



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Richard A. Davey, MassDOT Secretary and CEO and MPO Chairman
Karl H. Quackenbush, Executive Director, MPO Staff

MEMORANDUM

DATE October 11, 2012
TO Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
FROM Paul Regan, Chair
MPO Regional Transportation Advisory Council Review Committee
RE Report of the Committee

This memorandum is the report of the MPO's Regional Transportation Advisory Council Review Committee regarding its work addressing MPO concerns about the Advisory Council's 2012 election of officers and alleged unprofessional behavior at Advisory Council meetings. It transmits the recommendations of the committee and the committee's request for approval by the MPO of the recommendations and subsequent action by the Advisory Council.

Background

At the September 20, 2012, MPO meeting, members discussed concerns about this year's election of officers for the Regional Transportation Advisory Council. Complaints had been registered about how the election was handled on the day of the election at the Advisory Council meeting of September 12, 2012. Complaints had also been received about the conduct of some Advisory Council members, both at the September 12 Advisory Council meeting and at other meetings. There are concerns that these problems are negatively affecting participation on the Advisory Council.

MPO members expressed their concerns about these problems and decided they should be addressed. The Advisory Council is responsible for providing robust and broad-based public input to the MPO. The organization must provide an open environment for the sharing of diverse views in a professional and civil manner in order to enable it to provide the needed input to the MPO. The Advisory Council is a voting member of the MPO and therefore reflects on the MPO. The process for selecting the individual representing the Advisory Council who is to sit at the MPO must meet MPO standards for fairness, transparency, and civility.

The MPO appointed a committee to review the Advisory Council's election process and make recommendations for solving the problems. This committee met on October 4, 2012, and discussed the election process and issues raised, as well as an issue that relates to the committee's main charge – the question of whether certain entities can be voting members of the Advisory Council.

Advisory Council Review Committee Meeting Report

Paul Regan, Chair of the MPO Advisory Council Review Committee, opened the meeting and reviewed the background and the charge of the committee.

Laura Wiener, former Advisory Council Chair and Chair of the Advisory Council Nominating Committee, described the Advisory Council's election process and its implementation this year. The committee discussed the events in detail and reached the conclusion that the root of the problem is that, currently, nominations can be taken from the floor on the day of the election. This allows a candidate to be nominated and elected without the full notification of members not in attendance. The committee agreed on recommendations, which are listed below.

In addition, committee members discussed comments on the uncivil tone of the discussion at the election of officers. It was reported that this tone has emerged in past discussions from time to time. Committee members strongly affirmed that the Advisory Council needs to be a welcoming place and a platform for the safe expression of many views and voices.

Steve Olanoff, Advisory Council Chair, stated that he will undertake the steps necessary to implement the recommendations from the MPO on the election process. He will also take action to ensure that future discussions at the Advisory Council maintain a professional and respectful tone.

Recommendations

The Advisory Council Review Committee recommends that the MPO ask the Advisory Council to amend its bylaws to establish the following election process:

- The Advisory Council will begin its election process each year at its July meeting.
- The Nominating Committee (led by the most recent past Chair) will be convened at that meeting.
- The Nominating Committee will solicit nominations for Chair and Vice Chair from the Advisory Council members.
- At the September Advisory Council meeting, the Nominating Committee will announce the names of all candidates.
- The Nominating Committee may identify a slate of officers that it recommends.
- Nominations from the floor will be accepted at the September meeting.
- Nominations will be closed as of the adjournment of the September meeting.
- All candidates will submit a statement of candidacy for circulation to the full membership.
- The election of officers will be held at the October Advisory Council meeting.
- Elected officers will take their seats at the November Advisory Council meeting.

The committee asks for the MPO's consideration and approval of these recommendations.

Additional Issue

The committee also discussed municipal MPO membership and the effect it has on eligibility for Advisory Council voting membership, including whether the MAPC Subregions could be voting members of the Advisory Council, and if so, whether some seated municipal MPO members could be voting members of the Advisory Council if they were representing a Subregion there. (The Advisory Council bylaws state that MPO members may not be voting members of the Advisory Council.) The questions were pursued but were left unresolved, and no next steps were identified.

Attendance

All members of the committee were in attendance:

Paul Regan, Chair

Eric Bourassa, MAPC

Richard Canale, Town of Lexington

Calli Cenizal, MassDOT

Steve Olanoff, Advisory Council, Chair

Laura Wiener, Town of Arlington, and Chair, Advisory Council Nominating Committee

Member of the public in attendance:

Monica Tibbitts, Advisory Council Vice Chair

Staff in attendance:

Pam Wolfe, MPO Staff

PDW/pdw