

# WORK PROGRAM

## STRATEGIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

OCTOBER 5, 2023

### Proposed Motion

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) votes to approve this work program.

### Project Identification

#### Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Classification

Boston Region MPO Planning Studies and Technical Analyses

**Project Number** 14003

#### Client

Boston Region MPO

#### Project Supervisors

*Principal:* Sean Rourke

*Managers:* Stella Jordan and Judy Taylor

#### Funding Source

MPO Planning and MPO §5303 Contract #14003

### Schedule and Budget

**Schedule:** 12 months after work commences

**Budget:** \$25,086

Schedule and budget details are shown in Exhibits 1 and 2, respectively.

### Relationship to MPO Goals

The Boston Region MPO elected to fund this study with its federally allocated metropolitan planning funds during federal fiscal year (FFY) 2024. The work completed through this study will address the following goal areas established in the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan: resiliency, clean air and healthy communities, and equity.

## Background

Due to its regional focus, the Boston Region MPO is well-positioned to connect stakeholders around shared interests and facilitate collaboration on the environmental aspects of transportation planning, including key goal areas of climate resilience and equity. To improve representation of environmental, resilience, and environmental justice voices in MPO work, it is important to understand the range of efforts and interests currently operating in this space, and to build relationships with environmental practitioners in the Boston region. Environmental practitioners and groups that focus on climate change, climate resilience, greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, and environmental justice are of particular importance to engage with due to these issues' transportation implications. This study seeks to establish connections with environmental groups in the Boston region, understand how other MPOs and transportation agencies of similar geography and scale approach environmental engagement, and determine the most effective engagement strategies for the MPO to pursue in order to better understand and meaningfully contribute to environmental and climate action in the region.

## Objectives

1. Research environmental engagement practices of other peer MPOs and transportation agencies
2. Continue regional stakeholder engagement and document needs and priorities relating to resilience and environmental engagement in the Boston region
3. Build relationships with regional environmental stakeholders and improve coordination on local needs and the MPO's planning process
4. Identify potential roles and platforms that the MPO and its staff could use to improve engagement with regional environmental stakeholders and better incorporate environmental and resilience priorities into MPO planning and program development

## Work Description

### **Task 1 Research environmental engagement strategies and best practices**

This task will involve researching how other MPOs and agencies have engaged with environmental advocacy groups and stakeholders. Research will include both a literature review and interviews with MPO and agency staff, focusing on peers with similar governance structures, metropolitan areas, and environmental concerns to the Boston Region MPO.

***Subtask 1.1 Identify Peer Agencies for Research***

Identify and reach out to peer MPOs and relevant planning agencies to learn about their environmental engagement practices.

***Subtask 1.2 Conduct Literature Review***

Review peer MPOs' and agencies' documents to assess environmental engagement practices. Research best practices on engaging environmental advocacy groups and environmental justice communities.

***Subtask 1.3 Conduct Interviews***

Meet with peer MPOs and planning agencies to discuss environmental engagement practices identified through the literature review.

***Products of Task 1***

As a result of Task 1, staff will become familiar with environmental engagement strategies and best practices and have improved relationships with peer professionals for consultation and networking. The products of Task 1 will include documentation of findings.

**Task 2 Consult with environmental stakeholders**

Throughout the study, staff will consult with regional stakeholders about environmental and resilience needs and priorities, and the role the Boston Region MPO could potentially play in coordinating environmental work across the region. Discussions that are part of this task will also be informed by previous engagement and ongoing relationships with environmental advocates, community-based organizations, and municipalities in the region as well as information learned in Task 1. Environmental justice, or EJ, organizations will be one of the targets of this outreach, with the intentions of understanding priorities, building relationships, and developing foundations for improving coordination on local environmental needs and MPO work.

***Subtask 2.1 Identify Environmental Stakeholders for Outreach***

Staff will identify and reach out to environmental stakeholders to engage them in the study and gauge their interest in MPO work. Stakeholders will be identified using existing contacts, contacts from agency partners, and research into environmental advocacy and EJ groups operating in the region, with a focus on groups that work on issues related to climate change, resilience, greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, and equity.

***Subtask 2.2 Conduct Survey***

After identifying stakeholders, staff will prepare and distribute a survey to better understand how these groups would like to be engaged, including their topics of interest, preferred engagement platforms, and resource needs.

***Subtask 2.3 Conduct Interviews***

Staff will hold informal interviews with stakeholders interested in discussing their survey responses one-on-one to further build foundations for meaningful working relationships.

***Subtask 2.4 Hold Public Event(s)***

Based on findings from the survey and stakeholder interviews about groups' preferred engagement platforms, staff will hold one or more events to begin more regular coordination on environmental issues. Possible avenues of engagement include personal meetings, small focus groups, a forum focused on environmental issues in transportation, or existing MPO meetings.

***Products of Task 2***

The products of Task 2 will include strengthened relationships with regional environmental stakeholders, the identification of a preferred platform and frequency of environmental engagement, and at least one engagement event.

**Task 3 Determine Next Steps**

Toward the conclusion of the study, staff will document findings from Tasks 1 and 2 and report to the MPO with recommendations and/or options for ongoing MPO engagement with environmental stakeholders in the region. Staff will also provide recommendations on ways to leverage new relationships to improve the MPO's planning and project initiation process, including incorporation of local needs, public engagement, and project evaluation.

***Subtask 3.1 Write Memorandum***

Staff will write a short memorandum summarizing results from Tasks 1 and 2 and any resulting recommendations for the MPO and staff.

***Subtask 3.2 Report to MPO***

Staff will report findings at an MPO meeting and engage the MPO in a conversation about next steps, including how the MPO should engage with stakeholders on regional environmental issues, and implications for the ongoing development of the Resilience and Public Engagement Programs.

***Products of Task 3***

The products of Task 3 will include a memorandum, presentation, and feedback from the MPO board on a course of action for future environmental engagement.

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) operates its programs, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency), be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives federal assistance. Related federal nondiscrimination laws administered by the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, or both, prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, and disability. The Boston Region MPO considers these protected populations in its Title VI Programs, consistent with federal interpretation and administration. In addition, the Boston Region MPO provides meaningful access to its programs, services, and activities to individuals with limited English proficiency, in compliance with U.S. Department of Transportation policy and guidance on federal Executive Order 13166.

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Title VI Specialist  
Boston Region MPO  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150  
Boston, MA 02116  
[civilrights@ctps.org](mailto:civilrights@ctps.org)

**By Telephone:**

857.702.3700 (voice)

For people with hearing or speaking difficulties, connect through the state MassRelay service:

- **Relay Using TTY or Hearing Carry-over:** 800.439.2370
- **Relay Using Voice Carry-over:** 866.887.6619
- **Relay Using Text to Speech:** 866.645.9870

For more information, including numbers for Spanish speakers, visit <https://www.mass.gov/massrelay>.

**Exhibit 1**  
**ESTIMATED SCHEDULE**  
**Strategies for Environmental Outreach and Engagement**

Task	Month												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1. Task 1: Research environmental engagement strategies and best practices													
2. Task 2: Consult with environmental stakeholders													
3. Task 3: Determine next steps								A					

Products/Milestones

A: Memorandum

**Exhibit 2**  
**ESTIMATED COST**  
**Strategies for Environmental Outreach and Engagement**

<b>Direct Salary and Overhead</b>										<b>\$25,086</b>
Task	Person-Weeks by Pay Grade						Direct Salary	Overhead (120.3%)	Total Cost	
	G-9	G-7	G-5	G-3	G-2	Total				
1. Task 1: Research environmental engagement strategies and best practices	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	\$2,041	\$2,456	\$4,497	
2. Task 2: Consult with environmental stakeholders	0.0	0.1	2.8	0.8	0.0	3.7	\$4,953	\$5,959	\$10,912	
3. Task 3: Determine next steps	0.1	0.3	2.4	0.2	0.0	3.0	\$4,393	\$5,284	\$9,677	
Total	0.1	0.4	5.2	2.0	1.0	8.7	\$11,387	\$13,699	\$25,086	
<b>Other Direct Costs</b>										<b>\$0</b>
<b>TOTAL COST</b>										<b>\$25,086</b>

**Funding**

MPO Planning Contract and MPO §5303 Planning Contract #14003