



## —MEMORANDUM—

**DATE:** May 1, 2014  
**TO:** Boston Region MPO  
**FROM:** Maureen Kelly, MPO Staff  
**RE:** MPO Discussions about Green Line Extension to Route 16

As requested by the MPO at its April 3 meeting, staff has reviewed past MPO meeting minutes to provide a summary of discussions about the Green Line Extension to Route 16 project (Phase 2, from College Avenue to Route 16 in Medford). Below is a summary of key points of these discussions from MPO meeting minutes.

**February 5, 2009:** The chair briefed members on the updated plan for the Green Line Extension. The preferred alternative would have a terminus at Mystic Valley Parkway and would not include constructing a parking garage.

**July 2, 2009:** Members discussed the financial plan for expansion projects for an amendment to the Long-Range Transportation Plan, *JOURNEY to 2030*. The Executive Office of Transportation (now MassDOT) expressed its commitment to the Green Line Extension to Route 16, but noted that there is a \$130-million shortfall in funding for the project. Note that, in 2007, the first phase of the project, the Green Line Extension to Ball Square in Somerville, was programmed in the *JOURNEY to 2030*.

**July 9, 2009:** Representatives Denise Provost and Carl Sciortino expressed their constituents' concerns about scaling back the Green Line Extension project from the Route 16 terminus to College Avenue, as it was reflected in the financial plan for the amendment to the LRTP.

**July 16, 2009:** As the MPO considered the amendment to the LRTP, MAPC provided a list of projects that it believed should be strongly considered for inclusion in the LRTP because they met criteria consistent with the goals of MAPC's MetroFuture plan and the project-selection criteria of the MPO. The Green Line Extension to Route 16 (from College Avenue to Route 16), with an estimated current cost of \$130 million, was among those projects.

Following a debate about whether to flex highway funds to priority transit projects, the MPO voted to flex highway funds for several transit projects including \$185 million (cost inflated to the year of programming) for the Green Line Extension to Route 16 (from College Avenue to Route 16). The project was

programmed in the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2016–20 time band of the LRTP. Members that voted against the motion were the City of Boston, Town of Hopkinton, Town of Bedford, Town of Braintree, and Massachusetts Turnpike Authority.

**August 20, 2009:** Members discussed the funding plans and match requirements for the Green Line Extension to College Avenue—the State Implementation Plan (SIP) commitment—and the extension to Route 16, as well as the New Starts application for the project to College Avenue.

**September 24, 2009:** The MPO voted to approve the amendment to the LRTP, including the \$185 million of flexed highway funds for the Green Line Extension to Route 16.

**September 16, 2010:** During a discussion of the SIP, the City of Somerville suggested that the SIP be revised to include the Green Line Extension to Route 16 and the Community Path projects to make up for delays in the schedule of the Green Line Extension to College Avenue project.

**January 20, 2011:** During a discussion of the SIP, MassDOT announced that MAPC would begin a community visioning process and land use study around a proposed terminus at Route 16.

**March 10, 2011:** In a discussion of the development of the new LRTP, *Paths to a Sustainable Future*, the City of Somerville and Regional Transportation Advisory Council advocated for keeping the Green Line Extension to Route 16 in the new LRTP.

**May 19, 2011:** Members heard public comments in support of the Green Line Extension to Route 16 project from State Senator Patricia Jehlen, Representative Sciortino, representatives of the Conservation Law Foundation and Friends of the Community Path, and a Somerville resident. The Advisory Council reported that the project is among the Council's top priorities for inclusion in the new LRTP.

**May 26, 2011:** Representative Sciortino again advocated for the project's inclusion in the LRTP noting that building the line to the Route 16 terminus was the preferred alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Report. Members were briefed on the public comments received on the LRTP, which included 30 comments in support of this project and seven opposed.

Members discussed two potential investment strategies for the LRTP. Strategy One included the Green Line Extension to Route 16. Strategy Two did not. Members discussed the balance of funding in each scenario that would be allocated to named projects and left unallocated for maintenance projects. MassDOT expressed concern that Strategy One left too few dollars for

maintenance projects. Two motions to approve the project list in Strategy One failed.

MassDOT moved to approve the list of projects in Strategy Two. There were several failed amendments to this motion, including a motion by the Advisory Council, seconded by the City of Somerville, to add the Green Line Extension to Route 16 project to the FFY 2016–20 time band of the LRTP. Members continued to voice concerns about inadequate funding for maintenance needs in the funding strategy under consideration. They voted to table the discussion.

The idea of flexing highway funds to transit projects was raised during this meeting.

**June 2, 2011:** Representative Sciortino again expressed support for the project. The MPO also received a letter of support from Mayor Michael McGlynn of Medford.

Members continued the discussion of the LRTP by working with Strategy Two, however, MAPC presented an alternative scenario that included the Green Line Extension to Route 16 programmed for \$185 million in the FFYs 2016-20 time band of the LRTP. MAPC's strategy would leave at least 30% of funds in each time band unallocated. MassDOT withdrew its motion (from the May 26 meeting) to approve Strategy Two. A motion to approve MAPC's funding scenario was made by MAPC and seconded by the Town of Framingham. The motion passed and the Green Line Extension to Route 16 project was voted into the LRTP.

**August 4, 2011:** The City of Somerville asked if the Commonwealth would consider funding the Green Line Extension to Route 16 project. The chair stated that the Commonwealth could not commit to that segment of project.

**September 22, 2011:** The MPO heard a comment from a representative of the East Arlington Concerned Citizens Coalition who expressed concerns that the extension to Route 16 would cause rents to rise and displace residents. The MPO also heard comments in support of the project from representatives of the Friends of the Community Path, the Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership and Mystic View Task Force, and others in favor of constructing the Green Line Extension along with the Community Path.

The MPO voted to approve the LRTP, incorporating the Green Line Extension to Route 16 project in the FFYs 2016-20 time band.

**March 15, 2012:** MAPC presented the results of the Mystic Valley Parkway Green Line Community Visioning Project. MAPC held a public engagement process and studied the potential for land use changes and development around the proposed Route 16 terminus. The study identified potential benefits of the Green Line Extension to Route 16, including the potential for new housing units,

office and commercial space; job creation; an increase of the tax base; and increased home values. Potential drawbacks that were identified include increased traffic, on-street parking, noise, reduced air quality, tax increases, gentrification, and displacement of current residents.

**April 5, 2012:** Members heard comments from Representative Sciortino and a representative of the Conservation Law Foundation asking for the Green Line Extension to Route 16 project to be programmed to start in FFY 2016. A Medford resident also expressed support for the project and noted its benefits outlined in MAPC's study.

MassDOT expressed support for flexing highway funds for the project and offered to make cash flow recommendations for the next meeting.

**April 19, 2012:** The legislative delegation for Somerville and Medford, the Mayors of Somerville and Medford, representatives of the Conservation Law Foundation and Tufts University, and several Medford residents expressed support for the project.

Members discussed the FFYs 2013–16 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), including the programming of \$8.1 million for the design of the Green Line Extension to Route 16 project in FFY 2016. During a debate, the MBTA Advisory Council and MassDOT cautioned that programming the project in the TIP would commit the MPO to program \$190 million for future construction. The MetroWest Regional Collaborative, while indicating support for the project, expressed concern that the MBTA would not have enough resources, given its deficit, to operate the extension once built.

Those who spoke in favor of programming the project included MAPC, the Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville), and the Advisory Council. Supporters noted the strong community backing for the project and its potential benefits, which could include a mode shift from cars to transit, opportunities for economic development, increased tax revenue, and support of smart growth and sustainable development.

The MPO subsequently voted to program \$8.1 million for the Green Line Extension to Route 16 project in the FFY 2016 element of the TIP. The MetroWest Regional Collaborative and MBTA Advisory Board voted against the motion. Members then voted to release the draft FFY 2013–16 TIP for public review. The MBTA Advisory Board abstained.

**June 7, 2012:** During a discussion of the TIP, members heard a summary of public comments received. Supporters of the project expressed that the extension of the Green Line to Route 16 project would reduce air pollution by lessening auto traffic, produce economic development benefits by providing access to jobs and education, and serve an environmental justice community.

Supporters included State Senator Patricia Jehlen and State Representatives Carl Sciortino, Sean Garballey, and Denise Provost. The Advisory Council also submitted comments in support of the project.

Opponents, who included the Green Line Advisory Committee for Medford (GLAM) and other Medford residents, stated that the public support for the extension was exaggerated and the public process for the project was tainted. They expressed concern that certain populations (including the environmental justice and disability communities) were not included in discussions about the project, the project is not a fiscal reality for the state, the extension would worsen traffic, and that housing costs in Medford would escalate.

**June 21, 2012:** During a discussion about the LRTP, staff summarized the public comments received to date. There were 45 comments in support of the Green Line Extension to Route 16 project, including those from Congressman Michael Capuano and Representative Sciortino.

**June 28, 2012:** Members heard public comments from people opposed to a terminus at Route 16. They included the president of the Mystic Valley Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, who expressed concern about the possible displacement of residents. Representatives of GLAM and two Medford residents also expressed concern about gentrification and displacement, and stated that the public outreach process was flawed and did not take into account the interests of seniors, people with disabilities, and other residents who live near the proposed terminus.

Members voted to approve the FFY 2013–16 TIP and the amendment to the LRTP with funding programmed for the Green Line Extension to Route 16.

**April 4, 2013:** Members heard comments in support of the project from a representative of the Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership and Mystic View Task Force, who said the project would support MassDOT's mode shift goal; and from a Medford resident, who said that the project would support economic development along the Green Line corridor.

Members discussed funding for the Green Line Extension to Route 16 (from College Avenue) as presented in the staff recommendation for the FFYs 2014–17 TIP. The MBTA reported that the project is in the conceptual stage and the cost estimate could change as the project gets closer to implementation. The chair also noted that programming the project in the TIP would result in the MPO having to continue to flex a significant amount of highway funds to transit in the future. Also at this meeting, members discussed funding for the first phase of the Green Line Extension project in the context of *The Way Forward Plan*.