



Green Line Extension Project

Updated - June 2010



© Timothy Doherty

Introduction

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is partnering with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to extend the Green Line to improve transit service, mobility, and regional access for residents and visitors in Cambridge, Somerville and Medford. Bringing MBTA light rail service to these densely populated cities will address longstanding transportation inequities, result in fewer automobiles on local roads, and help to combat greenhouse gas emissions and other components of air pollution. The Green Line Extension will also support municipal plans for local economic growth and provide residents of environmental justice communities with faster rides to jobs, schools, health care, and other destinations.

In-depth information about the Green Line Extension project can be found on the project website, www.mass.gov/greenlineextension.

As the project nears the end of the environmental review phase, work is currently underway on field survey, community workshops, and the establishment of the Green Line Extension Design Working Group. The project team is preparing for the Preliminary Engineering phase, which begins later this year.

The Final Environmental Impact Report

On January 15, 2010, the Massachusetts Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs issued a Certificate on the Green Line Extension Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). The Certificate required MassDOT to produce a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) with a limited scope covering the following topics:

- Environmental analysis of the "Option L" and "Mirror H" vehicle maintenance and storage facility alternative locations
- Narrative discussion clarifying air quality modeling procedures
- Description of potential impacts associated with the use of College Avenue Station as a terminal station for the Extension
- Refined conceptual design of Lechmere Station
- Summary of overall project impacts and mitigation measures
- Development of a Public Involvement Plan for future community participation

On June 15, 2010, MassDOT submitted the required FEIR for the Green Line Extension Project to the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The document was then noticed in the June 23, 2010 *Environmental Monitor*, which initiated review under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). Complete reference copies of the document are available at:

- Public libraries in Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford
- The State Transportation Library at 10 Park Plaza, Boston
- City Clerk offices in Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford

The FEIR may also be viewed on the project website: www.mass.gov/greenlineextension.

See page 3 for more information about the FEIR document and a guide to submitting comments.





A truck-mounted boring rig performs borings for the proposed Lechmere viaduct.

Ongoing Work: Field Survey

MassDOT has been performing field work in support of the extension of the Green Line. Contractors have been undertaking field survey, noise and vibration testing, and soil borings. The data collected will be used to advance the design of the Green Line Extension project.

MassDOT announced the start of this work in a mailing to property owners along the rail right-of-way. Weekly updates are now sent by email, including a detailed schedule of activities.

If you have any questions or concerns about these activities, you may contact Katherine Fichter, Project Manager for the Green Line Extension, at 617-973-7342 and katherine.fichter@state.ma.us.

Public Workshops

MassDOT and the MBTA are partnering with Cambridge, Somerville and Medford to organize public planning and design workshops for the Green Line Extension project. While the formats may be slightly different in each community, the goal of the sessions is to gather ideas and suggestions on all of the Green Line Extension stations and station areas, the vehicle storage and maintenance facility, and the Community Path. People who live or work in the Green Line Extension corridor have a lot of valuable information that can help make the Extension a good neighbor.

Land Use Workshops – Spring 2010

In May and June, MassDOT and the MBTA partnered with Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford to sponsor public Land Use Workshops for the Green Line Extension project. The goal of these sessions was to gather ideas and suggestions on all of the Green Line Extension stations and station areas, as well as the vehicle maintenance and storage facility and the Community Path. More than 200 people participated in these Workshops, offering valuable insight to MassDOT and the project team. The project team has been compiling the hundreds of comments and ideas received and will make them available shortly.

Continued on next page.

Station Design Workshops – Fall 2010 and Spring 2011

Beginning this fall, MassDOT and the MBTA will launch a series of public Station Design Workshops to focus on the “look and feel” of the Green Line Extension stations. These Workshops will outline the MBTA’s station requirements, provide sample station designs and materials, and ask participants for input on issues of station scale, layout, and design. After collecting public comments on these topics, the team will present draft designs in a later series of public events.

Green Line Extension Design Working Group

MassDOT is pleased to announce the formation of the Green Line Extension Design Working Group. This group will help gather and share local input on design-related topics and will help the project team to plan the Station Design Workshops.

The project team looks forward to collaborating with the members of the Design Working Group to create a Green Line Extension that best meets the needs of future riders, the corridor municipalities, and the MBTA. Please visit the project website at www.mass.gov/greenlineextension for a complete list of Design Working Group members.

MassDOT is truly grateful to the more than 100 people who applied to represent their municipalities on the Design Working Group.



Team member Geoffrey Morrison-Logan talks with Medford residents.

Guide to the FEIR Document and Process

MassDOT will hold a public meeting on the FEIR on June 30, 2010 at 6:00 pm at Somerville High School (81 Highland Avenue, Somerville). The meeting will provide an opportunity for members of the public, agency representatives, and other project stakeholders to learn about changes to the project and ask questions.

Comments on the FEIR must be submitted in writing to the MEPA office to be considered. If you wish to comment, please mail, fax, or email your comments to the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, using the information listed below:

Secretary Ian Bowles
 Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
 MEPA Office, Attn: Holly Johnson, MEPA Analyst
 EEA #13886
 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
 Boston, MA 02114
 Fax: 617-626-1181
 Email: Holly.S.Johnson@state.ma.us

Copies of these comments may also be sent to Katherine Fichter, Massachusetts Department of Transportation – Office of Transportation Planning, 10 Park Plaza, Room 4150, Boston, MA 02116.

The comment period for the FEIR is 30 days. **Comments must be received no later than July 23, 2010.** It is anticipated that the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs will issue a MEPA Certificate on the Green Line Extension FEIR by July 30, 2010.



Workshop participants shared their ideas for station areas.

New Location for Green Line Extension Vehicle Maintenance and Storage Facility

To operate the Green Line Extension north of Lechmere, the MBTA must design and construct a new vehicle maintenance and storage facility. MassDOT considered and examined many locations for such a facility. The FEIR recommends a new site, located in the Inner Belt area of Somerville. The site is known as "Option L," due to its L-shaped configuration. The new location is further away from residences than the site – Yard 8 – proposed by MassDOT in the DEIR. The Option L site also allows for future development of the areas closest to the Green Line Extension

corridor and the creation of long-term transportation connections between the Inner Belt and Brickbottom neighborhoods.

The selection of the Option L site is the culmination of a community planning process that engaged community advocates, local residents, business people, and elected officials at all levels with MassDOT and the project team. MassDOT has received valuable input throughout the planning process and will continue to work with interested individuals and organizations, including municipal officials and staff, on specific design elements of the facility. More information about the process of selecting the Option L site can be found on the project website.

Additional Maintenance Facility Alternatives



FEIR Highlights

The Green Line Extension FEIR outlines project impacts and proposed mitigation measures as required by the Secretary's Certificate. Here is a brief summary of the results and recommendations, as well as a summary of project costs and funding.

Project Impacts: It is nearly impossible to build a new transit system in an urban area without having some impacts, either short or long-term. That being said, MassDOT and the MBTA feel confident that the nature of the Green Line Extension will allow it to be a comparatively "low-impact" project. The FEIR summarizes potential impacts and describes how they will be mitigated. As the project moves into detailed design, these recommendations will become more specific and detailed.

MassDOT currently estimates the following impacts:

- Noise impacts to 168 buildings
- Vibration impacts to 95 buildings
- Traffic impacts at 43 intersections

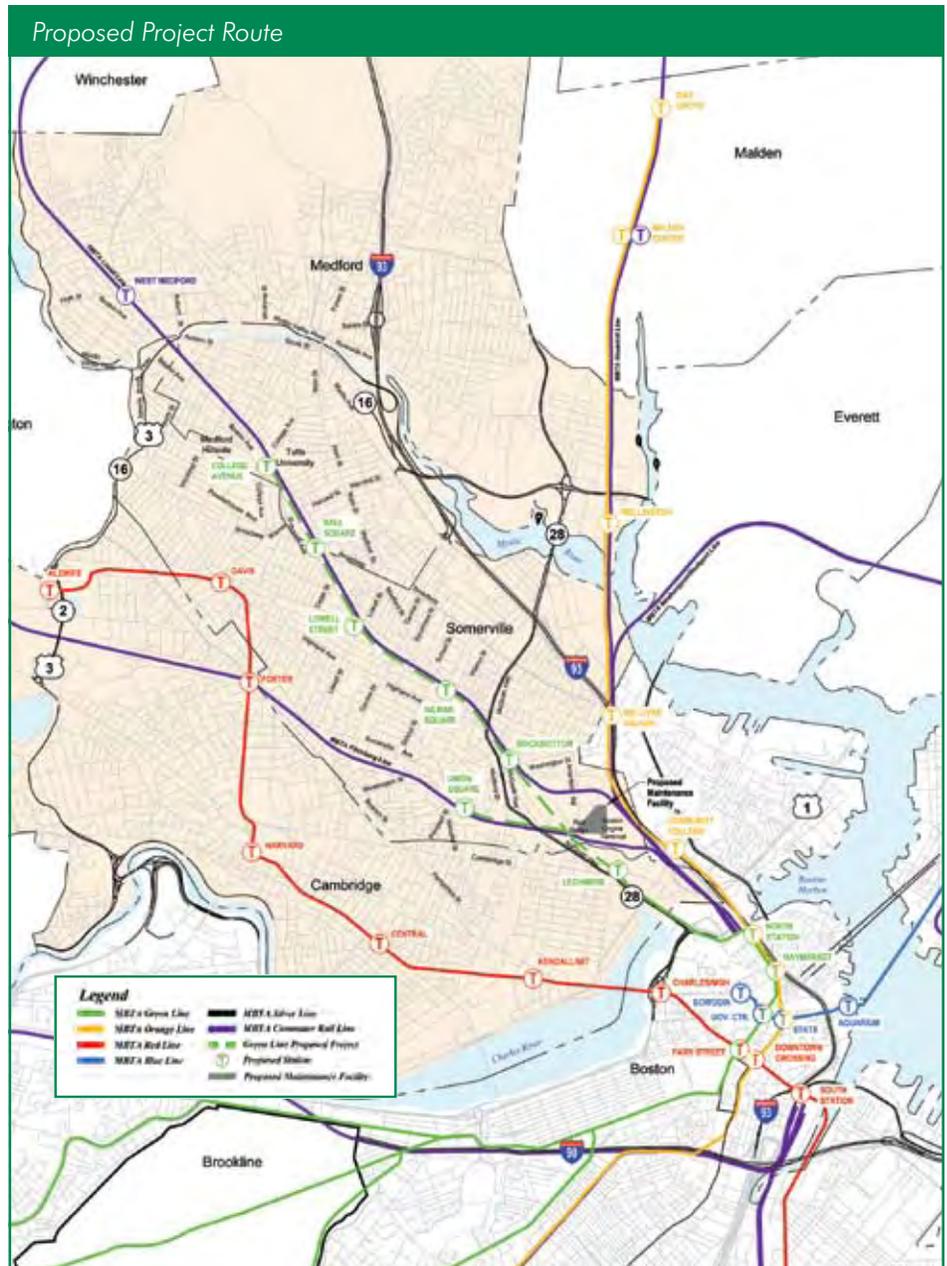
Noise Mitigation: One way to reduce noise is to control it at the source. When noise is related to rail tracks, lubricating the rails or using continuously-welded rail are common practices. At some locations along the corridor, noise barriers will be proposed, with details on their height and appearance to be developed in engineering. Where noise barriers will not be effective, the team will test other options, such as insulation treatments (including adding an extra layer of glazing to windows and sealing any holes in exterior surfaces that act as sound leaks), or providing improved ventilation and air conditioning. Specific mitigation measures will be developed for each impacted structure during Preliminary Engineering. If, after the Green Line Extension opens for passenger service, noise levels are found to be higher than the projections, the MBTA will investigate the cause and take appropriate corrective action.

Vibration Mitigation: The FEIR estimates that some locations could be affected by vibration from the operation of the Green Line Extension. To reduce or eliminate this impact, the team will develop approaches that reduce

vibration at the source, including using ballast mats or resilient rail fasteners or implementing special track work. These plans will be developed further during Preliminary Engineering.

Traffic Mitigation: While the Green Line Extension does not include new parking facilities, it is likely to impact

Continued on next page.



traffic flow and pedestrian patterns in some locations. The following traffic mitigation is proposed:

- Roadway and signal modifications at ten intersections
- Pedestrian improvements at 33 locations
- Reconstruction of O'Brien Highway at Lechmere Station
- Development of station area parking enforcement plans with the corridor municipalities

For more information, see the Executive Summary of the FEIR, which includes a chart with mitigation commitments (page ES-26).

Air Quality Modeling. The Green Line Extension project is included in the Statewide Implementation Plan (SIP), and it conforms with the requirements of the Federal Clean Air Act as well as Massachusetts Air Quality Regulations. For more detail on the modeling and data used to determine the air quality benefits of the Green Line Extension, refer to Chapter 3 of the FEIR.

Project Cost and Funding

The Green Line Extension has a total estimated project cost of approximately \$953.7 million. This cost includes constructing six new stations and reconstructing Lechmere Station, as well as constructing the vehicle storage and maintenance facility and purchasing 24 Green Line vehicles. The estimated cost of operating the Green Line Extension is \$22.1 million annually (in 2009 dollars).

The Commonwealth anticipates funding the project with a mix of federal and Commonwealth money.

Surveying work along the right-of-way.



Thanks for Your Participation

The *Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment* drew a great deal of attention when it was released in October 2009. The Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs received more than 400 individual comment letters — with more than 2,400 individual comments. The stack of letters measures 5 1/4 inches high! Comments came from abutters; elected officials; business owners; regional agencies; environmental, bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups; neighborhood organizations; groups representing people with disabilities and environmental justice populations; and from many other interested individuals. Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Ian Bowles noted that while expansion of any light rail service through an urban area is a challenging task and prompted a variety of views, “comment letters generally expressed overall support” for the project. Thank you for your interest.

The full January 15, 2010 DEIR Certificate can be viewed on the project website at www.mass.gov/greenlineextension.

Want more information?

Check out our project website, mass.gov/greenlineextension

The Green Line Extension website has a wealth of project information for anyone wanting to catch up on progress to date.

For additional project information, please contact:

Katherine Fichter
617-973-7342 or
katherine.fichter@state.ma.us

