



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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Community Connections Program Application

PART 1: PROJECT INITIATION FORM

About the Community Connections Program

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Community Connections (CC) Program funds projects in the following four categories:

- Transit operations and improvements
- Parking management
- Bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- Education and wayfinding

Projects that add capacity to the roadway network are ineligible.

For more detail on these types of projects see Appendix A to this document.

Eligible Applicants and Projects

Eligible applicants for this program include municipalities, transportation management associations (TMAs), and regional transit authorities (RTAs). Other entities, such as non-profit organizations, may apply in partnership with a municipality, TMA, or RTA that has agreed to serve as a project proponent and fiscal manager.

For the CC Program's initial year, funding projects beginning in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2021, all eligible projects are documented in the [Community Transportation Program Universe](#). Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis. If you have questions about how to initiate, advance, and apply for funding, please contact Sandy Johnston at sjohnston@ctps.org or 857.702.3710.

Funding

The MPO's FFYs 2020–24 Transportation Improvement Program allocates \$2 million per year for the CC Program, beginning in FFY 2021. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation typically provides the local match for capital construction projects

funded with federal dollars, while the project sponsors will be expected to provide a local match for operating projects.

Schedule

Applications for the CC Program are due by **December 6, 2019**. Please notify Sandy Johnston as soon as you are confident you will submit an application. We expect to present a scored project list to the MPO in January or February 2020.

Project Initiation

Project initiation is the first stage in the funding application process. To complete this initiation form, you will need the following:

- ✓ Information about the project proponent(s)
- ✓ A project description
- ✓ Some basic data about the project

Contact Information

Please provide your contact information in the table below. Feel free to submit additional information (such as contact information for co-sponsors) in the "Other/additional" field.

Name

Primary/lead applicant

Address

City/town

Zip code

Email address

Phone number

Other/additional

Project Description

Narrative Description and Project Scope

Please describe the proposed project and its goals. Include the following information and other relevant information:

- Project location
- Right-of-way (ROW) considerations:

- Will the work be conducted entirely within ROW controlled by a municipality or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts?
- If ROW acquisition is required, who must it be acquired from, and what entity would make the acquisition?
- Who will be served (for example, the approximate demographic profile of potential users/riders or the market for the services if the project is targeted at the workforce of a particular company or office park)
- Sources and amount of financial support (in the case of projects with multi-year funding, usually there is an initial match to federal funds and full funding in subsequent years)
- The financial situation of the project sponsor(s) and the ability of the sponsor(s) to fully fund the commitment to the project
- How this project fills a key unmet need for potential users
- Who will be responsible for managing the project (distinguish between operational management, capital procurement, and construction oversight in the event that multiple entities have differing roles in the proposed project)

Location(s) of the Project

Please provide a geographic file or files (in .kml, .kmz, or shapefile format) defining the project area. You may email this attachment to Sandy Johnston or provide it in a shared drive (such as Google Drive or Dropbox). You may use a geographic information system (GIS) program, such as Esri's ArcMap or Google's free My Maps service. (A tutorial for My Maps is available here:

https://support.google.com/mymaps/answer/3433053?hl=en&ref_topic=3024924).

Please contact Sandy Johnston if you have any questions.

Table 1 provides examples of the geographic data you may submit.

Table 1
Geographic Definitions for Project Proposals

Type of Project	Data Submission
Transit/operating	Lines representing routes and points representing stops
Capital construction	Polygon defining area where improvements will be made
Wayfinding	Collection of points representing where changes will be made
Education	Written description that identifies the area or particular institutions or workplaces to which the project or program will be targeted

Project Eligibility Verification

Candidates must pass a two-part test to confirm eligibility for funding. The first part consists of a basic analysis of air quality impacts to confirm that the project will not have a negative impact on air quality. The second verifies that the proponent possesses sufficient institutional capacity to manage the project.

Data Required to Assess Air Quality Impacts

Table 2 lists the data required to calculate the air quality impacts of candidate projects. Please provide the data listed for your project type. If you are unsure of the appropriate category for your project or believe that it does not fit into any of these categories, please contact Sandy Johnston.

**Table 2
Required Inputs for Air Quality Calculations**

Type of Project	What to Submit
New bus or shuttle service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Daily one-way person-trips anticipated 2. Total route distance in miles 3. Number of round trips per day 4. Vehicle type (e.g. cutaway bus, 30-foot bus, or 40-foot bus)
Bicycle/pedestrian improvements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Geographic definition file
Bike share	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of bikes in the bike-share system 2. Average bike trip length 3. Average number of trips per bike per day 4. Bike share operating days per year
Park-and-ride improvements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of new parking spaces 2. Average utilization of lots in the area (exact figures or estimates) 3. Prior mode split of future users 4. Future mode split of those leaving the lot 5. Distance to primary employment center
Wayfinding	No additional inputs necessary; air quality benefits are presumed
Education	No additional inputs necessary; air quality benefits are presumed

Proponent's Project Management Capacity

Describe the proponent's readiness and institutional capacity to manage the project, including the following details:

- The name of the entity (or entities) primarily responsible for managing the project
- The institutional capacity of the lead sponsoring entity to manage the project considering, for example, the availability of management's time and staff's ability to handle reporting activities or civil rights compliance activities
- A list of staff who will work on the project, including the following information:
 - The name and/or position of the anticipated project manager, if known
 - The number of hours each staff member will work on the project
 - The relevant skills and experience of the project team

Next Steps

MPO staff will analyze the data provided in the initiation forms to determine eligibility. Staff will then contact project proponents to request additional data for evaluating all eligible projects.

PART 2: QUESTIONS FOR ALL CANDIDATES

You should fill out this form after receiving verification from MPO staff that your project is eligible based on the information in the Project Initiation Form. Answer all questions fully. Please submit additional relevant documentation if it will help answer these questions.

Network or Connectivity Value

1. Describe any activity hubs, transit nodes, or other relevant elements that your project connects to and/or enhances and that you wish MPO staff to be aware of when evaluating your project. Please identify all known existing or connecting fixed-route and paratransit service within a quarter-mile of the proposed service.

2. Document the provision of parking within a half mile of your project area (for transit projects, this distance should be measured from stops, and for capital improvement projects, the distance should be measured from the location of the project). Include an estimate of the number of spaces available, the percentage of spaces used on an average day, and the prices charged. This information can be provided in the text box below and/or by emailing a spreadsheet, map, or chart to sjohnston@ctps.org. *Proponents of wayfinding and education projects do not have to answer this question.*

Coordination or Cooperation between Multiple Entities

In addition to the lead sponsor, identify the names of the other entities supporting this project. Explain their roles in the project, their financial commitments, and any in-kind support (such as staff time, data resources, or vehicles) they may be providing to the project.

Inclusion in and Consistency with Local and Regional Plans

The Boston Region MPO values continuity and prioritization of projects from the planning phase through implementation. Please document if and how your project has been included in local and/or regional plans or analyses. Examples include local comprehensive plans, transit development plans, or plans produced by the MPO or the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.

Equity Considerations

MPO staff will conduct an equity evaluation for each project application. For most projects, staff will identify the transportation equity (TE) populations in the project area based on the geographic file(s) provided in Part 1. The TE populations are those covered by the Civil Rights Act, the Environmental Justice Executive Order, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1973:

- Minority population
- Low-income population (defined as people whose family income is 200% or less than the poverty level defined in the national poverty guidelines)
- Limited English Proficiency population
- People with disabilities
- Elderly population

For more information about these categories and the MPO's TE Program, see <https://www.ctps.org/equity>.

Staff invites submission of descriptive or qualitative information about the TE populations the project is expected to serve. This is particularly important for education and wayfinding projects or education-related bicycle and pedestrian projects, as these projects are less geographically bounded. If you are not sure which category your project is included in, please contact Sandy Johnston at sjohnston@ctps.org.

Generation of Modal Flexibility and Shift

Please describe how the project will accomplish the following:

1. Allow new trips that prior to this project would only have been possible by motor vehicle
2. Shift existing trips from the single-occupancy vehicle mode to other modes

Demand Projections

Provide an estimate of what the typical weekday and weekend (if applicable) usage of the new service or facility will be once it has been in operation or existence for six months.

Next Steps

Please proceed to complete *either* Part 3A, “Additional Questions for Capital Construction Projects,” or Part 3B, “Additional Questions for Operating Projects.” If you have any questions about which you should be filling out, please contact Sandy Johnston at sjohnston@ctps.org.

PART 3A: ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

This form should be filled out by project proponents who are applying for funds for a capital construction project. *All capital construction projects applying for funds in this round should be ready to break ground by October 1, 2020.* Please contact Sandy Johnston at sjohnston@ctps.org if you have questions. You may submit additional relevant documentation to help answer these questions.

Safety Benefits

1. Describe the existing pedestrian facilities in the project area. Discuss whether pedestrian assets are missing or if other pedestrian infrastructure is necessary.

2. Describe the existing pedestrian use and the existing pedestrian safety concerns or issues in the project area. If possible, provide a quantitative response; however, qualitative descriptions are acceptable in the absence of data. "Use" can be defined as the number of users and/or or the number of users at peak travel periods during the day.

3. Describe the desired (or anticipated) pedestrian use in the project area and how the proposed project will address existing safety concerns or issues. Focus specifically on proposed pedestrian safety countermeasures.

4. Describe the existing bicycle facilities in the project area and gaps in the bicycle network.

5. Describe the existing bicycle use and the existing bicycle safety concerns or issues in the project area.

6. Describe the desired (or anticipated) bicycle use in the project area and how the proposed project will address existing safety concerns or issues. Focus specifically on proposed bicycle safety countermeasures.

Lifecycle Cost-Effectiveness

1. To the best of your ability, describe why this project is the most cost-effective use of funds relative to alternative solutions that were considered. In your answer, please consider both construction costs and the costs that will be necessary to maintain the project over the next twenty years. Discuss or quantify the following:
 - i. Alternatives to this project
 - ii. Why this project is the most cost-effective way to solve the relevant problem
 - iii. The cost advantage of this project relative to alternatives over the full period of its design life
 2. Demonstrate that the parties who will be responsible for the maintenance of the project have been consulted and have expressed confidence that they will be able to properly fund maintenance for this project over its full lifecycle.
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Resilience

Prioritizing projects that make transportation infrastructure resilient to climate change and weather impacts is one of the MPO's objectives. Please describe how the proposed project will affect (positively or negatively) the built and natural environment in its vicinity. Consider the following in your answer:

- Whether the project is located in an area of concern for climate change effects
 - Whether the project will provide mitigation measures sufficient to neutralize its own impact
 - Whether the project will provide mitigation measures such that it creates a net environmental benefit in each category, below, regardless of whether it is located in a specific area of concern
1. Climate Change:
 - a. Anticipated sea-level rise
 - b. Increased heat
 2. Water resources:

- a. Enabling the facility to function, or improving impaired functioning, during flooding events
 - b. Stormwater control
 - c. Water quality
3. Protected areas:
- a. Wetlands resources
 - b. Wildlife preservation areas or protected habitats
 - c. Cultural resources
 - d. Open space

Does the project help implement recommendations of a Hazard Mitigation Plan, climate adaptation plan, or a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program report? Please explain how below.

PART 3B: ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR OPERATING PROJECTS

This form should be filled out by proponents who are applying for funds for a project that will involve operating a new transit or bike share service over a period of time. Applications are accepted for multi-year education programs, such as those that support rider education, as well.

Please contact Sandy Johnston at sjohnston@ctps.org if you have questions. Please submit additional relevant documentation to help answer these questions.

Describe your long-term (five-year) financial plan.

1. Use the [budget worksheet](#) to create a detailed annual budget for your proposal covering the three years of Boston Region MPO funding, including all expected costs and revenue sources.
2. Detail your proposed fare structure and describe the rationale for it.

3. Describe your plans for reaching sustainability after the three-year limit for subsidies under this funding program has been reached. In particular, indicate the steps to be taken towards sustainability and the milestones to be reached during the first two years of funding.

Describe your service plan, including the routes and services you have designed to meet the needs of the envisioned ridership.

1. Provide details on the planned frequency and routing of the service(s) you are proposing.
2. Describe the types of vehicles your service would use and to whom they would belong.
3. Explain how your service plan meets the needs of the envisioned ridership. If the proposed project focuses on employment transportation, please identify the total number of employees who could be served and provide details about work shifts.
4. Describe how the service will connect potential riders with desired activity hubs (major destinations).
5. Affirm your chosen operator's ability to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Who will operate the service?

1. Will the vehicles and drivers be provided by a private contractor or will the service be operated directly by the applicant?
2. Who will administer the service? In particular, who will be responsible for monitoring the service provider and responding to customer concerns? Describe the administrator's track record (if any) in monitoring this type of service.

Marketing Plan

1. Describe in detail your plan for informing potential customers about the new service and encouraging them to become regular users.
2. Discuss your plans for branding the new service.
3. Explain how transit stops will be marked (with signage and schedule information, for example). Also describe any permitting processes that may be in place for locating transit stops, installing stop markers (signs), and posting schedule information at stops in the municipalities to be served.
4. What types of printed or electronic schedule information will be provided? How and where will this information be available to the public? Will your service publish schedule or stop information in General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) format or another shareable, interoperable format?
5. How will potential customers be able to find out more about the service, and how will regular customers access real-time information on service disruptions and up-to-date schedules (for example, by telephone information line or a website)?
6. Describe any other marketing pieces that may be mailed, emailed, posted, or advertised.

Performance Monitoring Plan

1. Describe how you plan to collect and maintain your ridership, demographic, and marketing data.
2. Describe your plans for collecting ridership data, such as the following:
 - i. Trip-level boarding counts, including the frequency at which they will be conducted
 - ii. Semiannual on-board passenger surveys to determine demographics and origins of customers or other data such as trip frequency and motivation for using the service (MPO staff can provide sample surveys)
 - iii. Semiannual boarding/alighting data by stop for all trips on a typical weekday.
3. How will you determine the success of marketing efforts in terms of increasing ridership and awareness of the service and, ultimately, shifting trips from the single-occupancy vehicle mode to other modes?

APPENDIX A: TYPES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Transit Operations and Improvements

Transit operation and improvement projects are those that close gaps in the transit network, including those that provide first- and last-mile solutions and address mobility needs not covered by existing fixed-route transit or paratransit services. Eligible project types include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Shuttle operations
- Partnerships with transportation network companies—ride-hailing companies such as Uber and Lyft
- Transit enhancements
- Construction of physical transit priority measures, such as dedicated bus lanes or queue jumps
- Installation or upgrades to signals that incorporate transit signal priority technology
- Improvements to bus stops
- Coordination of service or small capital improvements (for example, bus shelters) with existing or future fixed-route service
- Technology updates (such as to dispatching or vehicle tracking software)

Parking Management

Parking management projects encourage the adoption of innovative parking management strategies, including the leasing of remote parking lots—such as those belonging to churches or synagogues—that are located near transit stations and are underused during the week. Eligible projects types include the following:

- Leasing or arranging for off-site parking spaces near transit stations to supplement existing parking, and shuttles to connect them if necessary
- Constructing additional parking at transit stations for automobiles and bicycles

Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

Bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects are similar to projects supported by Safe Routes to Transit programs at several peer MPOs (as well as other transportation-related agencies), which often are supported by Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program funds. These programs fund minor infrastructure improvements near transit stations to make walking or biking to transit stations safer, thereby facilitating first- and last-mile connections. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Bicycle and pedestrian improvements intended to facilitate access to transit
- Improvements to non-automotive transportation infrastructure for travelers with mobility impairments
- Training and equipment for bringing bicycles on transit

Education and Wayfinding

Education and wayfinding projects provide education about transportation options and wayfinding (practical navigation in and around transportation facilities). These types of projects can help solve first- and last-mile problems and shift trips from the single-occupancy vehicle mode to other modes by reaching potential riders and users who would not otherwise be aware of or able to fully make use of available options. Eligible projects may include the following:

- Travel instruction
- Training on new technologies
- Signage and other wayfinding strategies
- Pilot or demonstration projects