFICIALS: Brad Rawson, City of Somerville; Hayes Morrison, Director of Transportation and Infrastructure

PURPOSE/SUBJECT: The third 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 Washington Street and Union Square 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). 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 introduced Mary Ainsley, MBTA Senior Director of Design; Jeff Sarin, the MBTA's Project Manager, and Margaret Lackner, MBTA Director of Design. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer reviewed the agenda for the meeting. This was the third of five meetings to update the community and neighborhoods on changes in designs to the Washington Street and Union Square Stations based on previous comments and the progression of design. The project team has been meeting regularly with the city of Somerville to discuss issues, such as traffic, crosswalks, and other local and safety concerns.

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 about managing 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.

Washington Street 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 Washington Street; the importance of community connections, the station entrances and safety beneath the bridge; traffic moving through and around the neighborhood; how the station is integrated with the Community Path. 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 nearest stations will be Lechmere and Union Station. 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. There are no changes proposed in site access from the Advanced Conceptual Design site plan, but the new design changes what happens beneath the bridge. Eliminating the pier column opens up the space beneath the bridge, and flipping and cantilevering the path allows much more light to flow under the bridge and into the station. In addition, the design team was able to move the mechanical rooms beneath the tracks, also helping to open up the site. Mr. Henke showed a bird's eye view of the new station.

Deborah Fennick, Fennick McCredie Architecture, presented the new station plan. She noted that the station is less than two miles from Boston in an area where the city of Somerville is focusing on redevelopment and rezoning. Considering that context and the neighborhood, the design team proposed a few changes. None of the change affects the function, but removing the bridge piers makes the lobby more visible and open and enhances safety. The mechanical

penthouse – previously on top of the station – has been eliminated, and there are better connections to the community path structure.

Ms. Fennick showed plans of each level of the station. Level 1, the street level, includes an entrance beneath the Washington Street Bridge, but with the columns removed, the entrance is more visible and safer. There is a gallery behind the lobby entrance that leads to the stairs and elevators, which would be glass as well. The mechanical support functions are now lined up along the concourse. Bicycle storage includes 162 on site spaces, 122 of them enclosed and 34 on the plaza (an improvement from the original commitment to include 70 spaces). There is an accessible drop-off location.

On Level 2, the main elements are the platform and track, concourse and egress that will connect to the future Community Path. There will be a scrim-like fence separating the path users from the tracks. The headhouse will include a lot of glass and will offer views toward Boston and around the area.

Ms. Fennick said the design of the structure recognizes that the station is in an industrial area. Current thinking about materials includes weathered steel of a matte reddish color and reclaimed granite blocks that will compose part of the structure. Ms. Fennick showed a series of renderings of the station from the west, of the entrance and egress path, from the future Community Path, from Knowlton St. and the east and on the platform.

Union Square Station

Greg Yates introduced the Union Square Station. He said that the team spent some time thinking about likely passenger volumes (which were depicted on a poster in the hallway) and the issues the community raised in previous meetings, including the station entrances and orientation; pedestrian connections and experience; and station and bus route connections. The Prospect Street Bridge will not be rebuilt at this time and the station will be built next to the bridge. Mr. Henke showed the Advanced Conceptual Design Site Plan and photos of Existing Conditions in the neighborhood.

Deborah Fennick reviewed the proposed site plan. She noted that Union Square is the oldest and largest commercial center in Somerville. While there are no changes proposed in the function of the station, the new design eliminates the mechanical penthouse; simplifies the upper lobby and adds bicycles to the upper plaza; enlarges the lower lobby on the Union Square side of the station; and provides for flexibility to incorporate future development.

The Level 2 plan includes a plaza area on the bridge; there is a two foot step up to ensure that the station will be aligned with the bridge when it is rebuilt at some point.

Level 1 includes an opened up lobby for improved passenger flow; space for bicycle storage (202 bikes, 80 within the structure, 102 outside on the plaza and 20 on the upper plaza); and mechanical rooms.

Ms. Fennick showed a series of images: the lower plaza entrance with drop-off space; the approach from Union Square; looking north; and the final site plan.

Greg Yates said that the next steps in the discussion will include further work to continue the design and bring additional images and sample materials to meetings with the community in the fall.

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer reminded the audience that there are two more station meetings coming up, on Lechmere Station on June 18 and on the College Avenue Station on June 20. Details are available at the sign-in table and on the project website.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer invited questions and discussion.

Will there be parking at the Union Square station? Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said that the only parking planned for the new stations will be at Lechmere, where parking already exists. The stations are primarily being designed to interact with pedestrians, drop-off and pick-up, and bicyclists. The city of Somerville is doing planning work in some areas that may result in construction of parking facilities, depending on zoning and development plans.

A member of the audience thanked the MBTA for not providing parking and noticed that there will be tracks on both sides of the Union Station platform. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said this is the case for terminal stations; the layout will be similar at College Station. These designs will not preclude further extensions; for example, to Route 16 in Medford, or from Union Square to Porter Square, although those are not planned extensions at the current time. The speaker also asked for assistance to reduce vehicle lanes on Prospect Street given the danger to bicyclists using the street. Hayes Morrison, city of Somerville, said that the city is preparing an RFP for release in the next four weeks or so to assess bicycle and pedestrian issues.

A member of the audience commented that the path on Washington St. provides an excellent access for East Somerville residents to come into the area. She asked about the staircases on both sides of the station and inquired if they could be converted to switchback bypasses or ramps instead of stairs. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said that there is not enough room to make ramps work due to land constraints in the area. The ramps would take a great deal of space to meet accessibility standards. It was added that should adjacent property become available, ramps could be possible.

In response to a question, Mr. Henke showed where the pick-up and drop-off area is on the plaza for Washington Street Station. Bus stops are currently planned for across the street; they would not be appropriate beneath the bridge. As the project advances, the team will work with bus operations to develop and/or adjust routes as necessary.

A speaker expressed concern about crossing Washington Street and asked if a pedestrian bridge was a possibility. Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said there is not enough room for one. Safe crossings are a priority for the MBTA and the team will continue to discuss these kinds of issues with the city.

When asked about access to the Community Path from Chester Street, it was pointed the path goes under Cross Street at Chester Street and there is access.

A speaker asked how the station will look at night. The team is working on 3-D models and more simulations, which will be available for the next set of community meetings.

Jim McGinnis asked about flooding and drainage planning with regard to the Washington Street Station. Mr. Henke said the pipes in the area will be sized to store and hold water to avoid any overflows or impacts to the Green Line or Fitchburg line.

Green Line Extension Project

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said she was reminded by Mary Ainsley of the MBTA that Transportation Secretary Davey has committed to the design of the Community Path to connect from Washington Street to the North Point development where it can then be connected into the city rather than end it without making those important connections. The audience applauded this statement.

Ms. Fennick said the team is looking at colors and materials for the entire extension. A variety of materials is under consideration, including copper and zinc. All of the stations will include a metal panel system.

Margaret Lackner responded to a question about public art. The MBTA is developing a program for permanent art in public places. The new General Manager supports community based art. In the meantime, the design team is keeping places in mind for art, when the policy and budget allow.

Responding to a question, Ms. Arpino-Shaffer said that there will be two tracks leaving Lechmere, with headways maintaining the current level of service. The current D Line will serve Medford and the E Line will serve Union Square.

Ms. Arpino-Shaffer thanked the participants and invited them to visit the project website to see the presentations and other project information.

GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT

PUBLIC MEETING – ATTENDANCE

Robert J LaTremouille
Lynn Weissman
Rose Mallard
Ted Hatzis
Robert Buchanan
Ellin Reisner
Lydia Laughingatis
Pat Quintin
Lindsey Deschenes
Anthony Menounes
Jerry Huretan
Charles Karshan
Russ Bradchulis
Alan Moore
Tim Czerwienski
Matt Morong
Ted Tobin
Michelle Hewitt
Andre Weinstock
John Smathers
Rob Kassel
Jack Gonsalves
Mary White
Tim Finn
Mimi Graney
Karen Molloy
Paul Tammaro
Jordan Stabile
Mark Staloff
Yee Chan
Jason Stockmann
Ken Krause

Matt Niloff
Amanda Sindel-Keswick
Joan Papendo
Blake Stacey
Lismary Rodriguez
Jeremy Bowman
Ethan Contini-Field
Jim McGinnis
Bill McGuinness
Brian Williams
Greg Bowne
Kristi Chase
Dow McCall
Michael Katz
Wig Zamore
Adrienne Mathers
Jonathan Rushmore
Marjorie S.
Vesna Maneva
Kelsey LeBeau
Ben Zimmerman
Lynn Donovan
Catherine Vanderwaart
Sarah Spiar
Heather Van Aelst
George Hatzis
Steve Mulder
Jean Vallon
Janet Steins
Stephen Mackey
Joseph Beckmann