



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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MEMORANDUM

DATE January 17, 2013
FROM Alicia Wilson, MPO Staff
TO Boston Region MPO
RE 2013 Environmental Justice Outreach in the Transportation Equity Program

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum outlines the next steps the MPO staff plans to take in its outreach to environmental justice communities.

As described in the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan:

The federal environmental justice circular requires the MPO to examine the allocation of benefits and burdens, historically and currently, and planned for the future; to ensure that minority and low-income communities are treated equitably in the provision of transportation services and projects; and to provide full participation for minority and low-income communities to advise the MPO during its planning and decision-making process.

The MPO's environmental justice outreach program supports the latter portion of this description. The information gleaned through its outreach helps the MPO understand the transportation needs of environmental justice neighborhoods throughout the planning and decision-making processes.

The outreach program has used several methods to gather this information, including regional environmental justice forums, targeted surveys, and small-group meetings. MPO members have been periodically briefed on the information gathered, and has shared it with the entities responsible for taking action. The program has yielded useful data that informed the transportation equity section of the Long-Range Transportation Plan's Needs Assessment and shaped the criteria used to evaluate projects for the Transportation Improvement Program.

Understanding peoples' needs is a key reason for engaging in outreach. It is also important to educate people who are interested in transportation planning about how transportation decisions are made and to explain how they can become more engaged in the process. Presenting this type of information will improve public understanding and lead to more informed participation in the MPO's work.

OBJECTIVES

The MPO staff has identified several objectives for its upcoming outreach to organizations and individuals in environmental justice communities. The objectives of the staff are to:

- Improve public awareness of the Boston Region MPO and its functions
- Improve understanding of the transportation-planning process
- Attract participation from low-income persons, minority persons, autoless households, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and persons with limited English proficiency (LEP)
- Increase the number of responses to the MPO's online transportation equity survey (available at www.bosotnmpo.org , under Transportation Equity; click on the Survey link)
- Increase public awareness of the MPO's Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Advisory Council) and attract groups that address environmental justice concerns to participating in the Advisory Council's work
- Learn about transportation needs in the environmental justice communities from which few or no survey responses have been received

STRATEGIES

Four key strategies are planned for the MPO's upcoming environmental justice outreach.

Strategy 1: Conduct meetings with organizations that serve low-income and minority persons, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and limited-English-proficiency communities in the region

The MPO staff plans to attend regularly scheduled meetings hosted by umbrella groups, such as Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) and area agencies on aging, which can reach a broad audience. The staff will request time on the meeting agendas of these organizations to present basic information about the MPO, similar to the information provided during the MPO orientation that was held in November 2011, but abbreviated and tailored for the new audience. The meetings will also present an opportunity for the staff to develop professional relationships with trusted advocates who can help the MPO communicate with traditionally underserved populations. Doing so will help the MPO engage groups that may not be aware of how transportation decisions are made, or that may have a low level of familiarity with or trust of public agencies. (A list of targeted organizations is in the appendix.)

The staff will also strive to better understand the needs of the communities by engaging in structured small-group discussions following staff presentations at meetings. An objective of the discussions will be to understand which transportation needs are the highest priorities of a given community.

Strategy 2: Update the MPO's online equity survey and seek additional responses

The current survey, developed in 2010, focuses on gathering information about the needs of environmental justice communities. Additional questions will be added to the survey to help the MPO understand the priorities of the communities. These questions may take the form of a rating scale in which respondents are asked to express their feelings about the relative importance of various types of improvements or transportation policies. A postcard promoting the updated survey will be distributed at the meetings and by mail to all of the Transportation Equity Program contacts so that people who are not able to attend a meeting can provide input at their convenience using the online survey. The updated survey will be available on the MPO's website, www.bostonmpo.org, in several of the most commonly spoken languages of the region.

Strategy 3: Encourage public participation through the Advisory Council

The MPO staff is actively reaching out to some of the organizations from the list of targeted organizations that serve the identified populations to elicit interest in attending Advisory Council meetings and encouraging active participation. Information on Advisory Council activities and meetings, along with a call for new members, will be included in the flyer that will be sent to all of the targeted organizations in the MPO's Transportation Equity database (a draft of the flyer's text is in the appendix).

Strategy 4: Target outreach to hard-to-reach audiences

Through written communication, the staff will solicit invitations to attend meetings of organizations that serve environmental justice communities. A flyer will be sent to each group listed in the MPO's updated database of contacts (see Tables 1, 2, and 3 at the end of the memorandum, in the appendix), asking them to provide the MPO an opportunity to discuss the Transportation Equity Program. Staff will also target organizations in neighborhoods or communities where participation has historically been lower than in other communities. Seeking an invitation to meetings at institutions, such as community centers, charitable organizations, senior centers, health care facilities, and places of worship, will help to reach residents who have difficulty participating in a traditional public process. Organizations offering to host a meeting will be invited to help recruit community members and other organizations to participate in the Transportation Equity Program. MPO staff will follow up with telephone calls to encourage higher response rates from organizations.

Because responses to the last round of surveying were concentrated in the urban core

of the region, staff will pay special attention to organizations that are geographically dispersed. The following communities should be targeted during outreach efforts because the MPO received little or no response from them during the last round of surveying:

- Chelsea
- Everett
- Framingham
- Lynn
- Malden
- Peabody
- Randolph
- Revere
- Salem
- Waltham

CONCLUSION

The MPO's environmental justice program is ongoing; these next steps in the outreach program will continue throughout 2013. The staff will update the MPO during the latter half of 2013 about the comments and concerns expressed through the meetings and the equity survey.

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APPENDIX

Table 1
Transportation Equity Contacts: Agencies and Community Development Groups

Organization	Community	Zip Code
Allston-Brighton Area Planning Action Council	Allston	02134
Brazilian Immigrant Center	Allston	02134
Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers	Allston	02134
Asian American Civic Association Inc.	Boston	02111
Asian CDC	Boston	02111
Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center	Boston	02111
Castle Square Tenants Association	Boston	02116
Chinatown Gateway Coalition	Boston	02111
Citywide Boston Hispanic Center	Boston	02111
Fenway CDC	Boston	02115
Fenway Civic Association	Boston	02123
Inquilinos Boricuas En Acción	Boston	02118
Latin American Health Institute	Boston	02116
Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants	Boston	02108
Mission Hill Neighborhood Housing Services	Boston	02120
Oiste?	Boston	02116
SNAP: South End Neighborhood Action Program	Boston	02118
United South End Settlements (USES)	Boston	02118
Women's Service Club	Boston	02118
Allston-Brighton CDC	Brighton	02135
Brazilian Women's Group	Brighton	02135
Cambridge Community Development Department	Cambridge	02139
Cambridge Community Services	Cambridge	02139
Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee Inc.	Cambridge	02139
Cambridge Housing Authority	Cambridge	02139
Just-A-Start	Cambridge	02141
Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers	Cambridge	02139
Boston Housing Authority Charlestown Development	Charlestown	02129
Charlestown Multicultural Tenants Task Force	Charlestown	02129
Centro Latino de Chelsea	Chelsea	02150
Chelsea [Human Services] Collaborative	Chelsea	02150
Chelsea Neighborhood Developers Inc.	Chelsea	02150
Community Action Program Inter-City Inc.	Chelsea	02150
Roca Inc.	Chelsea	02150
Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation	Dorchester	02124
Dorchester Bay EDC	Dorchester	02125
Dorchester Neighborhood Service Center	Dorchester	02121
Fields Corner CDC	Dorchester	02122
Four Corners Action Coalition	Dorchester	02124
Freedom House Inc.	Dorchester	02121

(cont.)

Table 1 (Cont.)

Organization	Community	Zip Code
Haitian Multi-Service Center/Catholic Charities	Dorchester	02121
Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers	Dorchester	02125
Roxbury Multi-Service Center (RMSC)	Dorchester	02121
Viet-AID	Dorchester	02122
Work Inc.	Dorchester	02122
East Boston Area Planning Action Council	East Boston	02128
East Boston CDC	East Boston	02128
East Boston Ecumenical Community Council (EBECC)	East Boston	02128
Neighborhood of Affordable Housing	East Boston	02128
Everett Department of Planning and Development	Everett	02149
Everett Human Services Department	Everett	02149
A Better Tomorrow Services, Inc.	Everett	02149
La Comunidad	Everett	02149
LUMA (Latinos Unidos en Massachusetts)	Everett	02149
A Suitable Image/Women's Alliance	Framingham	01704
Brazilian American Association (BRAMAS)	Framingham	01702
Framingham Community Partners	Framingham	01704
MetroWest Latin American Center (MLAC)	Framingham	01702
South Middlesex Opportunity Council	Framingham	01702
Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers	Framingham	01702
Gloucester Economic Development & Industrial Corp.	Gloucester	01930
Hyde Park Main Streets	Hyde Park	02136
Southwest Boston CDC	Hyde Park	02136
Asian American Resource Workshop	Jamaica Plain	02130
Back of the Hill CDC	Jamaica Plain	02130
City Life/Vida Urbana	Jamaica Plain	02130
Hispanic Office of Planning and Evaluation	Jamaica Plain	02130
Jamaica Plain Area Planning Action Council	Jamaica Plain	02130
Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation	Jamaica Plain	02130
Bridgewell	Lynnfield	01940
Community Minority Cultural Center	Lynn	01901
Essex County Community Organization	Lynn	01902
Lynn Community Health Center	Lynn	01901
Lynn Economic Opportunity Inc.	Lynn	01901
Lynn Housing Authority	Lynn	01902
North Shore Haitian American Association	Lynn	01903
Bread of Life	Malden	02148
Malden Dept. of Engineering, Planning, and Waterworks	Malden	02148
Malden Housing Authority	Malden	02148
Tri-City Community Action Program Inc.	Malden	02148

(cont.)

Table 1 (Cont.)

Organization	Community	Zip Code
Association of Haitian Women in Boston	Mattapan	02126
Haitian American Public Health Initiatives Inc.	Mattapan	02126
Haitian Americans United	Mattapan	02126
Mattapan CDC	Mattapan	02126
Mattapan Family Service Center	Mattapan	02126
Medford Housing Authority	Medford	02155
Medford Office of Community Development	Medford	02155
North Shore Community Action Programs	Peabody	01960
Peabody Community Development and Planning	Peabody	01960
Asian American Service Association	Quincy	02170
Germantown Neighborhood Center	Quincy	02169
Quincy Asian Resources Inc. (QARI)	Quincy	02169
Quincy Community Action Programs	Quincy	02169
South Coastal Workforce Investment Board	Quincy	02169
Randolph Chinese American Neighborhood Development Organization	Randolph	02368
Randolph Community Partnership	Randolph	02368
Randolph Housing Authority	Randolph	02368
Revere Community Development Dept.	Revere	02151
Revere Housing Authority	Revere	02151
Roslindale Village Main Street	Roslindale	02131
Alternatives for Community & Environment	Roxbury	02119
Cape Verdean Community UNIDO	Roxbury	02119
Committee for Boston Public Housing	Roxbury	02120
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative	Roxbury	02119
Elm Hill Family Service Center/Roxbury-North Dorchester Area Planning Action Council (APAC)		02121
Grove Hall NDC	Roxbury	02121
La Alianza Hispana	Roxbury	02119
Lena Park Community Development Corporation	Roxbury	02119
Madison Park Development Corporation	Roxbury	02119
Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation	Roxbury	02119
Parker Hill Fenway Neighborhood Service Center	Roxbury	02120
Urban Edge	Roxbury	02119
North Shore CDC	Salem	01970
Salem Department of Planning and Community Development	Salem	01970
Centro Presente	Somerville	02143
Community Action Agency Of Somerville	Somerville	02143
Groundwork Somerville	Somerville	02143
Haitian Coalition of Somerville	Somerville	02144

(cont.)

Table 1 (Cont.)

Organization	Community	Zip Code
Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership (STEP)	Somerville	02145
SCM Community Transportation Corporation	Somerville	02144
Somerville Community Corporation	Somerville	02143
The Welcome Project	Somerville	02145
Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce	South Boston	02127
South Boston Action Center	South Boston	02127
South Boston NDC	South Boston	02127
Joseph Smith Health Center	Waltham	02452
Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce	Waltham	02451
Waltham Alliance to Create Housing	Waltham	02453
Waltham Housing Authority	Waltham	02451

Table 2**Transportation Equity Contacts: Organizations Serving People with Disabilities**

Organization	Community	Zip Code
DEAF Inc.	Allston	02134
Massachusetts Office on Disability	Boston	02108
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission	Boston	02111
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind	Boston	02111
Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Boston	02111
Disability Law Center Inc.	Boston	02108
Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities	Boston	02201
Boston Center for Independent Living	Boston	02111
Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities	Cambridge	02139
Cambridge Family and Children's Services	Cambridge	02141
Multi-Cultural Independent Living Center of Boston Inc.	Dorchester	02124
Everett Disability Commission	Everett	02149
Framingham Disability Commission	Framingham	01702
MetroWest Center for Independent Living Inc.	Framingham	01702
Medford Commission for Persons with Disabilities	Medford	02155
Commission on Disabilities	Quincy	02169
Randolph Disabilities Commission	Randolph	02368
Revere Commission on Disabilities	Revere	02151
Salem Commission on Disabilities	Salem	01970
Independent Living Center of the North Shore and Cape Ann Inc.	Salem	01970
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Salem Office	Salem	01970
Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities	Somerville	02143
Waltham Disability Services Commission	Waltham	02451

Table 3
Transportation Equity Contacts: Veteran's Groups

Organization	Community	Zip Code
AMVETS Department of Massachusetts	Boston	02133
Disabled American Veterans	Boston	02133
Paralyzed Veterans of America	Boston	02203
New England Paralyzed Veterans of America	Walpole	02081

BOSTON REGION MPO: Transportation Information Resource Invitation to Participate

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) conducts the federally required transportation planning process for 101 cities and towns in eastern Massachusetts. The MPO makes decisions about which transportation projects receive federal funds for construction in the region and in your community. There are several reasons to be aware of the MPO and participate in the transportation planning process.

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR YOU

The MPO's website, <http://www.bostonmpo.org>, hosts a variety of transportation data for the Boston region. For example:

- Transit on-time performance and vehicle passenger crowding
- An interactive intersection database that includes bike and pedestrian crashes, traffic volumes, and bus routes
- A listing of transportation services available to senior citizens
- A large variety of interactive maps and applications such as a database and a map showing proposed highway projects.

In addition, the MPO's website provides information on transportation planning, the MPO process, and copies of reports pertaining to different transportation modes and policies.

PARTICIPATE IN TRANSPORTATION ISSUES THAT AFFECT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

The MPO gathers information about the transportation concerns of minority and low-income communities, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and persons with limited English proficiency as part of its **Transportation Equity Program**. The program encourages and facilitates involvement in the Boston Region MPO's regional transportation planning process. It is a way to be involved in decisions on how to allocate funds for transportation projects.

Contact us to start a conversation on how you can become involved. Take a survey and share your views via the website. Invite MPO staff to your organization's meetings. Attend MPO meetings and its Advisory Council's meetings. All meetings are open to the public. Meeting agendas and other planning information for these meetings for these meetings are posted on the MPO's website. Contact Alicia Wilson at (617) 973-8008 or awilson@ctps.org for additional information.

THE MPO'S NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY: The MPO fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. The MPO does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, English proficiency, income, religious creed, ancestry, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or military service.