

**GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT**  
**June 5, 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: June 5, 2018; 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

**ATTENDANCE:**

CWG Members: Jason Alves (East Cambridge Business Association), Michaela Bogosh (Magoun Square), Elliot Bradshaw (Brickbottom), Frederick Dello Russo, Jr. (Medford City Council), Jennifer Dorsen (Somerville Ball Square), Ryan Dunn (Magoun Square), Mark Johnson (DivcoWest), Jim McGinnis (Union Square), Brad Rawson (City of Somerville), Laurel Ruma (College Ave), Jim Silva (Medford Ball Square)

MassDOT/MBTA: Karen Burns – MBTA Deputy Director of Bus Operations, John Dalton – MBTA GLX Program Manager, Melissa Dullea – MBTA Senior Director of Service Planning, Terry McCarthy – MBTA Deputy Program Manager of Stakeholder Engagement

GLX Constructors (GLXC): Chris Bethel, Hannah Brockhaus, Nate Curtis, Jamie Doyle, Megan Jarrett, Clyde Joseph, Lloyd Lovell, Jeff Wagner, John West

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

Other Attendees: Thomas Fraim (LaQuinta Inn and Suites), Erica Mace (City of Somerville), 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 review on pre-construction surveys, traffic detour management, the School Street pedestrian bridge, GLX Community Tabling Events (DBE Outreach Event, June 21<sup>st</sup> and the City of Somerville info session, June 23) as well as informing the group that the CWG July 3 meeting has moved to July 10 and will include information on the Community Path.

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 Week

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(May 7-11). An overview was provided for GLXC's bridge closure schedule for 2018 through 2020. GLXC explained their bridge replacement approach to Broadway Bridge, Washington Street Bridge, and Medford Street Bridge, including the initial planning for traffic and pedestrian/bike detours.

Karen Burns of MBTA Bus Operations and Melissa Dullea of MBTA Service Planning also reported on the best strategies to divert MBTA bus services during bridge construction detours.

GLXC also provided 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.

Lloyd Lovell of GLXC informed the group on some of the project's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goals and let the group know about the DBE Networking Event on Thursday, June 21, inviting members to spread the word and invite local businesses to attend. The flyer for the event will be made available on the GLX website.

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION/ISSUES:

#### Bridge Construction

A member asked if Washington Street would be opened back up between the two scheduled closures. The project team confirmed that it would be open during that time.

It was noted by the project team that they committed to not having two adjacent bridges closed at the same time.

There was an inquiry as to why these bridges could not be constructed in the Fast 14 (accelerated construction) method used by MassDOT in the past. The project team stated that the presence of an active rail line did not lend itself to the accelerated bridge construction process.

There was discussion on a CWG question as to whether the current separate utility bridge for the Broadway Bridge could be modified into a pedestrian bridge during construction because the closure would add a burdensome walking detour. The project said it would evaluate the design to determine possible alternatives. This was presented as a significant issue for members of the CWG who expressed concern as to how pedestrians in the community would get around during construction.

An additional comment was made about the potential impact that the Broadway Bridge closure could have on local businesses, especially as the closure happens during the holiday season.

It was inquired if the traffic plans provided were final. The project team stated that these were the initial plans and adjustments may still be made.

It was asked if the MBTA buses would be following the same routes planned for vehicle traffic. MBTA Planning and Bus Operations said they are looking at different routes and concepts for how buses would operate and still meet customer demands but the routes have not yet been determined.

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A member asked if the MBTA would be providing ways for traffic to move more smoothly and swiftly through areas during the detours. The project team said there are ongoing discussions about the best use of signalization, signs, and police details.

It was inquired if any two-way roads would be changed to one-way during the detours. The City of Somerville responded that this option was on the table and they were looking at many different ways including signal optimization and transit priority for buses.

A member gave a suggestion for using a regional bus loop similar to those used in Washington DC to help connect certain parts of Somerville during the construction. MBTA said they are limited by the resources they currently have available.

It was asked if the MBTA Better Bus forums were an appropriate place to discuss busing options that will happen during construction. The MBTA said that those forums were more about long term strategies and not the short term for construction. The City of Somerville said that they are having discussions about busing in Somerville as part of the Better Bus program including some revenue neutral ideas for better cross-town service.

It was noted that Medford has a lot of congestion on Harvard Avenue with lots of trucks. A main concern for the neighborhood will be the tight turn from Harvard onto Main Street and members felt this should be addressed with the city.

The City of Somerville commented that they would be using their subscription to the Waze app to help direct traffic away from construction.

The City of Somerville also mentioned how they are working with the project team to make sure first responders' emergency vehicles, buses and local traffic routes are being handled differently than trucking and regional traffic as well as flagging certain pedestrian issues.

A member asked if it would make sense to use smaller buses like what are used in certain places (like Mission Hill) if it was found that larger buses could not navigate traffic routes. MBTA said that they don't have any small buses in the system and thus would have to contract out for accommodations like those at Mission Hill. It was also noted, however, that the customer demand for these routes would not be very well accommodated by smaller buses.

It was noted that the Medford Bridge pedestrian/bike detour that at School Street is quite steep, making it difficult for bicyclists.

The City of Somerville mentioned that its long-term vision has always been a two-way School Street so it is open to discussion on executing this to help with the traffic detour.

### Tree Clearing and Track Removal

It was asked if the tree clearing is now done. The project team said they are done on the east side and said that other than some select trees that may be needed on the west side, this was all that was planned to be cleared for the immediate future.

It was noted by the project team that the fourth iron track removal is planned to be done promptly (Lowell Street to Washington Street). Starting in August (tentatively the weekends of August 11, 18, and 25 the plan is to start relocating the commuter rail over to make way for the

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Green Line tracks. There will be a diversion of commuter rail service during these track relocations which will be announced in advance.

A member asked if there was an estimate of the total tonnage of the trees and vegetation that had been removed. The project team said they do not have the total numbers yet but will have them as part of their sustainability plan.

It was asked what was being done with the vegetation. The project team stated most of it was being recycled as mulch onsite, or at playgrounds or parks.

The project team noted that they have closed numerous gaps in fencing along the rail corridor to secure the railway. A new, continuous fence will be installed once the project is complete.

### Homan Building

The project team said the building is tentatively slated for demolition this summer. Plans are in place to preserve the lion's head above the Medford Street doorway in accordance with a commitment to the City of Somerville.

### General Discussion

The University Place residents at the Broadway Bridge are looking to have a meeting with their trustees and the project team about flexibility on fencing and access. Other concerns include construction notifications and traffic/safety. The project team will coordinate.

It was mentioned that one thing many abutters are concerned about is what the final fencing will look like. The project team said that designs are still in production but that the fence would be a standard chain-link fence. It was noted that fencing in addition to sound walls may create undesirable areas where trash and debris could collect. The MBTA will discuss this potential issue with homeowners.

The project team noted that the earliest designs for things such as sound walls are scheduled to wrap up in late December 2018/early 2019 and at that point it would plan to share the designs with the public.

It was asked if the entire project would have sound walls or only parts. The project said it would only be parts where they are required. A member asked if a map of the walls could be shared at some point and the project said they could do that.

It was also asked if the nature of sound wall materials could be shared. The project said it is still determining what materials will be used as part of the design packages.

The project team said it is planning to perform significant outreach leading up to the bridge closures in the fall by having events in different neighborhoods. The first will be partnering with the City of Somerville on June 23 in Ball Square. Draft flyers were made available to members and will be posted on the website.

Members asked if the project team could join various block parties and the ArtBeat event (July 14) in Somerville to answer questions about the project.

Members suggested having a board for posting information near construction sites as well as having renderings of station platforms near those construction sites to highlight the benefit of what was coming.

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The project team stated that the GLX public meeting in Medford on July 18 will focus on the bridge closings.

It was asked if the project was coordinating with Tufts University about their construction. The project team responded they are coordinating closely with Tufts.

In response to another inquiry, the project team and City of Somerville stated that they have significant coordination with the Somerville High School project to ensure a smooth interface between the Gilman Square Station, Community Path, and the high school design and construction.

The Friends of the Community Path (FCP) asked if the Homan Building is owned by the MBTA or the City of Somerville. The City of Somerville owns the property and is allowing the MBTA to use it for construction purposes. The MBTA will demolish the building, but it will be returned to the city after the project is complete to advance neighborhood plans and transit-oriented development.

The FCP asked if a Gantt chart of the bridge closings could be developed to show overlaps. The project team said that a visualized bridge schedule was in development.

The FCP asked if the Community Path would be discussed at the July 18 public meeting. The project team confirmed that it will be discussed, but the primary focus of that meeting will be the bridge closures and traffic detours. The Community Path will be a topic of discussion at the next CWG meeting.

Brickbottom residents followed up on a request made through Senator Jehlen's office to have a meeting in the early design phase, and the project team said they would strive to schedule the meeting soon.

There was a request by members to have a Community Path public meeting with the larger community once more design details had been worked out.

Next CWG meeting: July 10 at GLX Project Office at 200 Inner Belt Rd. in Somerville.