

COMMUTER RAIL COMMUNITIES COALITION

Draft Considerations for Charter, Governance and Structure

Updated October 19, 2018

Charter

Massachusetts depends on a safe, reliable, robust and affordable transit system to grow our economy and to meet the daily needs of residents and workers. The MBTA commuter rail system is an important piece of this system, and one that residents, commuters, and employers rely on every day.

Often, the communities served by the commuter rail system cannot speak “with one voice,” because municipalities need to focus on their own individual line or station, all of which are scattered throughout a very large region. Our goal is to assist communities that depend on commuter rail services to develop a unified vision and voice, and to advocate together for more resources and improved operations.

The Coalition seeks to identify concerns related to near-term issues around budgets, service, and operations, identify ideas and best practices related to commuter rail issues and opportunities, and consider new approaches to the delivery of intercity rail services that can help the Commonwealth as well as our region to address important long-term planning and investment decisions, which will advance the strength and future of our MBTA rail system.

Guiding Coalition Objectives

- *Foster cooperative planning efforts among commuter rail municipalities.*
- *Support an agenda for action and advocacy on legislative, regulatory, programmatic, and budgetary issues, transportation visioning, and improvements to our region’s rail system to maintain quality of life and economic prosperity.*
- *Advance innovative partnerships among municipalities, MassDOT, the MBTA and Regional Transit Authorities, the Commuter Rail Operator, Regional Planning Agencies, Transportation Management Associations, business, institutions, community-based organizations, and others to advance regional mobility, job access and overall connectivity.*
- *Address issues related to transit-dependent populations, such as youth, seniors, people without cars, and people with disabilities.*

See separate document for draft priorities for the Coalition.

Governance (decision-making process)

- The Coalition shall meet quarterly, or more frequently if needed at the call of the co-chairs.
- Voting members must be the municipal CEO (manager, administrator or mayor).
- Two members will be co-chairs, and will be responsible for facilitating meetings, work with support staff on developing meeting agendas and drafting annual work plan and priorities, as well as sign letters and provide quotes to the media on

behalf of the group. Where possible, leadership should include a mayor and a town manager, and should reflect the geographic and demographic diversity of the Commonwealth.

Structure (actors)

Members: Membership is open to all municipal CEOs (mayors, managers, administrators) whose communities benefit from MBTA rail service. As a best practice, meetings should include at least one community representative from each commuter rail corridor.

Each member may bring with them one municipal staff member to Coalition meetings.

Stakeholders: Supporting stakeholders may be invited to participate in Coalition meetings on occasion, and may include Transportation for Massachusetts or its members, state legislators or legislative staff, Transportation Management Associations, Regional Transit Agencies, Regional Planning Agencies, Chambers of Commerce, businesses, institutions, community-based organizations, municipal staff, Central Transportation Planning Staff, MassDOT, MBTA, the Commuter Rail Operator, the MBTA Advisory Board, or others as may advance the interests of the Coalition.

Staff Coordinators: As of October 2018, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the 495/MetroWest Partnership are the Commuter Rail Communities Coalition's coordinators, with assistance and funding from Transportation for Massachusetts. Funding for this work is programmed through 2018, and is anticipated for continuation in 2019. MAPC and 495/MetroWest Partnership staff will draft the annual work program, schedule meetings, prepare agendas, organize forums, hold events, draft policy letters, and provide regular correspondence to the members, in coordination with Coalition leadership, during that period of time.