



Elizabeth Cooper

Senior Mediator | Consensus Building Institute

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Mediator and facilitator skilled in process design, multi-party public dispute facilitation, collaborative problem solving, community engagement, and strategic planning on public, environmental, and planning issues. Particular expertise on substantively complex collaborative processes that require rigorous technical engagement, agile process management, and skilled facilitation to build trust and achieve durable solutions.

KEY SKILLS

- Process designer and facilitator: Designs and leads tailored multi-stakeholder, consensus-seeking processes on technically complex, contested public policy issues at local, state, and national levels; skilled at building trust and forging stable agreements across diverse interests.
- Subject matter depth: Strong working knowledge across climate adaptation and resilience, renewable energy siting, land use and transportation planning, marine resources, water resources, and agriculture.
- Clear and accessible communicator: Skilled at translating complex technical and scientific information for a range of audiences; develops accessible and engaging materials that support informed stakeholder participation.
- Equity-centered engagement: Deep experience designing inclusive engagement strategies that center environmental justice communities; builds community liaison networks and multilingual outreach to ensure underrepresented voices shape outcomes.
- Collaborative and adaptive: Builds strong working relationships with agency clients, community partners, and multi-disciplinary project teams; adept at managing complex, multi-workstream teams and engagements.

EXPERIENCE

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| 2016–Present | Consensus Building Institute
<i>Senior Mediator (previously Senior Associate, Associate)</i>
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. | Cambridge, MA |
| 2015–2016 | Water Diplomacy Research Center, Tufts University
<i>Research and Writing Associate, Water Diplomacy Blog</i>
Led research and writing on a series of papers applying complexity science and negotiation theory to analyze transboundary water disputes. | Medford, MA |
| 2013–2015 | Center for Governance and Sustainability, UMass Boston
<i>Research Associate</i> | Boston, MA |

Drafted policy briefs addressing environmental convention national reporting methods and effectiveness based on primary data analysis. Applied for grants and drafted project literature.

EDUCATION

2017	University of Massachusetts, Boston <i>Master of Arts, Conflict Resolution</i>	Boston, MA
2010	Mount Holyoke College <i>Bachelor of Arts, Critical Social Thought, cum laude</i>	South Hadley, MA

SELECTED PROJECTS

CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Climate Adaptation and Resilience Cost Study, 2025–2026. *Led stakeholder engagement process design for a first-of-its-kind statewide study of the projected costs of climate change impacts and adaptation in Minnesota, conducted for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.* Serving as stakeholder engagement lead on a team led by Industrial Economics, Incorporated (IEC), CBI designed a three-wave stakeholder engagement strategy to systematically ground-truth technical findings against Minnesota operational realities and local expertise. Each wave targeted a distinct point of inquiry — validating hazards and urgency in Wave 1; exploring adaptation actions, barriers, and costs in Wave 2; and gathering input on draft findings and the state's future role in adaptation in Wave 3. CBI developed the facilitation approach to ensure stakeholder feedback was gathered and systematically integrated into the technical analysis throughout the process.

Massachusetts EOEEA Resilience Processes: 2022 Climate Change Assessment, 2023 State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan, 2024 ResilientMass Metrics, and 2024 CZM ResilientCoasts Plan, 2021–2025. *Led stakeholder engagement across a multi-year suite of Massachusetts state climate resilience processes, from the statewide Climate Assessment through the development of the Commonwealth's first coastal resilience strategy.* Developed stakeholder engagement plans and community engagement materials to achieve a layered, inclusive approach. Convened a cohort of Community Liaisons from community-based organizations to serve as ambassadors and partners for on-the-ground engagement, especially with environmental justice communities. Subsequently designed engagement processes and facilitated stakeholder meetings with state agency partners, an Equity Advisory Group, external partners, and the public for the development of the Commonwealth's first set of climate resilience metrics and a holistic coastal resilience strategy.

Lincoln Institute of Land Policy / Climigration Network, 2020–2022. *Facilitated national dialogues among frontline community leaders grappling with whether and how to relocate in the face of severe climate impacts.* Worked with grassroots leaders representing underserved communities across the U.S. to facilitate learning across diverse contexts and 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. *Co-facilitated a community-driven research process providing economic analysis to inform long-term sea level rise decision making for two coastal communities sharing a barrier island.* Facilitated a community advisory group and led public engagement over the course of the project. The project, funded through the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program, provided economic and fiscal data on the costs and benefits of various management strategies for Plum Island in the face of sea level rise.

Climate Resilience Zoning Task Force, Cambridge, MA, 2019–2021. *Facilitated a 25-member multi-stakeholder committee that developed and reached consensus on zoning enhancements to increase climate resilience across a dense urban community.* The committee, which included developers, residents, labor, environmental experts, and city staff, used technical support to develop agreed-upon enhancements to city zoning addressing future risks from heat, precipitation, and sea level rise.

Resilient Mystic Collaborative, Mystic River Watershed, MA, 2020–2021. *Assisted in facilitating a regional collaborative bringing municipalities together to share knowledge and develop coordinated approaches to local-scale climate resilience.* The collaborative facilitates cross-jurisdictional learning on best practices and lessons learned, advocacy for improved policy and funding responses, and development of shared projects to address resilience challenges regionally.

Scituate 50-Year Coastal Vision, Scituate, MA, 2019–2020. *Co-facilitated a community-driven visioning process to help one of the most climate-vulnerable communities on the U.S. east coast develop a long-term resilient coastline strategy.* Developed and implemented an extensive community engagement plan reaching community members through neighborhood gatherings, online forums, and public meetings. Guided the community to weigh difficult tradeoffs and build a positive shared vision for its coast in 2070.

The Nature Conservancy – New York Climate Adaptation Team Strategy, New York State, 2019. *Assisted TNC in sharpening the strategic focus of its New York State Climate Adaptation Team through in-depth stakeholder assessment and facilitated strategy development.* The process was intended to strengthen the impact of the Conservancy's efforts to build resilience to flooding across New York State.

Climigration Network, 2019. *Facilitated the board and working groups of the Climigration Network, a community of practice on managed retreat and climate-induced migration.* Worked with the team to sharpen the Network's impact and catalyze communities, practitioners, and thought leaders confronting questions of climate change-induced displacement.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND CLIMATE MITIGATION

Massachusetts 2035 Clean Energy and Climate Plan, 2026–present. *Project manager and co-facilitator for the Commonwealth's ambitious next cycle of climate planning, leading facilitation in close integration with a multi-disciplinary technical modeling team.* Serve as co-facilitator and project manager, coordinating across a seven-organization consultant team. CBI's work focuses on designing and facilitating a multi-stakeholder process to support the development of the plan, including supporting facilitation of an Internal Advisory Committee and sector working groups, development of a decision-making framework to help EEA navigate key choices across technical pathways, and design and delivery of public and stakeholder engagement. The process integrates equity and environmental justice considerations throughout, coordinating closely with technical modeling and policy teams to ensure that stakeholder input meaningfully shapes analytical assumptions and emerging recommendations.

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) – Technical Working Group on Solar Development and Agricultural Lands, 2021–2026. *Facilitated a state-level technical working group navigating the tensions between solar energy development and agricultural land preservation in New York State.* Designed the process and facilitated discussions in which stakeholders openly communicate concerns, identify information needs, and learn of the actions each stakeholder group is taking to address these concerns. Facilitated specialist subcommittees — including the Solar Siting Scorecard and Regional Agronomic Impacts of Solar Energy committees — in which stakeholders advise NYSERDA on key policy and research questions.

NYSERDA Regional Clean Energy Hubs Facilitation Support, 2024–present. *Provide facilitation advisory support to NYSERDA's regional clean energy hubs program, helping Hub liaisons and leadership develop more effective collaborative processes.* The program is designed to help New Yorkers access and navigate opportunities in the clean energy economy, including clean energy careers, home improvements, and incentives to lower the cost of clean energy technologies like electric vehicles and heat pumps. Advised Hub liaisons in facilitation tools to advance dialogue and build consensus among Hub leaders and staff.

BOEM Gulf of Maine Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force Stakeholder Meetings, 2023. *Assisted in facilitating public stakeholder meetings gathering fishing industry input to inform the federal offshore wind leasing process in the Gulf of Maine.* BOEM's Gulf of Maine Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force uses stakeholder input to advise the bureau on the identification of Wind Energy Areas and the wind energy leasing process.

American Farmland Trust Smart Solar for New York Land Trusts, Technical Advisors & Farmers, 2023–2024. *Designed and facilitated a steering committee and multi-stakeholder process to guide the development of a tool helping land trusts, technical advisors, and farmers navigate solar siting decisions on farmland.* Conducted a stakeholder assessment, designed and facilitated steering committee meetings, and designed and facilitated listening sessions with key stakeholders across various regions of the state.

Cambridge Zero Emissions Transportation Plan (ZETP), 2022–2025. *Led facilitation and stakeholder engagement for the development of an equity-focused plan to reach net zero emissions from transportation in Cambridge, MA by 2050.* Formed and facilitated an advisory group of leaders from historically underrepresented and underserved communities to generate and build agreement on strategies and actions. Developed accessible content on complex transportation decarbonization issues, incorporated stakeholder feedback into an equity framework, and built commitment among diverse stakeholders to implement the Plan collaboratively.

LAND USE AND PLANNING

MassDOT Complete Streets Design Guide, 2026–present. *Lead stakeholder facilitation and consensus-building as part of a multi-disciplinary team developing Massachusetts' statewide Complete Streets Design Guide.* Serving as Stakeholder Coordination Lead for the Toole Design-led team, CBI is responsible for designing and managing a structured stakeholder engagement process to build broad ownership of and alignment around an integrated design guidance document for MassDOT. CBI's approach aims to foster mutual understanding across user groups — including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and motorists — and guide productive conversations about how to balance competing needs and allocate limited roadway space in ways that advance MassDOT's equity, safety, and multimodal goals.

Massachusetts Housing Partnership Coordinated Commonwealth, 2026–present. *Project manager and facilitator for a cross-sectoral stakeholder engagement and assessment process to help MHP develop a framework for coordinating state policy across housing, transportation, climate, and environment.* Leading a stakeholder assessment process — conducting in-depth expert interviews and facilitated focus group discussions with practitioners and leaders across sectors — to validate and refine cross-sectoral planning imperatives, surface areas of alignment and conflict, and identify tools, policies, and actions to advance progress across multiple imperatives. Synthesizing findings into recommendations that MHP can use to drive its programs, technical assistance, and policy advocacy.

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission – Housing Production Plan Updates, Merrimack Valley, MA, 2023–2025. *Partnered with a regional planning commission to design stakeholder engagement and facilitate a process to develop community-supported housing production strategies.* Designed

stakeholder engagement strategy and facilitated regional and municipal meetings. The process incorporated community input in the development of targeted short-term actions and long-term strategies to increase housing production, especially of affordable housing, and build community support for action.

Cycling Safety Ordinance Advisory Committee, Cambridge, MA, 2022–present. *Facilitates an advisory working group helping the City of Cambridge implement an ambitious and contentious ordinance to rapidly expand its separated bike-lane network.* Brings together diverse interest groups to advise the City on implementation and engagement strategies. The group provides guidance on community notification, public outreach, project evaluation, community feedback, and strategies to enhance and mitigate the land use and traffic impacts of projects.

Port Infrastructure Working Group, Cambridge, MA, 2021–present. *Facilitates a community working group guiding priorities for infrastructure improvements to address climate-induced flooding and heat impacts in Cambridge's Port neighborhood.* Designs and executes a broad community engagement strategy to ensure that infrastructure improvements are responsive to community needs and that diverse neighborhood voices shape investment priorities.

Lower Mystic Regional Transportation Working Group, Somerville, Boston, and Everett, MA, 2016–2018. *Provided facilitation and community engagement for a multi-agency, multi-city process to develop and prioritize multi-modal transportation improvements in a complex regional corridor.* The process integrated land use and transportation modeling and future scenarios, extensive public engagement, and robust mobility modeling to develop and prioritize actionable strategies across three cities.

Envision Cambridge Citywide Plan, Cambridge, MA, 2016. *Contributed facilitation support to the development of Cambridge's first-ever comprehensive citywide plan.* Planned and facilitated public workshops and focus groups and provided consultation on meeting materials and other engagement efforts for the Envision Cambridge planning process.

ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Nature Conservancy – State of Living Shorelines Permitting in New England, 2023. *Designed and facilitated focused conversations and workshops to improve understanding of regulatory and ecological issues around living shoreline approaches across New England.* Brought together regulators, practitioners, and researchers to clarify regulatory issues and opportunities, ecological impacts of habitat conversion, and possible tradeoffs under future conditions. Synthesized and shares findings in a written report.

Charles River Watershed Association – Muddy River Watershed Vision Plan, Greater Boston, MA, 2023–2025. *Designed and facilitated a multi-stakeholder process to develop a comprehensive long-term vision for the Muddy River watershed, the most polluted tributary of the Charles River.* Engaged municipal and state agencies, the business sector, community-based organizations, and others to incorporate strategies around water quality, climate resilience, environmental justice, recreation, and habitat restoration into a coherent, actionable vision.

Vermont Soil Conservation Practice and Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) Working Group, Montpelier, VT, 2019–2021. *Co-facilitated a state-convened working group developing recommendations for financial incentives to encourage farmers to adopt soil health and conservation practices.* The Working Group, convened by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets, developed recommendations for PES program design and strategies to catalyze a paradigm shift toward recognizing and valuing land stewardship in Vermont agriculture. Facilitated meetings and webinars on PES program design, improved soil health practices, and stormwater and carbon co-benefits.

Newtown Creek Superfund Site Community Advisory Group, Brooklyn and Queens, NY, 2019–2020. *Assisted in facilitating a community advisory group providing EPA with diverse stakeholder input on the remediation of a heavily industrialized Superfund site.* The group represented a wide range of interests and provided input on the development and implementation of plans to remediate water, soil, and sediment contamination from multiple industrialized sites along Newtown Creek.

Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site Community Advisory Group, Fort Edward, NY, 2019. *Assisted in facilitating a 25-member advisory group providing EPA input on implementation of the dredging and sediment transport Record of Decision for PCB-contaminated Hudson River sediments.* The group brought together diverse and often divergent interests — including environmental advocates, residents, and industry representatives — to provide input on implementing the Consent Decree to remediate PCB contamination from General Electric manufacturing operations.

Housatonic River PCB Cleanup Citizens' Coordinating Council, Pittsfield, MA, 2019–present. *Assists in facilitating a 25-member council providing EPA with community and stakeholder input on the remediation of PCB-contaminated sites along the Housatonic River.* The Council brings together diverse interests to provide ongoing input on the implementation of the Consent Decree to remediate river sediment and soil contamination from General Electric manufacturing facilities.

COASTS, OCEANS, AND MARINE RESOURCES

National Marine Fisheries Service Take Reduction Team Program, 2020–present. *Co-facilitates four of NMFS's federally mandated Take Reduction Teams, supporting consensus-based recommendations to reduce incidental marine mammal takes in commercial fisheries.* Designs and facilitates consensus-seeking processes for the Atlantic Large Whale, Bottlenose Dolphin, Harbor Porpoise, and West Coast Take Reduction Teams. Each team is charged with recommending management strategies to reduce incidental marine mammal take due to fishing industry impacts — recommendations that are written into federal regulations. Take Reduction Teams are mandated under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Aquaculture Stewardship Council Fish Welfare Standard, 2020–2022. *Facilitated a multi-stakeholder consensus-building process to develop common standards for fish welfare in aquaculture.* Guided deliberations among environmental and advocacy groups, aquaculture producers, and researchers toward shared standards with broad credibility across the sector.

Wolastoq First Nations and Federal Watershed Collaboration, Maine and New Brunswick, 2019–2021. *Assisted in facilitating a cross-border collaboration between the Maliseet First Nations and Tribe and Canadian and U.S. federal agencies to strengthen cooperation for salmon and ecosystem restoration in the St. John River watershed.* The process focused on building information sharing, mutual learning, and a strategic plan for collaborative action to restore salmon populations and watershed ecosystems across the international boundary.

WATER RESOURCES

Somerville/Cambridge Combined Sewer Overflow Long-Term Control Plan, Greater Boston, 2022–2024. *Co-facilitated community engagement for a multi-city, multi-agency collaborative updating a joint combined sewer overflow long-term control plan, with a strong environmental justice focus.* Develops innovative community engagement strategies to integrate meaningful input at key points in this technical planning process. Designs engagement tools including surveys and focus groups and facilitates public meetings with live interpretation in up to eight languages, with focused attention on the environmental justice communities most impacted by CSO releases.

USEPA Southeast New England Program: Massachusetts and Rhode Island Stormwater Accounting and Tracking Project, 2021–2022. *Facilitated a regional working group building*

municipal capacity to track and account for stormwater management practices across Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Brought together municipal engineers and planners, EPA Region 1 NPDES staff, MassDEP and RI DEM stormwater program staff, and technical consultants to assist municipalities 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 a capacity assessment across two Chesapeake Bay watersheds to determine opportunities and needs for strengthening multi-actor collaboration to achieve long-term water quality goals. Synthesized findings and developed recommendations to a pooled funding initiative to guide future grant-making strategy for improving regional water quality collaboration.*

Mystic River Watershed Initiative, Greater Boston Area, 2019–2020. *Supported EPA Region 1 and the collaborative of non-profits and agencies working to clean up the Mystic River Watershed, providing facilitation and convening support for a multi-stakeholder water quality initiative. Led an in-depth collaborative effort to bring regulators, stormwater experts, and municipal leaders together to share information and develop concrete work plans; assisted with facilitation of large events; and provided meeting summaries and other facilitation support.*

Dams and Sediment in the Hudson River, Hudson River Valley, NY, 2019. *Assisted in facilitating an advisory committee for a multi-disciplinary collaborative research project studying sediment transport when dams are removed. The CBI team managed overall project coordination and facilitated regular advisory committee meetings at which regulators, designers, and local officials shared concerns and goals. The project generated field data from six impoundments and models of sediment transport.*

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NOAA Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office Protected Resources Division Organizational Assessment and Strategic Plan, Gloucester, MA, 2023–2025. *Designed and facilitated a division-wide organizational health assessment and strategic planning process for a federal fisheries management division. The assessment identified recommendations for improving the division's organizational structure, systems, and management practices to support an effective, efficient, and well-supported workforce.*

Expansion Plan Implementation and Organizational Restructuring – Massachusetts Department of Ecological Restoration, Boston, MA, 2019–present. *Supports division leadership in implementing an organizational expansion plan, including strategic resource allocation, priority-setting, and staff integration. Develops and implements consultation approaches to engage staff and ensure their input shapes division planning; assists in aligning new positions and expanded resources with strategic goals.*

'Our Path Forward' Strategy – Boston Area National Park Service Three-Site Park, Greater Boston Area, 2019–present. *Facilitated an internal NPS process and stakeholder engagement effort to strengthen strategy for a three-site park comprising the Frederick Law Olmsted, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and Longfellow House – Washington's Headquarters National Historic Sites. Developed plans for the park's archives, interpretation, outreach, operations, facilities, and management through a facilitated process that integrated staff, partner, and stakeholder perspectives.*

ConnectMaine Stakeholder Engagement for Broadband Investment Grant Process, 2020. *Assisted ConnectMaine in revising its grant objectives and criteria through a meaningful public stakeholder engagement process. Facilitated a series of public meetings and synthesized stakeholder input into actionable feedback for incorporation into a revised grant process for broadband investment across Maine.*

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

New Leaf Energy Conflict Resolution and Community Engagement Training, 2026. *Design and deliver a customized training for New Leaf Energy's development operations team on conflict management, community engagement, and navigating difficult stakeholder interactions.* Design and deliver training to strengthen the team's capacity to engage communities effectively and constructively through the development and permitting process for renewable energy projects. Worked with New Leaf's team to tailor the training through intake interviews, CBI designed a program covering conflict management fundamentals; strategies for navigating difficult conversations and managing an angry public; process design best practices for community engagement; teaming strategies; and role plays to practice the above skills.

Yale School of the Environment Professional Skills Module, 2024-present. *Co-design and facilitate professional skills training modules for graduate students at the Yale School of the Environment on negotiation, stakeholder engagement, facilitation, and consensus building.* The training equips emerging environmental professionals with practical skills for navigating the complex, multi-stakeholder settings they will encounter in their careers. Topics include principles of mutual gains negotiation, effective stakeholder engagement strategies, facilitation fundamentals, and consensus building in contested environmental contexts.

Nexamp Solar Community Engagement Training, 2022. *Designed and delivered training for solar developers on community engagement skills and tools for navigating the municipal regulatory process.* Guided learning on how, why, and when to use a suite of community engagement approaches most effectively to strengthen community support for solar projects.

C40 City Advisers Conflict Resolution and Mediation Training, 2021–2022. *Co-trainer for cohorts of City Advisers across four global regions on conflict resolution and mediation skills for urban climate action.* Training cohorts in the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia focused on managing difficult conversations, negotiating across departments and sectors, and building consensus among the diverse stakeholders involved in urban climate action planning.

Green Climate Fund (GCF) Independent Redress Mechanism Training, Songdo, South Korea, 2019–2020. *Assisted in designing and delivering training for GCF Direct Accredited Entities on the development and operation of grievance mechanisms in international development contexts.* Training covered the design, strengthening, and operation of grievance mechanisms relevant to climate change mitigation and adaptation work, delivered in both face-to-face and online formats.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

"Pathways to Climate Resilience: Strategies for the Greater Boston Area." Co-authored with Ona Ferguson and Osamu Kumasaka. Barr Foundation, 2019. Describes leading activities on climate resilience at a municipal scale in eastern Massachusetts and identifies opportunities for action.

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

Cooper, Elizabeth S. **"A Critical Analysis of the Role of the Climate Secretariat in UNFCCC Negotiations."** Conflict Studies & Global Governance: The New Generation of Ideas Conference. October–November 2014. 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.

Water Diplomacy at Tufts – Insight posts on complex transboundary water conflicts:

<http://blog.waterdiplomacy.org/>