

GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Green Line Extension Project is an initiative of the Executive Office of Transportation & Public Works, in coordination with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, to implement enhancements to transit services that will improve mobility and regional access for residents in the northwest corridor communities of Somerville, Medford, and Cambridge, as well as the surrounding area. The purpose of the project is to improve corridor mobility, boost transit ridership, improve regional air quality, ensure a more equitable distribution of transit services, and support opportunities for smart growth initiatives and sustainable development.

The project would extend Green Line light rail service from Lechmere Station at its proposed relocated site through Cambridge, Somerville and Medford, as shown on the attached graphic, with an extension of the main line to Medford and a spur line to Union Square in Somerville. The area consists of densely settled urban corridors with a large base of commuters and transit users, including an active commuter rail corridor. The project will include construction of approximately six new transit stations. Alternative alignments to be considered as part of this project include:

- Green Line Extension to Medford Hillside with Spur to Union Square via the Fitchburg Line
- Green Line Extension to Mystic Valley Parkway (Rt. 16) with Spur to Union Square via the Fitchburg Line
- Green Line Extension to Medford Hillside with Spur to Union Square via Somerville Avenue
- Green Line Extension to Mystic Valley Parkway (Rt. 16) with Spur to Union Square via Somerville Avenue
- New Commuter Rail stations

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in obtaining environmental permits for the Central Artery/Tunnel Project in the early 1990s, committed to implementing a number of Boston region transit improvement projects as mitigation measures. The transit project commitments included a Green Line Extension. In 2004, the transit project commitments were reexamined and support for a northern extension of the Green Line was reaffirmed. Subsequently, the project was expanded, including a spur to Union Square in Somerville. Around this time, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) also conducted the Beyond Lechmere Northwest Corridor Study, which was a Major Investment Study/Alternatives Analysis that evaluated a wide range and mixture of technologies and operating plans for the area, including Green Line extensions, bus rapid transit, and commuter rail enhancements.



On October 2, 2006, EOTPW submitted an Expanded Environmental Notification Form to the Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs for an extension of the MBTA Green Line to Somerville and Medford. On December 1, 2006, the Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs issued a Certificate on the EENF requiring the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report in fulfillment of the requirements of Section 11.08 of the MEPA regulations. However, the Secretary's Certificate noted that should the DEIR provide a reasonably complete and stand-alone analysis of alternatives and environmental impacts and adequately address mitigation, the regulations would allow the DEIR to be reviewed as a Final EIR.

The current phase of the Green Line Extension Project – scheduled to require 18 months – is focused on finalizing the best route and station locations for the light rail service by moving into conceptual engineering and preparing the necessary state and federal environmental review documents. Additionally, EOTPW is pursuing federal funding assistance for this project. The Federal Transit Administration's discretionary New Starts program is the federal government's primary financial resource for supporting locally-planned, implemented, and operated transit capital projects. To successfully qualify for New Starts funding, candidate projects must have resulted from an alternatives analysis study, which may include the undertaking of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment.

EOTPW is committed to a comprehensive and inclusive public participation process for this project. Efficient channeling of public and agency participation is critical as we work to provide information to stakeholders, gather information about local conditions and priorities, hear feedback on proposed alternatives and develop stakeholder support for a project strategy. EOTPW will ensure that the process remains transparent so that the public understands the decision-making process, key milestones, and ways to participate in the process. The Green Line Extension Project will involve active and responsive neighborhood and overall community involvement.

In order to engage all stakeholders effectively, EOTPW and the project team are providing a range of public involvement forums and tools, including:

- Frequent meetings of the Advisory Group
- Major public meetings to be held at key milestones in the planning process
- Regular briefings for neighborhood councils and other groups throughout the corridor
- A project website (www.GreenLineExtension.org), which includes project information and documents, updates on meetings and events, and opportunities to ask questions and post comments
- Email notification of meetings and publication of new documents. Anyone interested in receiving electronic updates about the project can sign up at the project website.