

Beyond Lechmere Northwest Corridor Project Advisory Group

GROUNDRULES AND PROCEDURES

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) has invited the communities of Boston, Cambridge, Somerville and Medford to send representatives to an Advisory Committee for the Beyond Lechmere Northwest Corridor Major Investment Study, Phase I. The group includes residents, elected and municipal officials and/or their representatives, and other interested parties. MBTA staff and members of the project consultant team, led by VHB, will also participate in the meetings.

Goals

The primary role of the Advisory Committee is to review and discuss key information, data and alternatives for improving transit service in the Northwest Corridor. This will include commenting on the Purpose and Need for the project; data collected for the project; the criteria developed to evaluate the alternatives; the conceptual alternatives and screening process; and other technical and general information, such as environmental and cost issues. The MBTA believes that community involvement and input will help define the best project for the region.

Guidelines for Participation

1. The members of the Advisory Committee are nominated by the communities at the request of the MBTA. The public is welcome to attend the committee meetings as observers. A 10-minute public comment period will be set aside at each meeting for comments or questions from observers.
2. The MBTA's Project Manager will chair the meetings of the Advisory Committee. He will seek to achieve consensus on the proposals or alternatives; in the absence of a consensus, the opinions of the parties will be recorded in a written summary and taken into consideration by the MBTA. The opinions of the communities are an important element in the process of developing alternatives, but the MBTA also has to follow guidelines relating to feasibility, level of technical difficulty, environmental laws and regulations, and state and federal funding guidelines. The MBTA values the contributions and opinions of the communities and the individual participants, but it retains final decision making authority with regard to the project.

3. For the Advisory Committee to be effective, the parties have to take their roles and responsibilities seriously. The MBTA and its consultants commit to the following responsibilities: to schedule meetings on a regular basis that will allow the participants to consider issues and offer timely comments; to consider and respond to these comments and issues; to provide understandable and accurate data and project information; to provide timely notice of meetings, with agendas; and to record and distribute accurate summaries of the discussions. Members of the technical consulting team will participate in the meetings and will serve as a resource to the committee.
4. Members of the Advisory Committee are expected to: learn about the issues relevant to the project; disseminate this information to the community or segment of the communities they represent; and advise the MBTA of their opinions and those of their communities in a timely manner. In the case of a Public Meeting, the community members will participate and encourage others to learn about the project and share their opinions in writing or at the meeting.
5. All participants are requested to listen to the opinions of others in an effort to ensure a constructive discussion. Personal attacks will not be permitted.
6. Members of the Advisory Committee are asked to make every possible effort to attend the meetings consistently. Anyone who misses more than two meetings in a row will find it difficult to participate in the work of the committee effectively.
7. Participants are encouraged to stay focused on and limit the discussion to the issues on the meeting agendas. Issues related to other MBTA projects will not be addressed or will be ruled out of order.
8. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee will ask the members to approve the groundrules and will seek the support of the group to enforce them.

The MBTA appreciates the time and effort that individuals commit to this kind of project and thanks them for representing their communities and working to enhance the planning process.