

# Regional Climate Collaborative for the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord (SuAsCo) Rivers Watershed

Community Meeting #1 | March 25, 2026



# WELCOME, FROM THE TOWN OF CONCORD



# AGENDA

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- About the SuAsCo Watershed
- Project Overview & Timeline
- Engagement Update
- Small Group Discussion
- Closing & Next Steps



# CLIMATE CHANGE & THE WATERSHED

Climate change will impact the watershed and its municipalities.

Flooding will increase risk to critical infrastructure such as roads, natural resources will be lost, and stormwater will be challenging to manage

Drought will impact water supply, aquatic habitats, and biodiversity



# ABOUT THE SuAsCo CLIMATE COLLABORATIVE

This is a two-year project to:

- Establish a framework for regional coordination and collaboration
- Build regional capacity around climate resilience and water resources management across the communities of the SuAsCo Rivers watershed.



# PROJECT PARTNERS

## **A collaboration between:**

- Town of Concord
- MAPC
- OARS 3 Rivers watershed organization (Sudbury, Assabet, Concord Rivers)



## **With participation from:**

- Ten partners serving on the Steering Committee (munis, CBO, youth)
- Community-based organizations (local and regional)
- Environmental Justice (EJ) members and organizations
- All residents in the watershed

# REGIONAL SCALE ACTIONS

**Enhancing Regional Coordination** - Establishing a regional climate collaborative fosters collaboration among municipalities, organizations, and stakeholders, ensuring a more unified and strategic approach to climate adaptation.

**Identifying and Protecting Critical Infrastructure** - Conducting a vulnerability assessment helps prioritize infrastructure improvements, reducing the risk of failures due to extreme weather and other climate-related challenges.

**Data-Driven Decision-Making** - Developing a robust data analysis and modeling framework provides communities with the information needed to make informed decisions, allocate resources effectively, and implement targeted climate resilience policies and solutions.

**Proactive Adaptation** - Addressing vulnerabilities before they become crises helps communities minimize disruptions, protect public health and safety, and reduce long-term costs associated with climate impacts.

**Equity and Inclusion** - A regional approach ensures that solutions are designed with Environmental Justice (EJ) communities and vulnerable populations in mind, promoting fair access to climate adaptation resources and support

# Project Timeline

FY26

FY27

## Task 1: Project Kick-off, Management, and Report

- Kick off meeting with Project Team and EEA MVP Coordinator
- Bi-weekly Project Team meetings

## Task 3: Develop a Scope of Work for A Vulnerability Assessment of the Watershed's Critical Infrastructure & Assets

- Gather feedback/conduct background information on the options and feasibility of watershed-scale data analyses
- Develop and release a Request for Proposal
- Review and select service provider

## Task 5: Project Management and Reporting

- Participate in bi-weekly Project Team meetings to check in on progress, status, and action items
- Support with drafting the final case study for the project

## Task 7: Develop the SuAsCo Climate Collaborative's Framework & Workplan

- Draft and Finalize the Collaborative's Near-term Action Plan
- Develop Implementation Roadmaps for Priority Actions

September 2025 - June 2026

July 2026 - June 2027

We are here!

## Task 2: Establish the SuAsCo Climate Collaborative

- Identify Stakeholders of SuAsCo Watershed
- Convene the collaborative's steering committee meeting 1 and 2
- Host community meetings 1 and 2

## Task 4: Develop the SuAsCo Climate Collaborative's Framework & Workplan

- Review and compile planning and implementation efforts across municipalities to date
- Draft and finalize the Collaborative's organizational framework

## Task 6: Establish the SuAsCo Climate Collaborative

- Convene the Collaborative's Steering Committee Meeting 3 -6
- Host Community Meeting 3 - 4

## Task 8: Develop a Scope of Work for Identified Data Analysis Needs

# ENGAGEMENT



## **Focus Groups**

- 2 with municipalities
- 2 with community-based organizations
- Conversations with youth

## **Steering Committee**

- 6 municipal representatives
- 3 community-based organization staff
- 1 Youth member

## **Community Meetings**

- 4 community meetings
  - **tonight!**
  - May/June 2026
  - Fall & Winter 2026

# ENGAGEMENT SO FAR

## Municipal

- Acton
- Bedford
- Billerica
- Boxborough
- Carlisle
- Concord
- Harvard
- Holliston
- Hopkinton
- Hudson
- Lincoln
- Littleton
- Marlborough
- Maynard
- Natick
- Sherborn
- Shrewsbury
- Sudbury
- Tewksbury
- Wayland
- Westborough
- Weston
- NMCOG
- CMRPC

## Non-Municipal

- Energize Acton
- Green Acton Water Committee
- Chelmsford Conservation Commission
- Concord Climate Action Committee
- Former Framingham Climate Action Team
- Framingham Sustainability Committee
- Energize Framingham
- Harvard Climate Initiative Committee
- Green Hudson
- Hudson Land Trust
- Lincoln Conservation Commission
- Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust
- Maynard Sustainability Committee & Tree Corps
- Green Maynard
- Ashland Residents for Equity & Action
- Maynard Assabet River Coalition
- Wayland Climate Committee
- Weston Forest and Trail Committee MetroWest Climate Solutions
- Sudbury Valley Trustees MetroWest Conservation Alliance
- SuAsCo Wild & Scenic River Stewardship Council
- The Better Future Project
- CREW (Communities Responding to Extreme Weather)
- Acton/Boxborough Resource Force Club
- Middlesex School – Concord
- Framingham H.S. Environmental Club

# KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM ENGAGEMENT

*There was overwhelming support and demand for regional coordination and synthesis which is a main function of the collaborative.*

**Flooding Is the Dominant, Unifying Climate Concern** as it was repeatedly cited as a public safety and watershed-wide issue, in addition to being a long-term infrastructure challenge

**Aging Infrastructure + Climate Change = Compounding Risk** as aging municipal systems become increasingly vulnerable to our current and future climate conditions, especially culverts and road-stream crossings, stormwater and drainage systems, water and wastewater infrastructure located in flood-prone areas

**Funding Constraints Are a Primary Barrier to Action** due to competing priorities, rising costs, heavy reliance on grants, and lack of local funding streams.

**Strong Demand for Watershed-Scale Data and Tools** to support municipalities with decision-making, grant competitiveness, and public communication

**Vulnerable Populations Are Not Being Reached Effectively** so creative and equitable engagement approaches need to be prioritized. Priority populations include environmental justice communities, seniors and people with mobility challenges, low-income households, immigrant and ESL communities, rural residents and those on private wells

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**QUESTIONS?**

# Small Group Discussion

*Use the flipcharts at your table!*

- What are some of your top climate concerns? What are your priorities for managing these concerns?
- What are equity considerations that the collaborative should be keeping in mind?
  - *i.e. how to reach people who aren't here, priorities that benefit those most burdened by the climate change impacts to our watershed, etc.*
- What excites you most about the potential for this regional collaborative?
- What do you think the collaborative's priorities should be for the next 1 to 3 to 5 years?



# WE WANT TO KEEP HEARING FROM YOU!

- Stay tuned for the next community meeting!
- Connect us to the voices who aren't here today!
  - ✓ Email Heather Conkerton to set up a conversation:  
[hconkerton@oars3rivers.org](mailto:hconkerton@oars3rivers.org)

- Visit our website



*Thank you!*