MPO BOARD & COMMITTEE BEST PRACTICES

Quick Guide for Effective Member Engagement & Collaboration

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) governing boards and committees play a critical role in guiding regional transportation planning and project prioritization. This quick guide highlights strategies and best practices to support productive meetings, effective governance, and strong partnerships.

BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION

Define Clear Roles and Responsibilities

- Ensure MPO bylaws clearly establish the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority of the governing board and committees.
- Formalize and document official meeting procedures in the MPO's bylaws or policies and procedures.
- Consider delegating decision-making authority to the MPO Executive Director or an Executive Committee to take action on time-sensitive matters between governing board meetings.
- Periodically evaluate whether committees should be restructured, modified, or discontinued.

Prepare Members for Success

- Develop an onboarding program for new members that explains the fundamentals of the MPO planning process.
- Schedule one-on-one meetings between MPO staff and committee/board members, when appropriate.
- Encourage participation in the MPOAC Institute and other relevant trainings.
- Explain how members can guide MPO plans, programs, and priorities.

Keep Members Engaged

- Explain why each agenda item matters to members and their communities.
- Communicate with members using plain language and minimal technical jargon.
- Update members between meetings through phone calls, emails, or newsletters.
- Use workshops and one-on-one meetings for complex or unfamiliar topics.
- Give committee chairs opportunities to present recommendations directly to the governing board.

MAKING MEETINGS & PARTNERSHIPS WORK

Run Efficient and Productive Meetings

Before the meeting

- Coordinate early with the chair, staff liaison, FDOT liaison, and presenters.
- Brief members on complex or potentially sensitive agenda items.
- Provide agendas and materials a week in advance, at minimum.
- Develop clear and concise presentations with consistent formats.
- Clearly identify the action needed for each decision item.

During the meeting

- Follow a consistent agenda and meeting structure.
- Place action items before informational items when appropriate.
- Keep discussion focused on the item under consideration.
- Use consent items appropriately.
- Ensure the chair knows when and how to redirect discussion and keep the meeting on topic.

After the meeting

- After committee meetings, summarize recommendations and actions for the board.
- After board meetings, distribute meeting minutes and action items as soon as possible.
- Schedule additional meetings or workshops for items that require more discussion.

Coordinate and Collaborate with Partners

- Meet members where they are - attend their board, council, and commission meetings.
- Establish recurring coordination meetings or calls between FDOT and MPO staff.
- Discuss emerging issues and potential questions before public or formal meetings.
- Participate in statewide and district-level peer exchanges.
- Engage relevant partners based on the meeting agenda, such as state agencies, public transportation providers, schools, rail agencies, tolling authorities, and community organizations.
- Share successful practices, onboarding resources, sample bylaws, and engagement tools across MPOs.