



CASE STUDY



# GREEN LINE EXTENSION PROJECT OFFICE

*Changing Office Culture: GLX Green Committee*

## GLX Project Office

### Committee Members

Joann Heltzel *AECOM | HNTB*  
 Allison Sweeny, *MBTA*  
 Jonathan Smith, *HDR/Gilbane*  
 Chris Frano, *White/Skanska/Kiewit*

### Office Location

100 Summer St, Suite 250

### Date Committee Origin

January 2015

### Number of Employees

50

The Green Line Extension (GLX) Project Office consists of the MBTA and three joint ventures which make up the GLX Project Team. The three joint ventures are HDR/Gilbane (Program Manager), AECOM|HNTB (Design Manager), and White/Skanska/Kiewit (Contractor). The extension of the Green Line is intended to address transportation inequities, reduce road traffic and subsequent greenhouse gas emissions, and support plans for sustainable growth in Massachusetts, but the project team’s sustainability efforts don’t end at the new College Ave Station. The GLX project office Green Committee engages the full spread of company representatives in the office, uniting them in an effort to be sustainable.

The GLX Green Committee produces bi-monthly newsletters to encourage the implementation of sustainable procedures in the office, as well as to provide guidance for green behaviors that extend beyond the office. Each newsletter is published by different member of the Green Committee, and features topics from seasonal sustainability reminders such as spring composting, to trivia and fun facts. The July edition of the newsletter included a feature on Julie Callahan, a GLX “Green Leader,” who commutes to work on her bike. Employee recognition for sustainable behaviors helps highlight their importance in office culture and can further propagate behavior change.

The newsletter also connects the sustainability work that is happening within the office to that beyond the office walls, touching on larger sustainability topics that engineers are interested in like the sustainability rating system Envision from which the MBTA

## CASE STUDY



hopes to receive a Platinum Certification. Green Committee member Joann Heltzel believes that including topics like this that directly involve employees is the key to the newsletter's success and allows the Committee to avoid the burden of disinterest that many green teams face. In fact, Heltzel says employees are "happy to get involved".

Heltzel says the newsletter has been very successful in reducing employee waste. "The newsletter serves as a reminder to employees that we are participating in the Challenge for Sustainability and trying to beat our 2014 score," she says. "Everyone has a little competitive spirit and wants to help reach the goal."

In addition to the newsletter, the Green Committee engages the office through sustainability events. They hosted an Earth Day Trivia event where GLX employees were asked multiple choice questions about sustainability, with a special focus on topics in Boston and related to the MBTA.

Of course, as with any collaborative project, the GLX Green Committee does face some challenges. The office is part of a public project, so the Committee is not able to spend money on sustainable initiatives such as composting services or electronics upgrades. The Project Managers made a small allowance for Earth Day Prizes and new recycling bin covers, but for the most part, the Green Committee has to make as much change as they can without spending a dime. Heltzel also says that it is sometimes a struggle to keep people engaged with the big picture of sustainability when addressing their day to day actions.

Despite the challenges and the common misconception of "green teams" as ineffective and overly time consuming, the GLX Green Committee believes that the work they are doing is worthwhile. "The effort has already made an impact on the office by reducing waste, educating employees about proper recycling, and encouraging employees to order from our sustainable caterer," says Heltzel. "It takes a little time in the beginning to get started, but with just a few minutes each week, and a monthly meeting lasting no more than an hour...it is little time for the return."

### ABOUT THE CHALLENGE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The Challenge for Sustainability helps business or buildings save money by increasing energy efficiency, reducing resource consumption, decreasing solid waste, and reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions through hands-on technical assistance and access to local, state, and private incentives.

[challengeforsustainability.org](http://challengeforsustainability.org)

[challenge@abettercity.org](mailto:challenge@abettercity.org)

(617) 502.6240

#### FUNDERS



#### CONTACT

Challenge for Sustainability  
33 Broad Street, Suite 300, Boston MA 02109  
[challenge@abettercity.org](mailto:challenge@abettercity.org)  
(617) 502.6240

#### PARTNERS



CITY OF BOSTON  
Martin J. Walsh, Mayor

