



# Elizabeth Cooper

Senior Associate

Consensus Building Institute

Tel. (617) 844-1126 | ecooper@cbi.org

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## PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Elizabeth is a mediator and facilitator skilled in process design, multi-party public dispute facilitation, collaborative problem solving, and community engagement. Her facilitation work focuses on integrating the perspectives and interests of key stakeholders and communities into the development of complex policy and technical responses to issues at the intersection of the built and natural environment. She has particular expertise working with municipal, state, and federal agencies on climate adaptation, land use/transportation planning, water, marine resources, and agriculture issues. She also works with government and non-profit organizations to strengthen collaborative capacity and guide strategic planning.

## EXPERIENCE

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| 2016-Present | <b>Consensus Building Institute</b><br><i>Senior Associate, previously Associate</i>   | Cambridge, MA |
|              | Design, manage, and facilitate consensus-building processes for a range of public policy issues and disputes. Guide strategic planning and strengthen collaborative capacity in government and non-profit organizations. |               |
| 2015-2016    | <b>Water Diplomacy Research Center, Tufts University</b><br><i>Research and Writing Associate for Water Diplomacy Blog</i>   | Medford, MA   |
|              | Led research and writing on series of papers applying complexity science and negotiation theory to analyze transboundary water disputes.   |               |
| 2013-2015    | <b>Center for Governance and Sustainability, UMass Boston</b><br><i>Research Associate</i>   | Boston, MA    |
|              | Drafted policy briefs addressing environmental convention national reporting methods and their effectiveness, based on primary data analysis. Applied for grants, drafted project literature.                            |               |

## EDUCATION

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| 2017 | <b>University of Massachusetts, Boston</b><br><i>Conflict Resolution, MA</i>            | Boston, MA       |
| 2010 | <b>Mount Holyoke College</b><br><i>Critical Social Thought, BA, graduated cum laude</i> | South Hadley, MA |

## SELECTED PROJECTS

### LAND USE AND PLANNING

**Merrimack Valley Planning Commission – Housing Production Plan Updates**, Merrimack Valley, 2023-present. Partner with the planning commission to design stakeholder engagement strategy and plan and facilitate regional and municipal meetings. The goal of the process is to incorporate community input in the development of targeted short-term actions and long-term strategies to increase housing production, especially of affordable housing, in Merrimack Valley communities and build community support for action on housing issues.

**Port Infrastructure Working Group**, Cambridge, MA, 2021-present. Facilitate a diverse working group of community representatives to guide priorities for infrastructure improvements to address climate-induced flooding and heat impacts. Facilitate and execute a broad community engagement strategy to ensure improvements are responsive to community needs.

**Cycling Safety Ordinance Advisory Committee**, Cambridge, MA, 2022-present. Facilitate a working group bringing together diverse interest groups to advise the City on implementation and engagement strategies for an ambitious ordinance to rapidly expand the City's separated bike-lane network. The group provides guidance to the City on topics such as community notification and public outreach, project evaluation and community feedback, and strategies to enhance and mitigate the impacts of projects and the land use and traffic changes resulting.

**Lower Mystic Regional Working Group**, Somerville, Boston, and Everett, MA, 2016-2018. Assisted in facilitation and community engagement for a multi-agency and -city process to develop, model, and prioritize actions for multi-modal transportation improvements in and around one of the more vexing transportation planning problems in Greater Boston. Process included integrating land use and transportation modeling and future scenarios, extensive public engagement, and robust mobility modeling.

**Envision Cambridge Citywide Plan**, Cambridge MA, 2016. Part of consultant team developing Cambridge's first ever comprehensive plan. This included planning for and facilitation of public workshops, focus groups, and providing consultation on meeting materials and other engagement efforts being undertaken for Envision Cambridge.

### CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

**Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs State Climate Assessment and State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan**, September 2021-May 2023. Facilitator for the Commonwealth's 2022 Climate Assessment, which fed into the State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan. Developed stakeholder engagement plan, created community engagement materials to achieve a layered, inclusive engagement approach, convened a group of Community Liaisons to serve as ambassadors and partners for on-the-ground engagement of communities, especially environmental justice communities. Designed engagement process and facilitated stakeholder meetings.

**Lincoln Institute of Land Policy / Climigration Network**, 2020-2022. Facilitate dialogues with grassroots leaders representing frontline, underserved communities across the U.S. facing questions of whether and how to relocate due to severe climate impacts on their homes. Facilitate participants' learning from each other across diverse contexts, assist them in developing shared, collaborative statements to influence funding and policy.

**Plum Island Economic Analysis for Sea Level Rise Decision Making**, Newbury and Newburyport, MA. 2020-2021. One of a team of two facilitators leading a collaborative research project funded through the

Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability (MVP) program. Facilitated a community advisory group of stakeholders representing key interests and leading public engagement over the course of the project. The project provided economic and fiscal data about the costs and benefits of managing Plum Island (a barrier island) in the face of coming sea level rise for use in future decision making by Newbury and Newburyport.

**Climate Resilience Zoning Task Force**, Cambridge, MA, 2019-2021. Facilitated a 25-member multi-stakeholder committee including developers, residents, labor, environmental experts, and city staff. With technical support, this committee developed and reached agreement on enhancements to city zoning that will increase climate resilience given future predictions of heat, precipitation and sea level rise.

**Resilient Mystic Collaborative**, Mystic River Watershed, MA, 2020-2021. Assisted in facilitation of the collaborative, which brings together municipalities from across the watershed to share case studies, research, best practices, and lessons learned to strengthen local-scale climate resilience; advocate for improved policy and funding responses to climate impacts; and develop shared projects to address resilience challenges regionally.

**Scituate 50-year Coastal Vision**, Scituate, MA, 2019-2020. Co-facilitated a community process funded by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management to develop a long-term vision for a resilient coastline for one of the most climate-vulnerable communities on the east coast. Developed and implemented extensive community engagement plan to reach community members through neighborhood gatherings, online forums, and public meetings. Guided the community to weigh tradeoffs and build a positive vision for its coast in 2070.

**The Nature Conservancy - New York Climate Adaptation Team Strategy**, New York State, 2019. Assisted with in-depth stakeholder assessment and facilitated process to develop strategic focus to strengthen the impact of the Conservancy's New York State Climate Adaptation Team's efforts to build resilience to flooding in the state.

**Climigration Network**, Cambridge, MA, 2019. Facilitator of the board and working groups of the Climigration Network, a community of practice on the subject of helping communities consider managed retreat among climate adaptation options. Worked with team to enhance impact of the Network to catalyze communities, practitioners, and thought leaders confronting climate change-induced migration.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY AND CLIMATE MITIGATION

**New York State Energy Research and Development Authority – Technical Working Group on Solar Development and Agricultural Lands**, 2021-present. Co-facilitator of a technical working group that serves as a forum to address concerns relating to solar development and potential conflicts with agricultural operations and lands of greatest importance. Facilitate discussions in which stakeholders can openly communicate concerns, identify information needs, and learn of the actions that each of these stakeholder groups could (or are) taking to address these concerns to improve outcomes.

**American Farmland Trust Smart Solar for New York Land Trusts, Technical Advisors & Farmers**, New York, 2023-present. Design and facilitate a steering committee and process to guide the development of a tool to assist land trusts, technical advisors, and farmers in navigating the options in determining whether and how to develop solar energy on farmland. Conduct a stakeholder assessment, design and facilitate steering committee meetings, design and facilitate listening sessions with key stakeholders in various regions in the state.

**Net Zero Transportation Plan**, Cambridge, MA, 2022-present. Lead facilitation and stakeholder engagement for the development of a racial equity-based Net Zero Transportation Plan for the City, including helping form and then facilitating an advisory group to build awareness and understanding of key transportation data sources, indicators, and emissions inventory methodologies; incorporate stakeholder feedback to support an equity framework for the Plan; review, prioritize, and build consensus around strategies and actions for inclusion in the Plan; and build commitment to implement the Plan in a collaborative matter, including identifying key resource needs and next steps.

**BOEM Gulf of Maine Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Stakeholder Meetings, 2023.** Assisted in facilitation of public fishing industry stakeholder meetings around the BOEM's process to identify Wind Energy Areas in the Gulf of Maine. BOEM's Gulf of Maine Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force uses this input to advise the bureau on the wind energy leasing process in the Gulf of Maine.

## ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES

**The Nature Conservancy - State of Living Shorelines Permitting in New England**, New England, 2023-present. Design and facilitate a series of focused conversations and workshops with regulators, practitioners, and researchers aimed at increasing understanding of regulatory issues and opportunities, and to clarify the ecological impacts of habitat conversion due to living shoreline projects and possible tradeoffs considering future conditions. Synthesize and share findings in a written report.

**Vermont Soil Conservation Practice and Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) Working Group**, Montpelier, Vermont, 2019-2021. Co-facilitation of Working Group convened by the Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets to develop recommendations for financial incentives designed to encourage farmers in Vermont to implement agricultural practices that improve soil health, enhance crop resilience, increase carbon storage and stormwater storage capacity, and reduce agricultural runoff to waters. Facilitate meetings and webinars on PES program design, improved soil health and management practices, and strategies to catalyze a paradigm shift to recognize and value land stewardship in agriculture across the state.

**Newtown Creek Superfund Site Community Advisory Group**, Brooklyn and Queens, New York, 2019-2020. Assisted in facilitation of a group of diverse interests providing input to EPA on the development and implementation of plans to remediate water, soil, and sediment contamination from multiple heavily industrialized sites along Newtown Creek.

**Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site Community Advisory Group**, Fort Edward, NY, 2019. Assisted in facilitation of a 25-member group of diverse and divergent interests providing input to EPA on the implementation of the Record of Decision to dredge, dewater, and transport Hudson River sediments contaminated with PCBs from the operations of two General Electric manufacturing facilities.

**Housatonic River PCB Cleanup Citizens' Coordinating Council**, Pittsfield, MA, 2019-present. Assisted in facilitation of a 25-member group of diverse and divergent interests providing input to EPA on the implementation of the Consent Decree to remediate river sediment and soil sites in and along the Housatonic River from PCBs from the operations of General Electric manufacturing facilities.

## COASTS AND OCEANS / MARINE RESOURCES

**National Marine Fisheries Service Take Reduction Team Program**, 2020-present. Co-facilitator of multi-party stakeholder Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team tasked with providing consensus advice on strategies to reduce the incidental take of large whales in the Atlantic due to impacts from fishing industry, shipping, and ecosystem changes driven by climate change and other factors. Co-facilitator of the Bottlenose Dolphin and lead facilitator of the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Teams, tasked with

similar efforts to advise on gear and management strategies to reduce takes of bottlenose dolphin and harbor porpoise. Take Reduction Teams are mandated under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

**Aquaculture Stewardship Council Fish Welfare Standard, 2020-2022.** Facilitate the development of common standards for fish welfare in aquaculture. Guide a multi-stakeholder, consensus-building process among environmental and advocacy groups, aquaculture producers and researchers.

## WATER RESOURCES

**Charles River Watershed Association - Muddy River Watershed Vision Plan, Greater Boston, MA, 2023-present.** Design and facilitate a stakeholder process to develop a comprehensive and innovative long-term vision for the future of the Muddy River watershed, the most polluted tributary of the Charles River. Engage a range of stakeholders, including municipal and state agencies, the business sector, community-based organizations, and others to incorporate strategies around water quality, climate resilience, environmental justice, access to recreation, habitat restoration and other issues into a coherent vision.

**Somerville/Cambridge Combined Sewer Overflow Long-Term Control Plan, Greater Boston, 2022-ongoing.** Co-facilitate community engagement for a collaborative effort by the Cities of Somerville and Cambridge MA and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) to update a joint combined sewer overflow (CSO) long-term control plan (LTCP.) Develop innovative community engagement strategies to integrate meaningful community input at key points in this technical plan development. Design engagement tools such as surveys, focus groups, and facilitate public meetings. This effort includes live interpretation of meetings into up to eight languages, with a focus on impacts to environmental justice communities impacted by CSO releases.

**USEPA Southeast New England Program: Massachusetts and Rhode Island Stormwater Accounting and Tracking Project, 2021-present.** Facilitate a working group bringing together engineers and planners from municipalities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island along with EPA Region 1 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Program staff, stormwater program staff from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM), and technical consultants, to help build municipal capacity to track and account for stormwater management best management practices. Facilitate collaboration to assist municipal partners in adopting tracking and accounting tools, identify data gaps and challenges, and develop action plans.

**Chesapeake Bay Funders' Network Capacity Building Initiative Assessment, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, 2020-2021.** Conducted capacity assessment in two watersheds of the Chesapeake Bay to determine opportunities and capacity needs to strengthen collaboration among diverse actors to achieve long-term water quality goals for Chesapeake Bay. Synthesized findings and developed recommendations to pooled funding initiative for future grant-making.

**Wolastoq First Nations and Federal Watershed Collaboration, Maine and New Brunswick, 2019-present.** Assist in facilitation for a process of the Maliseet First Nations and Tribe and Canadian and US federal agencies to strengthen cooperation, provide information sharing and learning and a strategic plan for collaborative action to restore salmon and ecosystems in the St. John River watersheds.

**Mystic River Watershed Initiative, Greater Boston Area, 2019-2020.** Supported the Environmental Protection Agency (Region 1) and the many non-profit and agency members working collaboratively to clean up the water in the Mystic River Watershed. This included leading an in-depth collaborative effort to bring regulators, stormwater experts and municipal leaders together to share information and

develop concrete workplans and helping to plan steering committee and subgroup meetings, assisting with facilitation of large events, providing meeting summaries, and other facilitation services.

**Dams and Sediment in the Hudson River**, Hudson River Valley, NY, 2019. Assisted in facilitation for a collaborative research project studying what happens to sediments trapped behind dams when dams are removed. The multi-disciplinary team included modelers and ecologists doing field work. The CBI team managed overall project coordination and facilitated regular advisory committee meetings at which regulators, designers and local officials share concerns and hopes for the project. Project outcomes included field data from six impoundments and models of sediment transport.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

**NOAA Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office Protected Resources Division Organizational Assessment and Strategic Plan**, Gloucester, MA, 2023-present. Design and facilitate a division-wide organizational health assessment that identifies recommendations for improving the division's organizational structure and systems to support an effective, efficient, and well-supported workforce.

**Expansion Plan Implementation and Organizational Restructuring – Massachusetts Department of Ecological Restoration**, Boston, MA, 2019-present. Work with leadership of the Division to implement the organization's expansion plan, including aligning the use of expansion resources with the organization's strategic goals, helping determine how to prioritize and allocate staff effort across a range of objectives, and integrating new position hires into the Division. Develop and implement consultation approaches to engage staff and seek their input in division planning.

**“Our Path Forward” Strategy for Boston Area National Parks Service Three-site Park**, Greater Boston Area, 2019-present. Facilitate internal NPS process and stakeholder engagement effort to strengthen strategy for the three-site park comprised of the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site (NHS), the John Fitzgerald Kennedy NHS, and the Longfellow House – Washington's Headquarters NHS. Develop plans for the park's archives, interpretation, outreach, operations, facilities, and management.

**ConnectMaine Stakeholder Engagement for Development of New Grant Process for Broadband Investment**, 2020. Assisted ConnectMaine in developing strategy to revise its grant objectives and criteria, and elicit meaningful stakeholder input to inform those decisions. Facilitated a series of public meetings and synthesized stakeholder input into actionable feedback for incorporation into a new grant process.

## ORGANIZATIONAL TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

**Nexamp Solar Community Engagement Training**, 2022. Trained group of solar developers on skills to engage communities through the municipal regulatory process and expand their toolkit and facility using a suite of community engagement tools to strengthen support for projects. Guided learning on how, why, and when to use what community engagement tools to be most effective.

**C40 City Advisers Conflict Resolution and Mediation Training**, 2021-2022. Co-trainer for cohorts of City Advisers in the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia working with cities to develop and implement climate action plans. Training focused on conflict resolution and mediation skills, including preparing for and managing difficult conversations and meetings, negotiating solutions to meet organizational goals and those of other stakeholders, mediating conflicts and building consensus across departments, sectors, and communities involved in urban climate action.

**Green Climate Fund (GCF) Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) Training**, Songdo, South Korea, 2019-2020. Assisted in design and development of face-to-face and online training for GCF Direct Accredited Entities on the development, strengthening, and operation of grievance mechanisms in the context of international development, with a focus on issues relevant to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

### SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

**Pathways to Climate Resilience; Strategies for the Greater Boston Area.** 2019, co-authored with Ona Ferguson and Osamu Kumasaka. This report, written for the Barr Foundation, describes the current suite of leading activities on climate resilience at a municipal scale in eastern Massachusetts, outlines strategies, and identifies opportunities for action.

Cooper, Elizabeth S. **“Community Engagement 101: Why you need to involve the public, and how to do it well.”** Presented at: Cape Cod Commission One Cape Summit. 2016 June 24. Hyannis, Massachusetts.

Cooper, Elizabeth S. **“A Critical Analysis of the Role of the Climate Secretariat in UNFCCC Negotiations”** Paper presented at: Conflict Studies & Global Governance: The New Generation of Ideas. 2014 Oct. 31-Nov. 1. Boston, Massachusetts.

Aguirre, Jessica C. and Elizabeth Cooper. **“Evo Morales, Climate Change, and the Paradoxes of a Social-Movement Presidency.”** Latin American Perspectives 37 (2010): 238-44.

Insight posts about complex transboundary water conflicts for Water Diplomacy at Tufts:  
<http://blog.waterdiplomacy.org/>