



<b>Title:</b>	Advisory Board Principles Policy
<b>Number:</b>	1004
<b>Effective:</b>	November 15, 2016
<b>Cancel:</b>	N/A
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Danette Brannin, General Manager
<b>Approved by:</b>	Authority Board Resolution No. 2016-28

## **POL-1004 Advisory Board Principles Policy**

This policy applies to all Mason Transit Authority (MTA) board members, employees and citizen advisory board members.

### **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a formal mechanism for the Mason Transit Authority Board (hereinafter referred to as “Authority Board”) to obtain advice on MTA policies or issues from selected groups of individuals with particular expertise, interests or backgrounds through the use of an advisory board. An advisory board supports the Authority Board’s belief that it is important to obtain input from citizens on a regular basis through a variety of avenues such as conducting and attending community meetings, meeting with constituents, commissioning occasional opinion polls or surveys and disseminating information about MTA issues, services and programs.

The following is designed to provide general guidelines concerning the role of MTA advisory boards and how those advisory boards should be formed, dissolved, organized or reorganized and staffed as well as how they should operate.

### **2.0 Policy**

MTA advisory boards exist to enable the Authority Board to obtain advice on policies or issues from a specially selected group of citizens who, the Board believes, have the relevant expertise, interest or background to provide advice that is well reasoned, credible and/or appropriately represents opinions held by the broader community or relevant segments of the broader community.

The role of advisory boards is generally limited to providing advice to the Authority Board on policies or issues. The advisory boards are advisory to the Authority, not the agency. Advisory boards are encouraged to provide information, recommendations and advice whether or not it is critical of existing MTA policy.

### **3.0 Advisory Board Selection and Membership**

Generally, advisory boards shall be made up of citizens with expertise, experience, interests and/or backgrounds related to the purpose of the advisory board and in whose judgment the Authority Board has confidence.

**3.1** Unless otherwise provided by statute, the Authority Board may direct the composition of advisory boards, as well as how advisory board members are to be



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recruited and recommended for appointment. Depending upon the nature of the advisory board the Board may make membership recommendations; conduct interviews after advertising for applicants; and delegate responsibility for recommendations to the sitting advisory board members, to an ad hoc committee or to MTA staff.

- 3.2** Every effort shall be made to recruit advisory board members who can make a positive contribution to the advisory board process and, ultimately, to the ability of the advisory board to provide appropriate recommendations to the Authority Board. This shall be done through recruitment and interview processes that assure the potential candidate has the necessary expertise, commitment and time, to support the work of the advisory board.
- 3.3** Members and prospective members serving on advisory boards must comply with all policies and rules.
- 3.4** All appointees serve at the direction of the Authority Board and may be appointed or removed for any reason by majority vote of the Authority Board.

**4.0 Advisory Board Recommendations to the Mason Transit Authority Board**

Advisory boards are encouraged to provide advice, suggestions and recommendations to the Authority Board on legislative, policy and service issues through established procedures. Given the volume of information received by the Authority Board, it is important that advisory boards use these procedures to ensure that the Authority Board receives information in an organized format and manner.

- 4.1** Advisory boards are encouraged to report or provide recommendations on proposed or pending state or federal legislation as needed to assure the Authority Board stays informed. This is coordinated through the MTA General Manager and staff unless otherwise directed by the MTA General Manger or the Authority Board.
- 4.2** Budget recommendations shall be made, whenever possible, as part of the annual budget process. Advisory boards wishing to make budgetary recommendations should participate in available workshops or public hearings and share their recommendations with the Finance Manager and/or General Manager, and then provide information to the Authority Board regarding their recommendations.



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- 4.3 Policy and legislative recommendations on behalf of MTA to agencies and organizations other than the Authority Board are prohibited without prior approval from the Authority Board.
- 4.4 Recommendations and actions of an advisory board must be limited to matters within the scope of jurisdiction as defined by the Authority Board. The scope of jurisdiction is defined when the advisory board is formed and may be amended only by action of the Authority Board.
- 4.5 It is MTA staff's responsibility to prepare Board agenda items conveying advisory board recommendations to the Authority Board. A copy of the written report or recommendation shall be submitted to the Clerk of the Authority Board by the agenda cut off time, prior to the scheduled meeting, to allow the Authority Board sufficient time to review.
- 4.6 All recommendations and final reports to the Authority Board shall be made in person at a regular Authority Board meeting by the chair or a duly designated representative to explain or represent the advisory board's position and/or answer questions from the Authority Board.

## 5.0 **Advisory Board Communication with the Mason Transit Authority Board**

Inherent in the purpose of advisory boards is the ability to have regular communication with the Authority Board that may not necessarily contain recommendations. The Authority Board must have the ability to provide advisory boards with direction, to inquire about issues affecting the MTA, and to receive informational reports from advisory boards.

- 5.1 Advisory boards, unless otherwise directed, shall make available to members of the Authority Board, all agendas, minutes and reports.
- 5.2 Advisory boards shall provide the Authority Board with a report of goals, accomplishments and recommendations on at least an annual basis.
- 5.3 Advisory boards desiring to make a report of interest to the Authority Board shall coordinate this activity with MTA staff so that staff can facilitate placement of the report on to the Board's agenda.



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## 6.0 Staff Support for Advisory Boards

Staff support is critical to the effective use of advisory boards. Providing effective staff support requires both expertise in particular subject areas and a solid understanding of MTA policies and procedures. Although staff are expected to make recommendations to advisory boards and the Authority Board that reflect MTA and departmental policies and positions, staff are also expected to respect and foster the ability of lay citizens who serve on advisory committees to fairly and effectively convey their independent recommendations to the Authority Board.

- 6.1 MTA staff, rather than independent contractors, shall provide staff support for MTA advisory boards, unless otherwise authorized by the Authority Board.
- 6.2 MTA staff provides support while representing their department and MTA. Staff recommendations to advisory boards shall reflect the policies of their department, MTA management, and the Authority Board.
- 6.3 Except where required by law, it is inappropriate for MTA staff to serve on any MTA advisory boards that provide recommendations to the Authority Board.

## 7.0 Open Public Meetings Act

Advisory board meetings are intended to provide a forum by which members of the public, whether or not they are appointed as members, may participate or provide public comment. This allows for citizens interested in issues being considered by the advisory board to be aware of the issues and to provide input and thereby facilitates an 'open' process. As such, advisory boards shall conduct their meetings in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Ch. 42.30 RCW.

- 7.1 Except as otherwise stated in state law, all meetings of advisory boards are open public meetings.
- 7.2 Advisory boards shall establish regular meetings dates and times annually, and shall consult the Clerk of the Authority Board about scheduling special meetings and announcing meeting cancellations. There shall be no less than four meetings each calendar year.



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## 8.0 Public Records Requirements

The Washington State Public Records Act applies to advisory boards' records. The recorded activities of any MTA advisory board, such as meeting agendas, minutes, reports, and correspondence, are public records.

**8.1** All advisory boards shall take formal minutes of their meetings and shall appoint a member to take such minutes, or such minute responsibility may be delegated to a staff support person. A copy of all minutes shall be filed with the Clerk of the Authority Board as the official record. Any bylaws, rules, and regulations adopted by advisory boards shall be filed with the Clerk of the Authority Board.

## 9.0 Self-Evaluation of Advisory Boards

Any advisory board to the Authority Board will evaluate its accomplishments at the end of each calendar year. Primary criteria will include:

*Purpose:* Did the advisory board stick to the purpose set forth by the Authority Board or did it stray into areas not relevant to the purpose or mission of the Mason Transit Authority.

*Usefulness:* Did the advisory board transmit to the Authority relevant and meaningful recommendations.

*Scope of Work:* Did the advisory board achieve its' annual work plan? If not, what got in the way of accomplishing specific pieces of the plan? How did Mason Transit Authority and the community benefit from the results of the advisory boards' achievements?

*Meeting Process:* Did the meeting process and environment further the achievement of the advisory boards' purpose and work plan?

*Other:* Other criteria suggested by the advisory board members may be used.

## 10.0 Regular Evaluation of MTA Advisory Boards

The Authority Board recognizes and appreciates the value of citizen input and the volunteer nature of advisory board members. At the same time, the creation of formal MTA advisory boards is potentially the most costly citizen input mechanism in terms of time and money. Formal board membership is also by its nature limited to a small



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number of active participants. Thus, the need for advisory bodies shall be re-evaluated as needed.

**10.1** Upon creation of an advisory board, the Authority Board may determine guidelines for its purpose, duration, funding, membership and any other material matter. Advisory boards shall establish by-laws that adopt Roberts Rules of Order, operating procedures that define roles of officers/members and meeting protocols, as well as develop an annual work plan and conduct an annual self-evaluation.

**10.2** The Authority Board will review the goals and accomplishments of existing advisory boards as needed and evaluate continued need for such advisory boards. The Authority Board may, at their discretion, choose to combine, discontinue, or change the focus of existing advisory boards to better serve the needs of the Authority Board, the MTA, and the citizens of Mason County.

**10.2.1** Factors that may be considered in changing the status of advisory boards include but are not limited to:

1. Purpose of advisory board becomes broader or narrower than purpose for which it was established and is no longer consistent with Authority Board's goals or priorities;
2. Advisory board purpose, goals or activities that conflict with MTA policy;
3. Violations of MTA policy, local, state, federal law, or legislative mandates;
4. Goals and accomplishments met and purpose for which advisory board was established is concluded;
5. Goals and accomplishments not met;
6. Inability to maintain a quorum of membership attendance;
7. Need and/or desire for combining advisory board(s);
8. Reduction in or lack of resources to support advisory board; and/or,
9. To consolidate and/or reorganize advisory board(s) to better facilitate outcomes or accomplishments or to meet policy or legislative requirements.