From: 365poet@michaeljmonroe.com
To: publicinformation@ctps.org
Subject: Please read this - it"s about the Green Line (hi, by the way).
Date: Tuesday, September 06, 2011 3:29:19 PM

Dear People of the Boston MPO Staff,

Heartbreak! Horror! Not to mention a sheer lack of what I would characterize as pure logic, big-picture thinking, or having – Oh I dunno – a spine? Elbow grease? Gumption? Courage?

Not sure. I'm at a loss. And I don't mean you. At least, I hope not….?

I'm writing to you in particular about the original legal agreement in 1990 (that was the last century, by the way) to extend the Green Line – revised in 2000 for planned completion in 2011, then delayed to 2014 in revisions to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) legal obligations under the Clean Air Act.

You guys are inside the proverbial system. I'm writing because I believe *you* are people who could help change things around. Please bear with me here – I have just a few things to say, *and they're important.* It's Tuesday. It's raining. C'mon.

So as you know, last year MassDOT said the Green Line Extension (GLX) wouldn't open until 2015. And now they've announced even more delays (2018 to 2020)! If I was a conspiracy theorist, well, I'd be a conspiracy theorist. But this is just too dumb and mean and unjust and plain ridiculous for that.

I entreat you – hang with me for a paragraph or two. Just three main things here.

1) SUSTAINABILITY. It's important to remember that the GLX is a fantastic sustainable transportation project. (Projects like this have a precedent in other parts of the country of completion within the same time frame, by the way.)

Basically it's light rail providing clean transit to the city most health-burdened by god-awful highway and diesel commuter rail pollution. Yuck! With the GLX, *85%* of Somerville residents will have access to rail and many of our neighbors in East Cambridge, Medford and Arlington would too. Less congestion, fewer cars, meaning less upkeep to roads, (saved money there) etc. etc. yada-yada-yada, ohmygod it's that obvious. Everybody wins! It will also hopefully integrate with the Community Path, providing convenient access to Green Line stations and completing a bike and pedestrian route from Bedford to downtown Boston. The Green Line Extension fully embodies the principles espoused by GreenDOT!

No wonder the Green Line is *overwhelmingly* supported in Somerville and surrounding communities.

2) OK, this one's a biggie, so brace yourself. *Ahem* THE GREEN LINE IS A LEGAL OBLIGATION UNDER THE CLEAN AIR ACT! I know, right? It's been the state's single largest Transportation Control Measure (TCM) obligation under the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for, like, 20 freaking years. Thus, it's a *binding legal obligation* under the Clean Air Act. Federal Transportation Conformity Regulations *require* that SIP TCMs like the GLX *must* be given funding and completion priority by the region and state.

This is a no brainer. If the State can play around with this kind of thing, well shucks – what the hell is the point of the rule of law in the first place? What's the point of doing anything? If the State is above the law and can pull this kind of feces, then why should citizens respect the state?

I'm really hoping this email finds *you* to be of a different mindset.

So yeah, think about it. Meeting this legal obligation *requires* the Boston MPO to show realistic funding sources and timely completion of the GLX in both the 2012 – 2015 Transportation Improvement

Program (TIP) *and* the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Currently the TIP shows *less than 50%* of the money (what?) and less than 50% of the GLX being completed by the legal deadline of 2014.

In a word: Arrgh!

FACT: The Draft 2012 – 2015 TIP and the Draft LRTP "Paths to a Sustainable Region" fail to meet both the "fiscal constraint" requirement for full funding and the "environmental" requirement for timely completion of the SIP TCMs.

FACT: And beyond the binding legal obligations, MassDOT and the Commonwealth have failed over and over to meet promised deadlines given to the GLX communities.

BELIEF (one that I really, *really* hope you share): ***Citizens deserve greater respect.***

I mean, the MBTA and MassDOT might as well just run us over with a truck and then pour a gallon of lemon juice all over our bleeding, pavement-encrusted carcasses.

3) Last one. (Thanks for reading so far, by the way.) FUNDING, TIMING and TRANSPARENCY: The GLX communities have *repeatedly* welcomed project staff from MassDOT, the MBTA and their consultants. Cooperation, rapport and enthusiasm have generally been sky-high *on both sides* whenever people have rolled up their sleeves to tackle project details. Warm fuzzies are flyin' all over the place here. However, MassDOT has too often been coy and tactical, squirming at major steps with regard to securing real funding for the project and making reasonable time commitments.

Let's get personal. I'm an activist. I'm vocal. I'm a performer in the local area. I believe in being responsible, and changing the tide from the status quo toward practical, obvious and just activities. The only way *any* of us are going to make this country better is by working locally on things like this. Otherwise other, nastier things like Big Oil, giant faceless profits-over-people corporations (with track records of not giving a crap about people and trampling their rights nationally and internationally) are going to continue to have sway and drive the average middle class person into the ground. And wreck the country. Make it a place we just don't want to live in anymore.

What if you were a champion of better ideals? What if you could help? Would you want to? Could you? Is there *anything* specific you can do to aid in these larger and smaller goals? I would love to hear back from you with any reaction to this.

So thank you for reading. I really hope this note finds you well, and I truly hope you can recognize the overwhelming compassion and unassailable logic (and moral correctness) behind getting things in gear to get the GLX going. No more fooling around. Let's do this. Anything less is literally inhuman at this point. People are literally *dying* before seeing this project to completion in their lifetimes. "Heinous" doesn't even begin to describe this travesty.

Sincerely Yours,

Michael Monroe:
Father
Poet
Activist
Somerville Resident Who Works for a Well-known Somerville Business
Nice Person