



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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Community Connections Program Application

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PART 1: HOW THE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS PROGRAM WORKS

What is the Community Connections Program?

Community Connections (CC) is the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) funding program for first- and last-mile solutions, community transportation, and other small, nontraditional transportation projects such as updating transit technology and improving bicycle facilities. The goals of the CC Program are to

- create first- and last-mile connections between transit and other modes;
- incentivize collaboration between entities; and
- promote mode shift by filling gaps in the transportation system.

More details on the CC Program can be found at <https://www.bostonmpo.org/community-connections>.

How does Community Connections funding work?

The MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) allocates \$2 million per year to the CC Program. For this funding round, the MPO anticipates allocating funding for projects in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2023, meaning project proponents should expect to have funding available for their projects between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023. Projects requesting multiple years of funding, such as new shuttle or microtransit services, should anticipate funding being available in FFYs 2023, 2024, and 2025.

The CC program will cover 80 percent of project capital or operating costs, meaning **proponents should anticipate providing the 20 percent local match**. Proponents should also anticipate funding the cost of installation (for capital projects) and project administration (for operating projects).

Is my project eligible for Community Connections Program funding?

Municipalities and regional transit authorities (RTA) in the Boston region may apply for CC funding, including RTAs that partially overlap the MPO's area (if the proposed project serves one or more of the 97 communities in the Boston region). Other entities, such as Transportation Management Associations and nonprofit organizations, may apply **in partnership with a municipality or RTA that has agreed to serve as a project proponent and fiscal manager**.

The CC Program is funded with federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. As such, **all projects must demonstrate a benefit to the quality of the air in the Boston Region MPO's area and meet other federal requirements**.

The following types of projects are eligible for CC Program funds:

- Bikeshare stations and bikes
- Bicycle parking and shelters
- Bicycle lanes
- Bus lanes
- Transit signal priority (TSP)
- Transit service

Specific information on the requirements for each type of project is available in Part 2 of this guidance.

How do I apply for Community Connections funds?

After you have reviewed this guidance and believe your project may be eligible for the CC Program, you may complete the application and the accompanying budget spreadsheet for your type of project.

All project materials, including budget sheets, geographic files, and support letters, should be submitted via the online application portal. Each project type features a unique application, with links to the respective application forms available in Part 2 of this guidance document. Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

When submitting project budget sheets, you may add lines to the sheet if your project requires more components than the base sheet allows. Likewise, if your project requests funding across multiple years, you may add additional tabs to the spreadsheet in the same format as the base sheet.

If you have questions on any aspect of the CC program, including whether or not your project is eligible for funding, please contact Matt Genova at mgenova@ctps.org or 857.702.3702.

When is my application due?

The deadline to apply for this year's CC Program is December 17, 2021.

What happens once my application is submitted?

After the application deadline has passed, MPO staff will review all submitted materials to confirm project eligibility and application completeness. Staff will then begin the project scoring process, during which time all projects will be evaluated using a defined set of criteria. Throughout the scoring process, MPO staff will keep project proponents informed with regular email updates.

MPO staff anticipate that draft project scores will be available by January 21, 2022. Your project's score will be shared directly with you for your review. MPO staff invite you to provide feedback on your score to ensure that the final score accurately reflects the benefits your project will create. You will have approximately two weeks to review your score, and all feedback should be submitted in writing to Matt Genova at mgenova@ctps.org. After the conclusion of this review period, all project scores will be considered final.

When will I hear if my project has been selected for funding?

MPO staff will present project scoring results to the MPO in February 2022. The MPO will select a list of projects to be funded under the CC Program during TIP scenario programming discussions in March 2022 or shortly thereafter. All projects selected for funding will be reviewed for eligibility by the Commonwealth's CMAQ Consultation Committee in Spring 2022.

When and how will my project be implemented if selected for funding?

CC projects are implemented with the help of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), and the region's RTAs (as applicable). Once the FFYs 2023–27 TIP has been endorsed in May 2022, MPO staff will connect proponents of projects selected for funding with staff from the relevant agency to guide them through implementation. Provided all administrative measures are settled, funds will be available beginning October 1, 2022. Further guidance on implementation will be made available to those proponents whose projects are selected for funding.

PART 2: APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Application instructions differ slightly by project type. Please see below for specific instructions for your project.

Bikeshare Stations and Bikes

The CC Program can fund the purchase of Bluebikes docks and bicycles to support municipalities in joining or expanding their presence in the regional bikeshare network. Existing Bluebikes municipalities can work directly with Motivate to determine pricing of stations, bikes, and installation fees.

Municipalities interested in joining the Bluebikes system should contact Marah Holland, Transportation Planner at MAPC (mholland@mapc.org) for more information about the system. MAPC conducted a procurement for bikeshare services in 2016, allowing all 101 municipalities in the MAPC region to join the system.

Note: Bikeshare works best in dense, urban areas. It's not the most appropriate solution for every municipality. Municipalities that joined the Bluebikes system recently have been responsible for paying both capital costs of equipment as well as monthly operations fees, which can be a maximum of \$110 per dock per month. Typically, new municipalities joining the system start out with five stations, each with 9-25 docks.

To apply, please submit:

- [Bikeshare project application](#)
- [Bikeshare project budget form](#)

Bicycle Parking and Shelters

The MPO partners with MAPC to help project proponents purchase bicycle shelters and parking options that serve first- and last-mile connection purposes.

Through MAPC's collective purchasing program, a range of bicycle parking solutions are available, including:

- Inverted U racks in multiple styles
- High-capacity racks that hold up to 14 bicycles
- Bicycle stalls for in-street parking
- Tool stands
- Bicycle shelters and canopies
- Stacked bicycle parking for tight areas

More information is available on each of these options on [MAPC's website](#). When applying for bicycle parking and shelters, please note the specific vendor and product name in the project details section. The MPO will not consider applications that propose

the use of bicycle parking or shelter options that are not listed in existing MAPC collective purchasing agreements.

To apply, please submit:

- [Bicycle parking and shelters project application](#)
- [Bicycle parking and shelters project budget form](#)

Bicycle Lanes

The MPO has partnered with MAPC to fund implementation of bicycle lanes in several MPO member municipalities. CC funding can be used to cover the cost of green and white paint for bicycle lanes in the following municipalities:

- Arlington
- Boston
- Brookline
- Cambridge
- Chelsea
- Everett
- Lynn
- Malden
- Medford
- Quincy
- Revere
- Somerville
- Watertown

These municipalities are eligible for funds for bicycle lanes because they are party to MAPC's collective purchasing agreement for these materials through vendor K5.

To apply, please submit:

- [Bike lane application](#)
- [Bike lane budget form](#)

Bus Lanes

The MPO has partnered with MAPC and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to fund implementation of bus lanes. CC funding can be used to cover the cost of red and white paint for dedicated bus lanes in the following municipalities:

- Arlington
- Boston
- Brookline
- Cambridge
- Chelsea
- Everett

- Lynn
- Malden
- Medford
- Quincy
- Revere
- Somerville
- Watertown

These municipalities are eligible for funds for bus lanes because they are party to MAPC's collective purchasing agreement for these materials through vendor K5.

All applications for bus lane paint must be coordinated with the MBTA prior to the time of application. With their application, proponents must submit a letter of support for the project from the MBTA's Transit Priority Group. Applications for bus lane paint that do not have explicit written support from the MBTA will not be considered for funding.

To apply, please submit:

- [Bus lane application](#)
- [Bus lane budget form](#)

Transit Signal Priority

Transit signal priority (TSP) projects add TSP equipment to traffic signals at individual intersections or along a corridor to make transit vehicles faster and more reliable. Currently, these projects can be implemented by the MBTA in municipalities with MBTA bus or surface Green Line rail service.

All TSP projects must be advanced in partnership with the MBTA and must use MBTA-approved signal equipment. With their application, proponents must submit a letter of support for the project from the MBTA's Transit Priority Group. Applications for TSP equipment that do not have explicit written support from the MBTA will not be considered for funding.

To apply, please submit:

- [Transit signal priority application](#)
- [Transit signal priority budget form](#)

Transit Operations

Transit operations 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. Operations funded through the CC Program must represent *new service*. If you have questions about the definition of new

service, please contact MPO staff. Eligible project types include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Fixed-route transit service
- Shuttle operations
- Microtransit operations
- Partnerships with transportation network companies—ride-hailing companies such as Uber and Lyft

The MPO can provide a maximum of three years of funding for Transit Operations projects. Projects are obligated to provide certain reporting metrics after each year, so that their continuing air quality benefit can be confirmed. The local match to federal funding is expected to increase annually, while the federal share of funding for the project is expected to decline each year. For example, proponents may elect to provide a local match of 20 percent in year 1, 50 percent in year 2, and 80 percent in year 3. The local match may not be less than 20 percent in any year. Projects will be expected to demonstrate fiscal sustainability for the fourth year of operation and beyond.

Transit operating projects are strongly encouraged to be undertaken directly by an RTA or administered by an RTA in partnership with a municipal proponent.

This is not mandatory, but RTA-administered operating projects have the greatest likelihood of being awarded funding by the MPO. Operating projects that are not directly administered by an RTA must be administered by MassDOT staff, and the capacity to carry out this work is extremely limited. The MPO reserves the right to deny funding to operating projects that request administration by MassDOT in the event that the staffing capacity to do so is unavailable. Such decisions may be made to ensure the viability of all projects selected for funding by the MPO.

If you have questions about this policy, please contact Matt Genova at mgenova@ctps.org or 857.702.3702.

To apply, please submit:

- [Transit operating project application](#)
- [Transit operating project budget form](#)

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.

The Boston Region MPO also complies with the Massachusetts Public Accommodation Law, M.G.L. c 272 sections 92a, 98, 98a, which prohibits making any distinction, discrimination, or restriction in admission to, or treatment in a place of public accommodation based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or ancestry. Likewise, the Boston Region MPO complies with the Governor's Executive Order 526, section 4, which requires that all programs, activities, and services provided, performed, licensed, chartered, funded, regulated, or contracted for by the state shall be conducted without unlawful discrimination based on race, color, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, disability, veteran's status (including Vietnam-era veterans), or background.

A complaint form and additional information can be obtained by contacting the MPO or at http://www.bostonmpo.org/mpo_non_discrimination. To request this information in a different language or in an accessible format, please contact

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