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Subject:	Comment on Boston MPO 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program and Long Range Transportation Plan --- Green Line Extension to Medford Hillside
Date:	Tuesday, September 13, 2011 4:48:13 PM
Attachments:	oledata.mso

To: The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

Subject: 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program and Long Range Transportation Plan

The delays in the Green Line Extension to Medford and Somerville embodied in MassDOT's Annual Report are unacceptable, unjustifiable, indefensible and in violation of the law. As such, you must reject MassDOT's plans to delay the Extension yet again or else become accomplices to their failures. Kindly redouble your support and increase COMPLETE funding for the ENTIRE project including the final mile to Route 16 / Mystic Valley Parkway by the close of 2014.

The Green Line Extension has been delayed repeatedly in the few years I have been following its trajectory. In the twenty-two years since its origin, it has been scheduled for completion in 2011, 2014, 2015 and now 2018-2020. Time has come to discontinue this pointless charade and either

1) accept the requirement for service to Medford Hillside by the close of 2014 and get on with meeting that requirement or

2) toss concern for air quality to the wind and resign ourselves to ALL Federal transportation funding being withheld as direct consequence of the Commonwealth's failure to meet its obligations.

In the polite vernacular, it's time to "paint or get off the ladder", where "paint" constitutes beginning, in earnest, sincere efforts to construct a Green Line Extension with a terminus at Route 16 / Mystic Valley Parkway, a terminus which uniquely satisfies the requirement. It is time to

1) admit that Route 16 / Mystic Valley Parkway meets the Medford Hillside requirement and that no station short of it does;

2) note that Transit-Oriented Development can occur at Route 16 / MVP but not at College Avenue;

3) accept that a terminus at College Avenue serves a population, the Tufts community, that least needs it, and neglects the Environmental Justice areas that a terminus at Route 16 / MVP serves;

4) properly account for the cost of the Maintenance Facility, which will support the entire Green Line, as a general operational expense of the Green Line rather than a burden to be borne by the Extension;

5) acknowledge that assuming the cost of the Lechmere Station relocation (previously to be funded by a private developer) and redesign of the Brickbottom area (in order to treat an affected community fairly) is an inflation in scope that should not be paid for by offsetting reductions in service to other communities;

6) recognize that, with a global economy, the skills needed to construct railroads may best be

found in Europe or Asia and, if Gilbane or VHB are not capable of constructing a five-mile railroad in a pre-existing right-of-way within a reasonable schedule with a manageable budget, perhaps it's time to consider other avenues.

Alternatively, the Commonwealth can "get off the ladder" and stop pretending that it will ever meet the requirements it accepted in the current SIP. With that action it can forego ALL Federal Transportation monies and sacrifice the environmental benefits, rider time savings and automobile cost-of-ownership reductions those monies promote.

It is clear which of these is preferable. As an agency with no small interest in the environment and in the concerns of the public transportation ridership, I would hope that you would

1) evaluate and publicize the environmental advantages of a complete Green Line Extension to Route 16 / MVP, especially as it compares with a foreshortened Green Line Extension;

2) take what action you can to encourage full funding of the project to Route 16 / MVP;

3) reject MassDOT's plan to delay, yet again, this legally-mandated commitment.

Regards,

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