



BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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

November 7, 2012

Mr. Steven Olanoff
Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Mr. Olanoff:

The purpose of this letter is to transmit to you the recommendations of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (Boston Region MPO) regarding proposed procedures for future Regional Transportation Advisory Council ("Advisory Council") elections and guidelines for Advisory Council membership.

Because the Advisory Council is now a voting member of the Boston Region MPO, the actions of the Advisory Council reflect on the MPO. We believe that this confers additional responsibilities on the Advisory Council. We would like the Advisory Council to operate under processes that reflect high standards for fairness and civility. As you know, concerns were recently raised at a Boston Region MPO meeting regarding events that occurred at the Advisory Council's annual election. In response, the MPO convened a special committee that discussed this issue and submitted a report to the MPO. At its October 18, 2012, meeting, the Boston Region MPO approved the committee's recommendations, which are designed to ensure that future Advisory Council elections are conducted using a process more consistent with the MPO's process.

The Boston Region MPO asks that the Advisory Council revise its election procedures by adopting the following committee recommendations into its bylaws:

- 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 nominees and may recommend a specific slate of officers.
 - Nominations from the floor will be accepted.
 - 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 Advisory Council 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.

At its October 18, 2012, meeting, the Boston Region MPO also discussed the issue of who can be a voting member of the Advisory Council. The MPO discussed this matter at length. It is our belief that, for the Advisory Council to remain an independent voice that provides fresh views for the MPO's discussions and decisions, voting members of the MPO should not also have a vote on the Council. The Boston Region MPO is concerned that:

- If entities or individuals who vote on the Boston Region MPO can also vote on the Advisory Council, their ability to vote twice might give the impression that they have more influence over certain MPO decisions than other MPO members.
- If an individual who sits on the Boston Region MPO were to represent a different entity on the Advisory Council, there might be confusion about which entity the individual was representing when voting as a member of the Council, and which entity the individual was representing when voting as a member of the MPO.
- If subregions could vote on the Advisory Council, and the individual representing the subregion on the Advisory Council was a different person from the individual representing the subregion on the MPO, additional confusion would be created.
- If a quorum of the Boston Region MPO were to attend an Advisory Council meeting (which could happen if MPO members were also members of the Advisory Council), the MPO would be at risk of violating the state's Open Meeting Law.

Therefore, the Boston Region MPO supports the Advisory Council's current bylaw that says, "All members of the MPO shall be non-voting members of the Advisory Council." In addition, after extensive discussion at its October 18, 2012, meeting, the MPO took a series of votes establishing the following actions:

- That the Boston Region MPO recommend to the Advisory Council that individual MPO members and their alternates should be prohibited from being voting members of the Advisory Council.
- That the Boston Region MPO recommend to the Advisory Council that municipal members of the MPO should be prohibited from being voting members of the Advisory Council.
- That the Boston Region MPO recommend to the Advisory Council that the subregions should be prohibited from being voting members of the Advisory Council.

In summary, the Boston Region MPO's position is that no entity on the MPO and no person representing an entity on the MPO (except the Advisory Council Chair) should be a voting member of the Advisory Council. The MPO strongly recommends that the Advisory Council also adopt this position (as detailed in the above list of recommendations that the MPO voted for) and incorporate it into its bylaws.

The Boston Region MPO takes these matters and recommendations very seriously and advises the Advisory Council to do so as well. We look forward to hearing a report from you on how the Advisory Council will incorporate the MPO's recommendations into its bylaws, procedures, and practices.

Sincerely,



David J. Mohler, Chair
Boston Region MPO

DJM/PDW

cc: Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization