

**GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT  
July 10, 2018 COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP MEETING – SUMMARY MINUTES**

LOCATION OF MEETING: GLX Project Office, 200 Inner Belt Rd, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Somerville, MA 02143

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: July 10, 2018; 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

**ATTENDANCE:**

CWG Members: Joseph Barr (City of Cambridge), Michaela Bogosh (Magoun Square), Elliot Bradshaw (Brickbottom), Ryan Dunn (Magoun Square), Dylan Manley (East Somerville), Jim McGinnis (Union Square), Justin Moeling (Gilman Square), Brad Rawson (City of Somerville), Laurel Ruma (College Ave), Jim Silva (Medford Ball Square), Tegin Teich (City of Cambridge)

MassDOT/MBTA: John Dalton – MBTA GLX Program Manager, Terry McCarthy – MBTA Deputy Program Manager of Stakeholder Engagement, Andrew Smith – MBTA Service Planning

GLX Constructors (GLXC): Sean Anderson, Hannah Brockhaus, Jamie Doyle, Michael Hoytink, Megan Jarrett, Paul Tyrell, John West

GLX Project Team: Randy Henke, Martin Nee, Joe Sgroi

Other Attendees: Amy Eastment (Brickbottom), Thomas Fraim (LaQuinta Inn and Suites), Laura Jasinski (Charles River Conservancy), Erica Mace (City of Somerville), Alan Moore (Friends of the Community Path), Ron Newman (Friends of the Community Path), Polly Pook (Brickbottom), Lynn Weissman (Friends of the Community Path)

**PURPOSE:** The GLX Community Working Group (CWG) was formed to help engage and foster communication with the communities along the GLX corridor by meeting with representative members (both residents and officials) of Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford.

**BACKGROUND:** The Green Line Extension (GLX) Project is an initiative of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), in coordination with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). The project intent is to extend existing MBTA Green Line service from Lechmere Station through the northwest corridor communities of Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford. 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:**

Terry McCarthy, MBTA GLX Deputy Program Manager for Stakeholder Engagement gave a GLX update and reviewed items from the last GLX Working Group meeting:

- Focus of outreach in coming months will be on bridge closures since they will have the biggest impact.
- A scheduling chart for the bridge closures was requested and has been included in the presentation.

## Green Line Extension Project

- Washington Street Bridge utility work will need to happen in advance of the closure and could require some lane shutdowns on weekends and non-commuter hours – details will be forthcoming.
- The GLX team did review the possibility of repurposing the current utility bridge as a pedestrian bridge at Broadway during the closure but it did not have the capacity is not structurally built to withstand pedestrian traffic.
- A meeting has been scheduled for July 26 meeting with first responders to review the traffic detours for bridge closures.
- There was a GLX groundbreaking event on June 25 at Union Square.
- In response to an inquiry at the last meeting about the tonnage of trees that had been removed, an excerpt of the arborists report on trees removed with a diameter greater than 6 inches (see slide 5) was presented.
- The next Public Meeting on GLX has been scheduled in Medford (City Hall Chambers) for July 18 at 6:30 PM.

Sean Anderson GLX Constructors (GLXC) Engineering Coordinator gave an update on the Community Path design (which is at a draft stage and subject to change).

- The current design, which is subject to change keeps the path continuous on west side of GLX corridor.
- The continued Path from East Somerville to the Avalon Bay/Divco West development, will terminate at North Point using connections yet to be designed by Divco.
- The Path will be brought up/down to street grade at Cross Street (up) and Washington Street (down).
- The project has also preliminarily designed new access points from the path to Medford Street and Walnut Street.
- Safety features include bollards, lighting, call boxes, signage, and fencing.

John West, the Project Manager for GLX Constructors (GLXC), and Jamie Doyle, the GLXC Construction Manager, gave an overview of the project schedule and update on safety. They then described GLXC's bridge closure schedule for 2018 through 2020.

Andrew Smith from MBTA Service Planning gave an overview of the different alternate bus diversion routes that were being considered during the Washington Street and Broadway bridge closures.

Broadway (bus routes 80 and 89 affected) diversion options (these are both just considerations at this point):

- From Powder House Square up Warner/Harvard Street to Main/Medford Street to Magoun Square – this is most conservative option but impacts most riders as it would result in closing 10 bus stops on Broadway with Ball Square being most affected. This would also affect runtime and is not the MBTA's preferred option.
- Running service via Rogers and Pearson Streets – this requires coordination with City of Somerville to reverse direction of a segment of these roads and to eliminate some parking at turns. This is the preferred option of MBTA because it is shorter travel time and connects to more riders.

Washington Street bus routes (86, 91, CT2 affected) – looking at running service via Tufts Street which effects only one bus stop at McGrath; parking would have to be eliminated on the street however.

GLXC also gave updates on ongoing operations such as tree clearing, rodent control, old track removal, trash clean up along the rail right-of-way, pre-construction surveys, and the Homan

Building demolition. They also gave an update on their June 21 Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Networking event.

#### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION/ISSUES:

##### At-grade Crossings

In response to a member asking if at-grade crossings in Ball Square at Granville Avenue and a location off of Cedar Street had been looked at, the project team said to send them the specifics of the idea and they would take a look. Representative Barber's Office will be sending the specifics. It was noted that cost and time added to the schedule would be the biggest factors in influencing if changes can be made.

##### Community Path

In response to a question on how far along the design for the Community Path was, the GLX team answered that they are at about 20% design.

There was a question about how the path would tie into the paths on the other side of the Divco West development. The GLX team said that this would be up to the developer how the connections would be made and that they are meeting with them weekly. The City of Cambridge clarified that the layout by the developer was subject to the city planning board which has already approved a continuous connection.

A member asked if it was possible to find out what the cost difference would be if the path were to cross at Washington Street and ran along the other side of tracks (Inner Belt side). The GLX team said to send the idea over as a request for a cost comparison and the team would look at it – it would be a very significant change and could not add cost or delay construction.

The City of Cambridge recommended considering signaling at street crossings to account for safety of bicyclists.

In answer to a question about a part of the path shown as a dotted line on slide 12, it was explained that this was an existing path/parking lot that the path would connect into. The City of Somerville said that they would be redeveloping the parking lot into a true open space.

It was asked who would be answering the call boxes. The City of Somerville stated that it would be their local responders per an agreement with the MBTA.

A member asked if there had been any consideration about the path lighting effecting neighbors. The project team said they would use MBTA station standards that mitigate the amount of light pollution onto neighboring properties.

The City of Somerville also noted that they will be working towards making pedestrians and the bicyclists the priority at crossings and will be involved in the planning.

It was asked what kind of fencing would be used on the path and the team said that though the fencing is still in the design process that it would most likely be of the chain-link variety for security purposes.

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It was also asked if privacy concerns had been taken into account for the fencing. The project said that though it had not been addressed in design yet that it would be looked at.

A member asked if there was a plan to have landscaping for the path. The project team said there would be opportunities, although somewhat limited in scope, for landscaping. A landscaping plan is part of the contract and it would be part of the design process.

It was asked if the path would be at the standard 10-feet with 1-foot shoulders on each side throughout the path length. The project team said that the standard was a minimum requirement but exceptions by the contractor could be made if necessary and approved by the MBTA. If the path were to go wider it would incur additional costs, so this would be unlikely.

It was recommended that when displaying the path designs for the public meeting that it made clearer where the path went under streets and where it met street grade.

There was a question as to if the Community Path would open at the same time as the rest of the GLX. The project team said that they would be constructed and open concurrently.

### Safety

A member asked what the biggest concern has been for the first responders. The project team said it was the street/bridge closures and the effect they would have on emergency response. The project team said that it was committed to making sure there would be no surprises for emergency teams by regularly updating them and meeting with them on their plans.

### Construction and Tree Clearing

In response to a member's question about the Keolis tree clearing in Medford beyond the GLX area, the project team said that trees needed to be removed to address sight line issues for the train operators related to the signaling system that was added in addition to other signal equipment issues.

There was a question as to where new track construction would be occurring this summer and what would be the impact. The project team said it would be from Washington Street to Lowell Street. The work would be done in the corridor and mostly done in the day.

A member asked when the temporary retaining wall at College Avenue would be replaced with the permanent wall. The project team said they would be starting on the new wall this fall.

It was asked if any west side corridor tree clearing would be occurring before 2019. The project team stated that in general the west side clearing would not begin until 2019 but this is subject to change.

### Bridge Closures and Bus Planning

City of Somerville said they are talking to MBTA as part of the Better Bus Project to look at ways of updating broader bus options for Somerville.

The project was asked if there would be pedestrian access during closures of Cedar and Lowell Street Bridges. The project team said that as it stands now, no pedestrian access is planned but it will look at options since they aren't complete bridge removals.

### Groundbreaking

A member asked why there was not a lot of advance notice and publicity prior to the groundbreaking and if it had to do with concerns about potential for protests against the US Transportation Secretary who was in attendance at the event. The project team said this was due to security.

### General Discussion

It was asked if green space was being integrated into stations. The project team said that there is language in the contract for green space opportunities to be pursued where they can be made available at stations.

### DBE Networking Event

It was asked how local individuals or companies that want to work on the project should contact GLXC. GLXC has a career opportunity section of their website.

There was an inquiry as to when there would be station designs that could be shared. The project team said that over the next couple of months the team could have some station renderings to share with the Working Group at future meetings.

A member noted that recent renderings of Union Square shared by the US2 developer did not show at-grade access and wondered if the GLX project had control over these designs. The project team said they were the developer's designs, and the City of Somerville said they would look into the matter.

It was asked if the focus of the July 18 Public Meeting would be the bridge closures and the Community Path. The project team confirmed this.

It was questioned if the Lowell Commuter Rail Line weekend closures were related to GLX work. The project team said that they were piggybacking GLX work on these closures but that they were due to the Positive Train Control program testing.

There was an inquiry if there could be a possibility of a connection to the Magoun Square Station to the Community Path. The project team said that there was not enough room/clearance to make the connection.

It was asked if the project allows for a future connection to McGrath Highway from the path. The project said that would have to be something determined by the city at a future time but that the connection at Cross Street is very close.

STEP and the Friends of the Community Path invited the project to Somerville's ArtBeat event on July 14. The project team said they would be joining the City of Somerville at their table.

A member also invited the project to participate in a Touch-A-Truck event that they were considering for the Gilman Square Association and Winter Hill Association's block party being scheduled for September. The project said they could look into coordinating something.

Next CWG meeting August 7, at GLX Project Office at 200 Inner Belt Rd in Somerville.