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October 26, 2006

Secretary Robert Golledge, Jr.  
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs  
Attn: MEPA Office  
Dierdre Buckley, EOEA No. 13886  
100 Cambridge St., Ste. 900  
Boston, MA 02114-2524

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MEPA

Dear Secretary Golledge:

I am writing with regard to your office's request for comments on the Extended Environmental Notification Form for the Green Line extension project, EOEA No. 13886. I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on scoping the Green Line extension Environmental Review Report (EIR).

First, I want to re-affirm my support for the Green Line extension. The city of Somerville has been underserved, transit-wise, for far too long. By extending the Green Line from Lechmere station to some point in Medford, and adding a spur from Lechmere to Union Square, I feel the Commonwealth will take a major step forward in offering adequate transit service to Somerville residents.

**F-001-001** | I strongly endorse your office requiring the MBTA and/or the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) to file an EIR. While this project has existed in theory for some time, and in fact the MBTA has already spent considerable time weighing various alternatives in the Beyond Lechmere process, I do feel there are several areas that require the in-depth study associated with an EIR. Additionally, I hope that EOT decides to concurrently file an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) so that this project may also qualify for federal funding.

**F-001-002** | In general, clearly there is much coordination necessary between the MBTA, Massachusetts Highways, EOT, and the cities of Somerville and Medford in order for this project to be successful. An EIR ought to spell out clearly this necessity, and make it a requirement, as well as enumerate the areas in which coordination is required.

**F-001-003** | In particular, I suggest that the EIR address transportation and environmental concerns. There are several transportation related issues that merit study. First, it seems that adding new tracks to accommodate Green Line vehicles will impact the Lowell commuter line. This should be done with a minimum of disruption to the Lowell Line. Additionally, a number of roadway and

**F-001-004** |

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### F-001-001

The December 1, 2006 MEPA Certificate (EOEA #13886) required the EOT to prepare a DEIR in accordance with Section 11.08 of the MEPA regulations. This document also serves as an Environmental Assessment (EA), required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the EOT to seek federal funding through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

### F-001-002

In addition to the Advisory Group, which has representatives from the Cambridge, Somerville and Medford, the Green Line Extension project team has held at least 48 official and agency briefings with city representatives and elected officials. The team has also had 35 meetings with other agencies, including the MBTA, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), MassHighway, and Cities of Medford, Somerville and Cambridge.

### F-001-003

The construction sequence is intended to maintain existing commuter rail service on all affected lines. Construction sequencing and staging is discussed in Section 3.7.6, *Construction Sequencing and Staging* of the DEIR/EA.

### F-001-004

As detailed in Chapter 3 (Alternatives), Section 3.7.6, *Construction Sequencing and Staging* of the DEIR/EA, a construction staging plan is being proposed to minimize bridge closures and maintain traffic during construction to the greatest extent possible. Also, coordination with communities and local public safety and emergency services will continue through the development of Preliminary Engineering plans for the Project.



**F-001-004** | railway bridges in Somerville will need work in order to accommodate the Green Line. Each bridge should be studied thoroughly to determine what alterations are needed, and the construction schedule must be well coordinated with Somerville public safety and emergency services. EOT must also understand and appreciate that Somerville residents have already endured a number of indefinite bridge closures. Whenever these bridges need to be closed for Green Line work, there must be ongoing communication with the community and an effective traffic plan in place. Lastly, I urge you to include coordination with the Somerville Community Path in the EIR. It is essential that the Community Path and the extension are able to co-exist.

**F-001-005** |

**F-001-006** | There are also several environmental issues which I feel ought to be included in the EIR. First, the MBTA will need to expand and/or build new storage and maintenance facilities. The environmental impact in the forms of noise, ground and air pollution at these sites ought to be considered and addressed. It seems likely that there will be an unknown number of hazardous sites discovered along the right of way. Acceptable ways of dealing with these sites needs to be planned. It is my understanding that no wetlands will be impacted by the Green Line extension, which I am pleased with. However, I expect that between building impervious cover (in the form of Green Line stations) and work around retaining walls for the right of way, there will be an impact on groundwater and storm water management. Both of these issues ought to be included in the EIR. Lastly, it is my understanding that it is possible construction may have an impact on two city of Somerville parks, Trum Field and the Hoyt-Sullivan playground. The EIR should include studying the impact, and finding methods to mitigate the impact on each of these parks. Green space is vital everywhere, and especially so in Somerville. Losing it, even temporarily, should be minimized as much as possible.

In closing, I would like to take the opportunity to underscore my support for the Green Line extension. The MBTA should be in the business of reaching out to serve areas that have unmet public transit needs while connecting people with jobs. I believe that the Green Line extension, when completed, will accomplish both of these two goals and will also spur economic growth in several Somerville neighborhoods. I appreciate the opportunity to offer my thoughts on how EOT should proceed in studying the Green Line extension.

Sincerely,  
  
 Michael E. Capuano  
 Member of Congress

**F-001-005**

The Secretary's Certificate on the EENF requires the DEIR/EA to include conceptual designs for the Community Path. Details on the design and coordination of the Somerville Community Path in connection with this Project are found in Section 3.8, *Community Paths* of the DEIR/EA.

**F-001-006**

A full environmental review of the proposed maintenance and storage facility site, including evaluations of noise, traffic and air quality impacts, was prepared for this Project and is detailed in the DEIR/EA. The results of the environmental analyses for the Project can be found in Chapter 5 (Environmental Consequences) of the DEIR/EA.

**F-001-007**

Known contamination issues for properties to be acquired or constructed upon were identified through records research and site investigation. These contaminated sites are identified in Chapter 4 (Affected Environment), Section 4.16, *Hazardous Materials* of the DEIR/EA. The potential for each alternative to encounter hazardous materials in soil or groundwater is assessed in Chapter 5 (Environmental Consequences), Section 5.14, *Hazardous Materials* of the DEIR/EA. Any contamination encountered during construction will be handled according to DEP regulations.

**F-001-008**

Changes in impervious cover may increase stormwater flows and decrease infiltration and groundwater recharge; however, these effects can be offset through detention- and infiltration-based stormwater management. Techniques for stormwater management are discussed in Section 5.9, *Stormwater* of the DEIR/EA.

**F-001-009**

Impacts of the Green Line Extension Project on parks and recreation areas such as Trum Field and the Hoyt-Sullivan playground, were evaluated as part of the DEIR/EA. Impacts to parks and recreation areas and their associated mitigation are discussed in Section 5.11, *Parks and Recreation Areas* of the DEIR/EA. The analysis concluded that the Project would not directly impact or result in constructive use of these park or recreational areas.