

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

Survey questions to TIP contacts regarding the MPO Municipal Elections Process

Below text is from the Boston MPO Certification Report from Federal Highway and Transit Administrations:

The BRMPO should review voting procedures for BRMPO Board seats to ensure that they effectively engage all communities in the region and result in effective representation.

ELECTION OF MPO MEMBERS The MOU establishes 22 voting seats divided into two groups, permanent and elected members. There are ten permanent voting seats: three are from MassDOT, two from the City of Boston, and the remaining permanent voting seats are held by the MBTA, the MBTA Advisory Board, MassPort, MAPC, and the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC). The 12 elected voting Transportation Planning Certification Review of the Boston Region MPO Page 27 members are cities and towns drawn from the 97 municipalities that comprise the BRMPO, not including the City of Boston. These elected municipal voting members are comprised of two at large cities, two at-large towns, and eight cities and towns elected to represent each of the eight MAPC sub-regional groups. FHWA and FTA are ex-officio, non-voting members. According to the MOU, MAPC and the MBTA Advisory Board jointly administer elections. Nominees for the elected municipal seats are the chief elected official of the municipality that will hold the seat. A candidate must receive nominations from at least five chief elected officials in the Boston region. Each chief elected officer in the region may vote for one candidate municipality for each open seat; consequently, municipalities are not only voting for representative for their sub-region and the at-large seats, but for all sub-regional representatives. The Review Team notes that of the 96 BRMPO municipalities (excluding Boston) only 17 have served in elected seats on the BRMPO Board in the past 21 years. Two communities of these 96 have been on the BRMPO for 21 years, four others for over ten years, and nine for six years or more. All seats were contested in only one year (1999); for 11 years no seats were contested, including a five-year period from 2012 to 2017 when there was no change in membership of the BRMPO. Seven municipalities have run for BRMPO seats and never won. The Review Team notes that in the past 21 years only 17% of the eligible municipalities have held seats on the BRMPO. **FINDINGS Recommendation:** The BRMPO should develop an operations plan, as called for in its MOU. An operations plan should clarify roles and responsibilities among BRMPO members and staff, particularly among CTPS, MAPC, and MassDOT, pertaining to collaboration, communication, work assignments, and products. Additionally, it should provide further clarification on the roles of the Chair and Vice Chair, define officer roles for sub-committees, and identify other necessary processes to support an effective 3C process and facilitate BRMPO operations as the regional forum for transportation decision-making.

Recommendation: The BRMPO should review voting procedures for BRMPO Board seats to ensure that they effectively engage all communities in the region and result in effective representation.

Draft Survey Questions

1. Does your municipality currently participate in the Boston MPO elections? (i.e. serves currently or in the past, has run for the Board, endorsed another community or voted in the Boston MPO elections)

- – Yes
- – No

2. Are you aware of the Boston MPO Elections and receive information each year regarding the election nominating process and voting rules?

- – Yes
- – No

3. Do you think that these elections are open, transparent, and fair?

- – Yes
- – No
- – Comments:

4. What do you think are the biggest challenges for municipalities to seek election to the Boston MPO Choose top two:

- – Nomination process
- – Time commitment to serve on MPO
- – Lack of content knowledge
- – Unclear understanding of what MPO does
- – Uncomfortable challenging incumbent municipal members
- – Unsure
- – Convince the Chief Elected Official to run for a seat on the Boston MPO

- – There are no challenges
- – Other

5. Do you feel that you understand the role of the elected members of the Boston MPO?

- – Yes
- – No

6. Do you feel that your local or regional transportation concerns are understood at the Boston MPO?

- – Yes
- – No

7. The Boston MPO currently elects members to represent eight of the MAPC subregions, two At-Large City seats and two At-Large Town seats. All 96 municipalities in the Boston MPO region can vote for these seats. The Boston MPO adopted this process to encourage the elected members to feel that they are representing the best interests of the entire MPO region, and not just the interests of the subregion they represent, or the interests of towns or cities.

Do you agree that the current process promotes regional planning and that the Boston MPO should continue it? Or do you feel it is not an effective regional planning processes and that the Boston MPO should allow the subregional seats to be voted on by just the municipalities from that subregion, only cities vote for the At-Large City seats, and only towns vote for the At-Large Town seats?

- – Yes, I agree that the current Boston MPO process promotes regional planning and should not change.
- – No, the current process is not effective at promoting regional planning and should change.

8. Currently, MPO municipal members serve three-year terms, and can run again after their term expires. Do you think term limits for the municipally elected seats would encourage more cities and towns to seek election to the MPO?

- – Yes, term limits would encourage more turnover
- – No, not enough municipalities have the bandwidth to be elected MPO members

9. What issues, comments or recommendations would like to share with the Boston MPO to help improve the selection process for municipal representation on the Boston MPO?

10. What is your role in your municipality?

- – DPW staff
- – Municipal Planning staff
- – Town Manager/Town Administrator
- – Local Elected Official
- – Chief Elected Official
- – Volunteer
- – Other