



February 28, 2017

Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Matthew A. Beaton  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)  
Attn: MEPA Office, Holly Johnson, EEA No. 13886  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114

Submitted via: [holly.s.johnson@state.ma.us](mailto:holly.s.johnson@state.ma.us)

Re: EEA No. 13886, GLX Notice of Project Change, Community Path Extension (CPX)

Dear Secretary Beaton,

I am writing on behalf of the Mystic River Watershed Association to comment on the Notice of Project Change for the Green Line Extension (GLX) and Community Path Extension (CPX).

By way of introduction, the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the Mystic River, its tributaries and watershed lands for the benefit of present and future generations. Our most recent initiative – Mystic Greenways – seeks to revitalize, restore access and create connections along waterfront parklands, creating a world-class transportation and recreation system. This work is particularly important in Somerville given the limited open space and shared-use paths that connect to the Mystic River. The Community Path Extension represents an enormous opportunity to improve mobility as well as the health of people and environment within the watershed.

Overall, we are pleased that the Green Line Extension (GLX) and included Community Path Extension (CPX) project is moving forward. We recommend that you issue a determination that no additional MEPA review is warranted so that this vital project can move forward without additional delay.

However, we also request that you do so **conditionally** -- with specific requirements for MassDOT and MBTA to advance **the design and eventual completion of a full, off-road CPX consistent with previous MEPA Statements and the federal Full Funding Grant Agreement of the Green Line Extension.**

This can be accomplished by requiring in your determination that MassDOT add contractual language and methods in the GLX bidding documents, RFP, and final contracts, specifying that the design-build contractor produce an improved, cost-effective complete design for the off-road Community Path that can be constructed with the GLX project if sufficient funding is identified (or later if necessary). This improved design should include the following three elements:

**1. Identifying and fully designing a more user-friendly and cost-efficient CPX route from the East Somerville (formerly Washington St.) Station to North Point.** The Friends of the Community Path group has worked with

*Serving Twenty-Two Communities*

Arlington Belmont Burlington Cambridge Charlestown Chelsea East Boston Everett Lexington Malden Medford  
Melrose Reading Revere Somerville Stoneham Wakefield Watertown Wilmington Winchester Winthrop Woburn

20 Academy Street, Suite 306 • Arlington, MA • 02476-6401 • (781) 316-3438 • [www.MysticRiver.org](http://www.MysticRiver.org)

engineers to come up with numerous alternative designs that connect the CPX to North Point in a much more cost-effective way as compared to the MBTA's original design.

**2. Restoring CPX street access points at Medford, Walnut, and Cross Streets.** If the community is unable to access the CPX via convenient street connections, then much of the environmental benefits will be lost.

**3. Comparing the costs/benefits of keeping the CPX on the south (west) side of the rail corridor from Central to School Streets.**

In its current state, the CPX plan is not sufficient as it eliminates the critical off-road 3,100-foot 'last leg' from Washington Street to the existing North Point in Cambridge, thereby preventing the key connection to the Charles River paths. Furthermore, removing this segment would most affect environmental justice communities in East Somerville who are in need of improved walking and biking facilities.

Lastly, we want to address the second phase of the GLX project that will extend past the College Ave Station. We hope that the Route 16 station that was originally planned continues to be funded and built not long after the GLX is open. Currently, that funding has been added to the main GLX project, and the timeline for the Route 16 Station is unclear.

We hope you take these comments into account – a completed Community Path has the potential to increase sustainable mobility for the residents of Somerville and neighboring communities, as well as to improve the quality and status of the Mystic River and its waterfront parklands. If you have any questions please contact [Amber.Christoffersen@mysticriver.org](mailto:Amber.Christoffersen@mysticriver.org) or at 781-316-3438.

Sincerely,



Patrick Herron  
Executive Director  
Mystic River Watershed Association



Amber Christoffersen  
Mystic Greenways Director  
Mystic River Watershed Association

*Serving Twenty-Two Communities*

*Arlington Belmont Burlington Cambridge Charlestown Chelsea East Boston Everett Lexington Malden Medford  
Melrose Reading Revere Somerville Stoneham Wakefield Watertown Wilmington Winchester Winthrop Woburn*

20 Academy Street, Suite 306 • Arlington, MA • 02476-6401 • (781) 316-3438 • [www.MysticRiver.org](http://www.MysticRiver.org)