

December 6, 2019

John Dalton
Program Manager, MBTA Green Line Extension
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

Joseph Aiello
Chair, MBTA Fiscal Management and Control Board
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

Dear MBTA Green Line Extension Program team and Fiscal Management and Control Board,

The City of Cambridge's appointed Transit Advisory Committee, advising the City Manager, has reviewed and discussed your proposed substitute transportation plans for passengers currently transferring and boarding the Green Line at Lechmere Station (i.e., the so-called "Bus Bridge") for the shutdown required to reconstruct the Lechmere viaduct and to reconnect it to the new Lechmere Station being built as part of the Green Line Extension. The Committee believes that the "Bus Bridge" plan is inadequate and will unnecessarily add substantial inconvenience to current Lechmere station customers.

The "Bus Bridge," using one of the most congested and slowest bridge approaches to downtown Boston during both the morning and evening peak periods, will likely add 30-45 minutes to passenger travel time. This is an unacceptable result that will further drive customers away from MBTA service and potentially suppress the future market for GLX service. If implemented in any form, the "Bus Bridge" must travel across the river in *new* bus lanes. Otherwise, this substitute service will be seen, rightly, as an ill-planned and totally inadequate substitute service that customers will be asked to endure seven days a week for over at least one year.

We are especially concerned for the many transferring bus riders on all the routes that currently terminate at Lechmere. To impose an additional vehicle trip segment on a separate bus that entails a second transfer to their ultimate destination is a significant burden to bear for the eventual core passengers of the new GLX service.

As such, we call on the MBTA to completely rethink these preliminary plans and ask the MBTA propose a series of alternatives that reduce the impact on existing Lechmere station riders. Specifically, we urge you to investigate extending all of the existing Lechmere bus routes directly to one or more subway stations while reducing the headways on each route to accommodate all walk-up passengers at Lechmere. These route extensions could be planned to North Station or Haymarket, although the travel time for that trip will be quite long without significant bus priority treatments being available.

Alternatively, we ask you to investigate extensions to both Community College station on the Orange Line and Kendall/MIT station on the Red Line. Both of these extensions should add about 20 minutes round trip in the peaks and less time in the off-peaks. An extension to Community College on

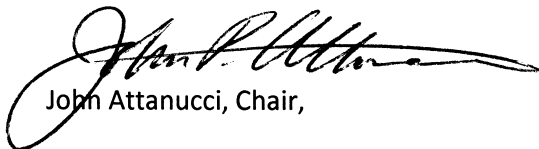
the Orange Line could be quite quick in the inbound direction if the Commonwealth converted some unused and blocked off space on Monsignor O'Brien Highway between the Lechmere viaduct overpass and Land Boulevard for a single exclusive bus lane. This exclusive bus lane would merge directly into one of the two designated left turn lanes onto the Gilmore Bridge. The buses could then proceed over the Gilmore Bridge generally in the off-peak direction, turn around easily at the Ninety-Nine restaurant just beyond Rutherford Avenue, and proceed to the drop-off/pick-up lane at the station. We have estimated that this extended trip in the peak directions for passengers would average less than 8 minutes, far less than the Bus Bridge proposal to extend buses into downtown Boston. A similar extension of one or more routes to Kendall/MIT on a routing coordinated with the City of Cambridge that could include bus priority treatments.

We would also point out that, although our proposals will involve additional bus and driver resources on each route, some overall vehicle and operator cycle time could be saved by deadheading every other bus in the off-peak direction back to the original peak direction terminal. For example, in our alternative proposal, every other inbound PM trip to Community College could travel out-of-service directly back to Community College to provide outbound service. And we would also request that the MBTA investigate the EasyRide shuttle bus capacity (to and from North Station from Kendall/MIT) to augment any alternative services, seeing as how the EasyRide ridership directional peaks are generally opposite the MBTA customer peak direction demand.

Another alternative to investigate for providing improved downtown access for bus patrons of routes 80, 87, and 88 would be to establish and reroute these buses to a temporary commuter rail station just adjacent and behind the Target shopping mall property in Somerville. This temporary station could be accessed directly at 84 Medford St., on land that appears to be at least partially owned by the MBTA and/or the Commonwealth. Buses going to and from Lechmere and beyond could be rerouted through this temporary station for 2-3 hours during rush hours to allow free transfers to the Fitchburg Line trains for the short segment to and from North Station.

We as a Committee feel strongly that the MBTA must thoroughly investigate all possible service plans, such as those suggested above, before settling for a traditional station-to-station bus shuttle plan that is inferior to current service and which will likely result in significant ridership losses and dissatisfaction among remaining riders. We would also request that the MBTA consult further with our Committee and the City staffs of Cambridge and Somerville after completing the requested investigation, before announcing a substitute service plan for this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Attanucci", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

John Attanucci, Chair,

On behalf of the Transit Advisory Committee