



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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Secretary Ian Bowles  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
MEPA Office  
Attn: Holly Johnson, MEPA Analyst  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Re: EEA #13886

Dear Secretary Bowles:

I am writing to comment on the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Green Line Extension Project (GLX). My comments, which I kept brief, are in no particular order. Arranged by topic, the concern:

## 1) Station Access

### a. Inclusion of the Community Path

I urge MassDOT to commit to designing, funding, and constructing the Community Path from its current terminus to the re-located Lechmere Station at North Point. MassDOT could help with the funding by co-sponsoring the City of Somerville's Tiger II grant application, and by taking advantage of other applicable federal grant programs. Besides being an appropriate mitigation for yet another announced delay in the completion of the GLX project, construction of the path would:

- Boost ridership by facilitating station access, without bringing more congestions to Somerville's already clogged streets;
- Bring this project into better compliance with the MassDOT's "Green DOT" program, and with the Healthy Transportation Compact enacted as part of the 2009 Transportation Reform legislation that created MassDOT;
- Help to ameliorate the cumulative effect of numerous state transportation decisions over the years which have isolated Somerville geographically, while filling it with traffic and its emissions; construction of elevated Route 28; construction of the Boston Engine Terminal (BET); construction and continued existence of elevated I-93 through Somerville, the addition of an I-93 exit ramp onto Washington Street; the inaccessibility from Somerville of the I-93 HOV lane; the construction of the new runway at Logan Airport, running commuter rail service through Somerville without any Somerville stops, etc.

## **b. Station Design**

Please ensure that MassDOT design all stations with access for all riders, arriving by all modes of travel, including those with physical limitations. Access should be reasonably direct, not long and convoluted, and maximizing the safety of those NOT in motor vehicles. One important example of such design will be access across McGrath Highway to the re-located Lechmere Station: the East Cambridge Planning Team's efforts here and the redesign of Lechmere Square should be supported.

### **2) The Proposed GLX Terminus at College Avenue**

I was a member of the Joint Committee on Bonding Capital Expenditures, and State Assets at the time that the 2008 Transportation Bond Bill authorizing \$600,000,000 for the state's share of the GLX project. The language of the Bond Bill expressly authorized a capital expenditure for the extension of the Green Line to "Medford Hillside." With all due respect to the Massachusetts Environment Commissioner Laurie Burt, I do not see how the FEIR's proposed terminus of the GLX at Tufts University (College Avenue) squares with the Bond Bill's authorization for an extension to Medford Hillside.

I am aware that a Route 16 terminus is MassDOT's "preferred" alternative, and is scheduled for construction as a second phase, due to funding constraints. My concern is that constraining the project could adversely affect project funding. The questions of the project's Bond Bill authorization apart, there are conformance with the State Implementation Plan, in which the GLX is an important step towards bringing the Commonwealth into compliance with the Clean Air Act, and related obligations.

I would urge that you insist that MassDOT address these questions now, starting by filing a substitution request under the SIP regulations. Better yet would be for you to require a robust look at the practical effects of putting the GLX terminus effectively in the middle of the Tufts University campus. Considering the road capacity, grade, and land uses around the proposed College Avenue station, I see maximum congestion and inconvenience of access combined with minimum economic development potential – not a smart leveraging of a huge transportation infrastructure investment.

### **3) Maintenance Facility**

I am grateful for the selection of Option L as the site of the future maintenance facility, a great movement over the proposal to build at Brickbottom. Please ask MassDOT to continue to work with the City of Somerville and private landowners to weak the exact sitting of the facility to minimize land takings and interruption of existing business and to maximize the redevelopment opportunities. One obvious and vital way to foster economic development here is to take elevated Rte. 28 down to grade, and to connect to that highway the dead end of Inner Belt Road- another important mitigation of the effects of the Central Artery off-ramp on to Washington Street.

### **4) Mitigation for Further Delay**

My initial involvement with the Green Line Extension was in 1984, when I worked for then – Somerville mayor Eugene Brune, and the "Beyond Lechmere" study was published, recommending prompt action on the extension of the Green Line. The revised 2014 deadline for the completion of the project would have at least allowed use to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that recommendation in a satisfying way. The latest delay, purportedly to October, 2015, is privately discouraging and publicly embarrassing.

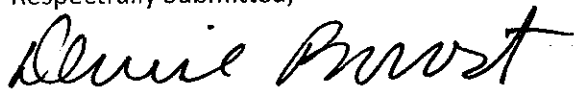
There has to be an upside to this attenuation, which should come as mitigation. As I've suggested, design and concurrent construction of the Community Path is an obvious and important deliverable in

this category. Other mitigations that will help to improve air quality in the short and longer term would be:

- Designing into the project the capacity to electrify the commuter rail trains in the longer term;
- Replacing dirty diesel locomotives currently used on the commuter rail line with cleaner technology
- Ditto for Somerville's bus fleet
- Design and plan for an extension of Porter Square Connecting the Green & Red Lines, and connecting the Green line with the Fitchburg Line west of North Station would be big gains for urban and regional connectivity, and would displace many trips by automobile.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I applaud MassDOT for its conscientious focus on this project, even through the upheaval of its recent reorganization.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Provost". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Denise Provost