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Subject:	Green Line Extension – Enforce the SIP air quality and Transportation Conformity Measures in the Boston MPO 2012 – 2015 TIP and LRTP.
Date:	Tuesday, September 13, 2011 10:55:10 AM

Greetings,

I appreciate being able to comment on the Boston MPO TIP and LRTP and the Annual Status Report of the transit projects in the State Implementation Plan as required in the Transit System Improvements regulation (310 CMR 7.36). But I must comment that it is getting tedious having to respond to the ongoing pattern of MassDOT delays on the SIP projects, and most specifically on the Green Line Extension every year.

It bears repeating that **THE GREEN LINE EXTENSION (GLX) IS A LEGAL OBLIGATION UNDER THE CLEAN AIR ACT.** For the past 20 years it has been the state's single largest Transportation Control Measure (TCM) obligation under the State Implementation Plan (SIP). 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.

Under USCs 7506(c)(1) all transportation plans or transportation improvement programs, reviewed, supported, or funded by federal agencies, such as the MPO's LRTP and TIP, must conform to the goals of this existing state implementation plan. See 42 USC s. 7506(c)(1). Before a federal agency may approve, accept, or fund any projects in the LRTP or TIP, there must be an affirmative finding by the federal Department of Transportation ("USDOT") that all activities included conform to the state implementation plan.

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. The TIP includes $476,200,000 for FY2012 through FY 2015 and the LRTP includes $586,654,000 for the same time period. MassDOT has estimated the cost of the GLX to be a billion dollars. The Draft 2012 – 2015 TIP and the Draft LRTP fail to meet both the "fiscal constraint" requirement for full funding and the "environmental" requirement for timely completion of

the SIP TCMs. **Aside from not meeting 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. The public deserves greater respect.**

The Federal Clean Air Act Transportation Conformity Regulations were legislated to protect public health. The GLX is supposed to mitigate the health effects of regional ozone and vehicle pollution from 1-93 and regional highway traffic by moving people out of cars and onto public transportation. Delaying completion of the project without the required mitigation of the pollution will 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. Extensive scientific research has been carried out that People who live in the most transportation-polluted 10% of a large urban region (such as Somerville) may have:

- 20% higher overall mortality rates;
- 50% higher lung cancer mortalities
- 50% higher childhood asthma rates
- 50% higher heart attack mortalities

Although MassDOT and the Governor speak enthusiastically about the GLX, their failure to fund the Extension, meet project milestones on time and lack of project transparency has lead to real cynicism about FUNDING, TIMING and the PROCESS. Over the many years of this project community residents have enthusiastic in working with project staff from MassDOT, the MBTA and their consultants and this has resulted in some very good collaboration. However, MassDOT has often proceeded in coy and tactical ways regarding funding and meeting scheduled milestones. Examples of this include:

- Failing to develop a design and construction schedule and funding plan using state funds (which has been agreed to by the state to meet its legal obligation) despite the insistence of MA DOT that securing federal "New Starts" funding for the Green Line is risky because of the MBTA financial condition. Stating that the status of receiving federal funding is questionable REQUIRES MassDOT to develop alternative strategies to meet its SIP requirements.
- Perfunctory submission of Monthly SIP reports to DEP as late as May 2011 committed to completing the Green Line Extension at the end of 2015, with no suggestion of further possible delays. This reflects a serious lack of transparency and seriousness

in meeting the SIP requirements.

- MassDOT's assertion that land acquisition is a primary factor in the latest delay is not acceptable. Commuter rail track could be moved and track could be laid while waiting to acquire land for the Ball Square and Union Square Stations.
- Using Greenbush Line land acquisition delays as a lesson learned for the GLX is not a valid comparison because the Greenbush land required was for right of way. This is not the case for the GLX. GLX land acquisition is for station locations and the maintenance facility (not included in the SIP agreement)

Delaying the GLX will have negative impact on regional/statewide economics because failure to meet Federal Transportation Conformity environmental and fiscal constraint measures:

- Could jeopardize the State's federal transportation funding, a loss of $650 million per year.
- Will increase the overall project cost beyond the $1 billion, 200 million dollar estimate when the cost of interim offset mitigation is added.
- Would significantly increase the cost of the GLX project and needlessly cost taxpayers statewide $200 million or more, plus the costs of required air quality mitigation to offset the delay.
- Will fail to provide a much needed regional transit link for employers, universities, research centers and residents.
- Will result in significant loss of sales and income tax revenues to the Commonwealth because it misses the opportunity to create construction and other jobs when we really need them.

The Commonwealth must identify alternative funding for the GLX and other public transportation projects and not rely on the shaky possibility of New Starts funding. A start would be to execute a new transportation bond bill, raise new revenues for transportation projects and consideration of an inter-agency agreement with Massport to provide revenue for the GLX and other MBTA projects.

The state's failure to move the GLX forward to a state of being shovel ready made the GLX ineligible for federal ARRA funding and also is not eligible for the newest round of infrastructure spending that is proposed. The failures keep reverberating and the cost keeps escalating.

The Green Line Extension and Community Path are models for the MassDOT GreenDOT sustainable transportation initiative to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG), promote the healthy transportation options of walking, bicycling, and public transit; and support smart growth development. There is a lot of rhetoric promoting sustainability in the Commonwealth. If these words have REAL meaning then we must insist that the state meet its legal commitments and support the GLX. We are tired of being greenwashed and hope that DEP will act decisively by requiring MassDOT to meet its obligations and not allow it to manipulate their SIP commitments, otherwise DEP is allowing the DEP certification process to be completely ineffectual.

Sincerely,

Ellin Reisner, President

Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership

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