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Subject:	Public Comment on the Green Line Extension delays
Date:	Wednesday, September 07, 2011 9:34:24 AM

Email recipients:

Mr. Jerome Grafe, Mass Department of Environmental Protection

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Mr. David Mohler, Chair, Boston MPO Planning & Programming Committee

Ms. Katherine Fichter, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning

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Ms. Anne Arnold, Manager, EPA Region 1 Air Quality Planning Unit

Mr. Donald Cooke, Conformity and mobile monitoring, EPA Region 1 Air Quality

Ms. Rosemary Monahan, EPA Region 1 Smart Growth Coordinator

Ms. Pamela Stephenson, MA Division Administrator, Federal Highway

Mr. Michael Chong, Federal Highway Planning and Environ. Program Manager

Ms. Mary Beth Mello, Regional Director, Federal Transit Region 1

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To whom it may concern:

I am writing today in regards to the new delay in the Green Line Extension. As a resident of Somerville, an environmental justice and transit equity advocate, and a worker in green infrastructure in the City of Somerville, I am disheartened by this new delay, to say the least. I feel that this is a justice issue, more than anything else, and that the state must follow-through with their legally-mandated obligations. Please follow-through on your promises, if not for the environmental justice reasons, than for the reason that the residents of the Commonwealth have exceedingly less faith in the word of the Commonwealth as this drags on. Following is a lengthy account of the reasons why this project must be finished in a timely manner.

1) The original legal agreement in 1990 to extend the Green Line was revised in 2000 for planned completion in **2011**. Then it was delayed to **2014** in revisions to the State Implementation Plan (SIP), legal obligations under the Clean Air Act. Then last year MassDOT said the Green Line Extension (GLX) would not open until **2015**. Now, they have announced even more delays, to **2018 to 2020**! **This is unacceptable.**

2) It is important to **remember that the Green Line Extension is a great, sustainable transportation project**. It is light rail that will provide clean transit to the city most health-burdened by highway and diesel commuter rail pollution in the Commonwealth. 85% of Somerville residents will have access to rail (compared to 25% now) and many of our neighbors in East Cambridge, Medford and Arlington will have access to new light rail. It will also integrate with the Community Path, providing convenient pedestrian and bike access to Green Line stations. The Green Line Extension fully embodies the principles espoused by GreenDOT, of which DOT has not embraced in practice up to this point.

3) THE GREEN LINE IS A LEGAL OBLIGATION UNDER THE CLEAN AIR ACT. It has been the state's single largest Transportation Control Measure (TCM) obligation under the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for twenty years. Thus, it is a binding legal obligation under the Clean Air Act. Federal Transportation Conformity Regulations require that SIP TCMs like the Green Line Extension must be given funding and completion priority by the region and state.

4) Meeting this legal obligation requires the Boston MPO to show realistic funding sources and timely completion of the Green Line Extension 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 and less than 50% of the Green Line Extension being completed by the legal deadline of 2014.

5) 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. And, beyond the binding legal obligations, MassDOT and the Commonwealth have failed over and over again to meet promised deadlines given to the Green Line Extension communities.

6) The Green Line Extension communities have repeatedly welcomed project staff from MassDOT, the MBTA and their consultants. Cooperation, rapport and enthusiasm have generally been high on both sides whenever people have rolled up their sleeves to tackle project details. However, MassDOT has too often been coy and tactical, not putting forth reasonable funding and mitigation actions.

7) The Green Line Extension is supposed to mitigate the health effects of vehicle pollution

from 1-93 and regional highway traffic as well as regional ozone. Delaying completion of the project without mitigation of the pollution will continue to negatively affect the health of Somerville and regional residents. Somerville has the greatest daily exposure to commuter traffic and diesel rail pollution in the state from 250,000 vehicles on I-93, Mystic Avenue (38) and McGrath Highway (28). We also breathe fumes from 200 daily diesel commuter and freight trains that cut through the city but (fortunately) do not stop.

8) ***GreenDOT*** *http://transportation.blog.state.ma.us/blog/2010/06/massdot-launches-greendot.html:* "GreenDOT, a comprehensive environmental responsibility and sustainability initiative that will make MassDOT a national leader in "greening" the state transportation system. GreenDOT will be driven by three primary goals: reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; promote the healthy transportation options of walking, bicycling, and public transit; and support for smart growth development."

9) This is a justice issue. The residents of Somerville are systematically overburdened by transportation infrastructure that does not benefit them. There needs to be a promise that is actually followed through on to benefit the environmental health of Somerville residents.

I thank you for taking the time to read my comments. Please respond to the needs of the residents and business of Somerville, Medford and East Cambridge by building the Green Line extension.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Lawrence

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Jennifer Lawrence
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Advisory Team Member

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