MESM ACADEMY:

Introduction to Municipal Governance in Massachusetts



October 22

1-2pm

MESM Academy: Training Norms

Please:

- Add your municipality(ies) to zoom name
- Keep camera on, if possible
- Stay present, avoid distractions
- Take the brief evaluation at the end of this training!

Reminders:

- Only the presentation is recorded, not Q&A
- Feel free to add questions in the chat throughout
- “Learning check” questions scattered throughout the trainings
- Go over lesson details at the start & do intro polls
- Slides & recording will be posted on the website in 1-2 weeks



NOTIFICATION OF RECORDING

This meeting will be recorded. MAPC may choose to retain and distribute the video, still images, audio, and/or the chat transcript. By continuing with this virtual meeting, you are consenting to participate in a recorded event. The recordings and chat transcript will be considered a public record. If you do not feel comfortable being recorded, please turn off your camera and/or mute your microphone, or leave the meeting.



MESM ACADEMY:

Introduction to Municipal Governance in Massachusetts



October 22

1-2pm

Today's Lesson

Lesson Questions

- How do municipal governments function in Massachusetts, and who should I connect with to advance my goals as an energy/sustainability manager?

Learning Objectives

- Understand the government structure my municipality is operating under.
- Describe the role of key elected officials and staff in my municipality and at the State.



Introductory Polls

Rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

- I understand the government structure my municipality is operating under.
- I can describe the role of key elected officials and staff in my municipality and at the State.

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

I work in a:

- City, Town, Multiple Towns, MLP, Regional School District, Other [Write in chat]

Have you met your City/Town admin yet?

- Yes, No

Meet the Instructor



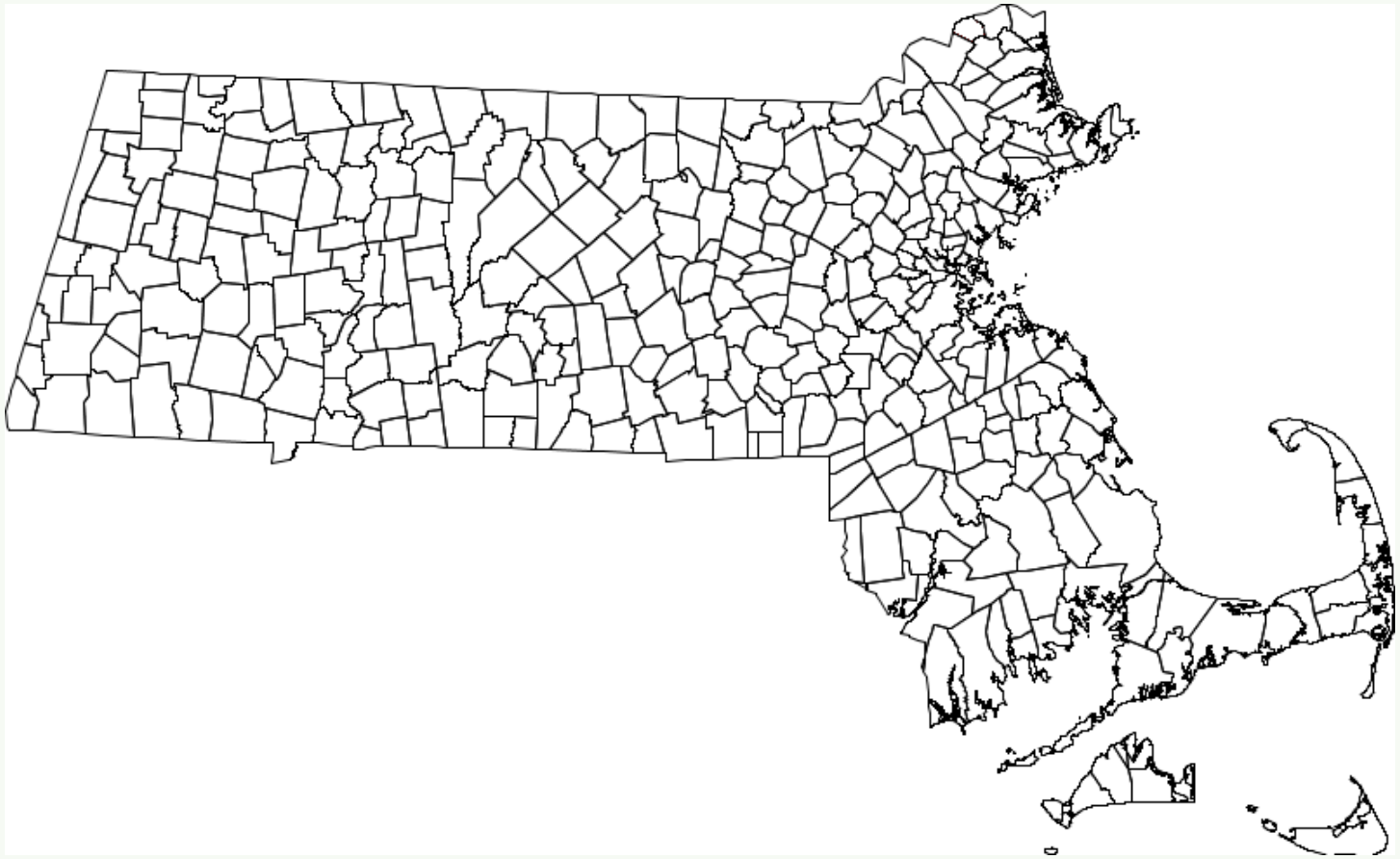
Leah Robins

Government Affairs Director,
Metropolitan Area Planning Council

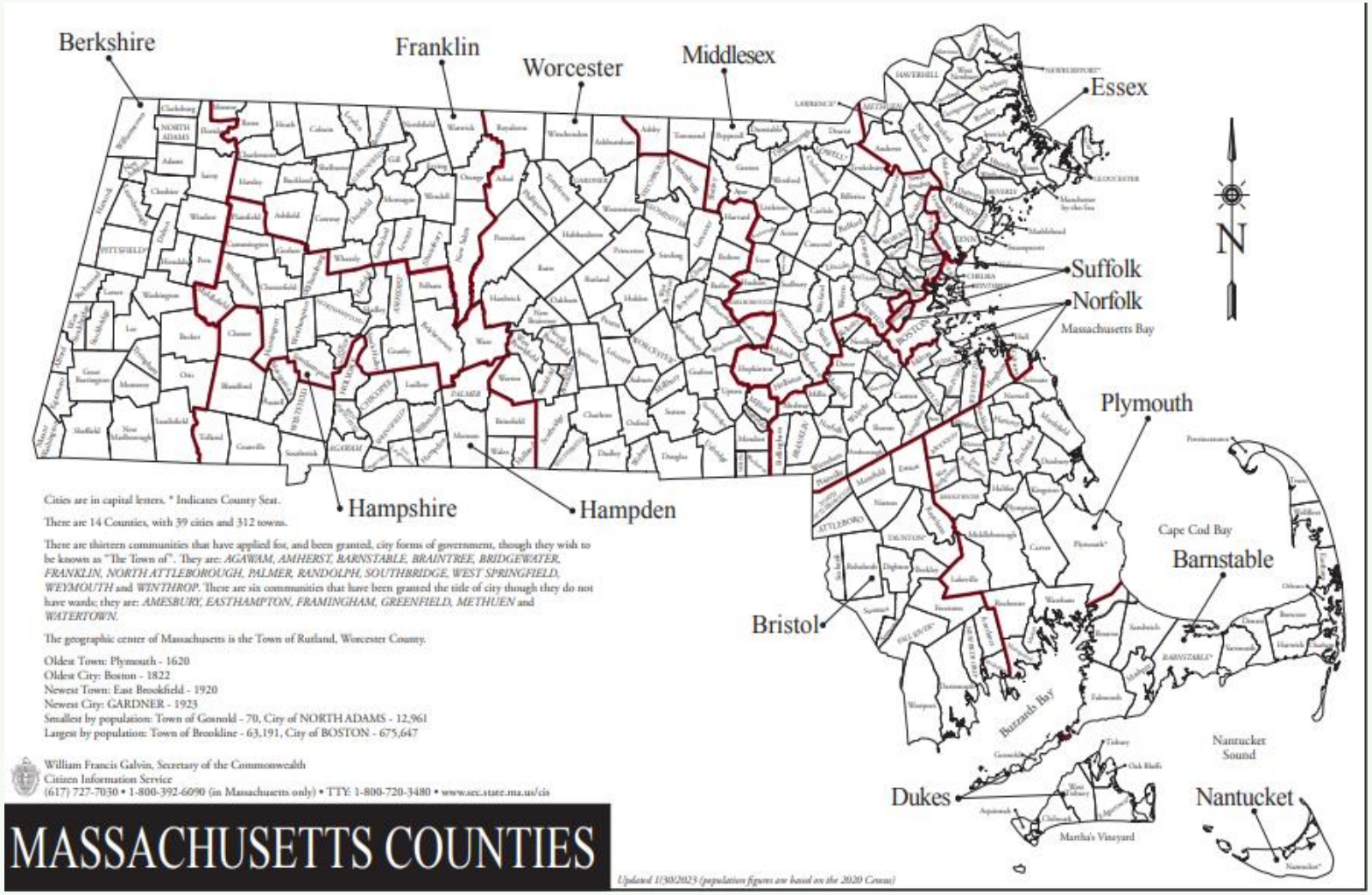
Today's Agenda:

Time	Duration	Topic
1:00-1:05pm	5 mins	**Welcome & Lesson Overview**
1:05 – 1:15	10 mins	**Regional Government**
1:15 – 1:35	20 mins	**Municipal governments: City and town**
1:35 – 1:55	15 mins	**Q&A**
1:55-2:00pm	5 mins	**Next Steps**

Regional Government?



County Government

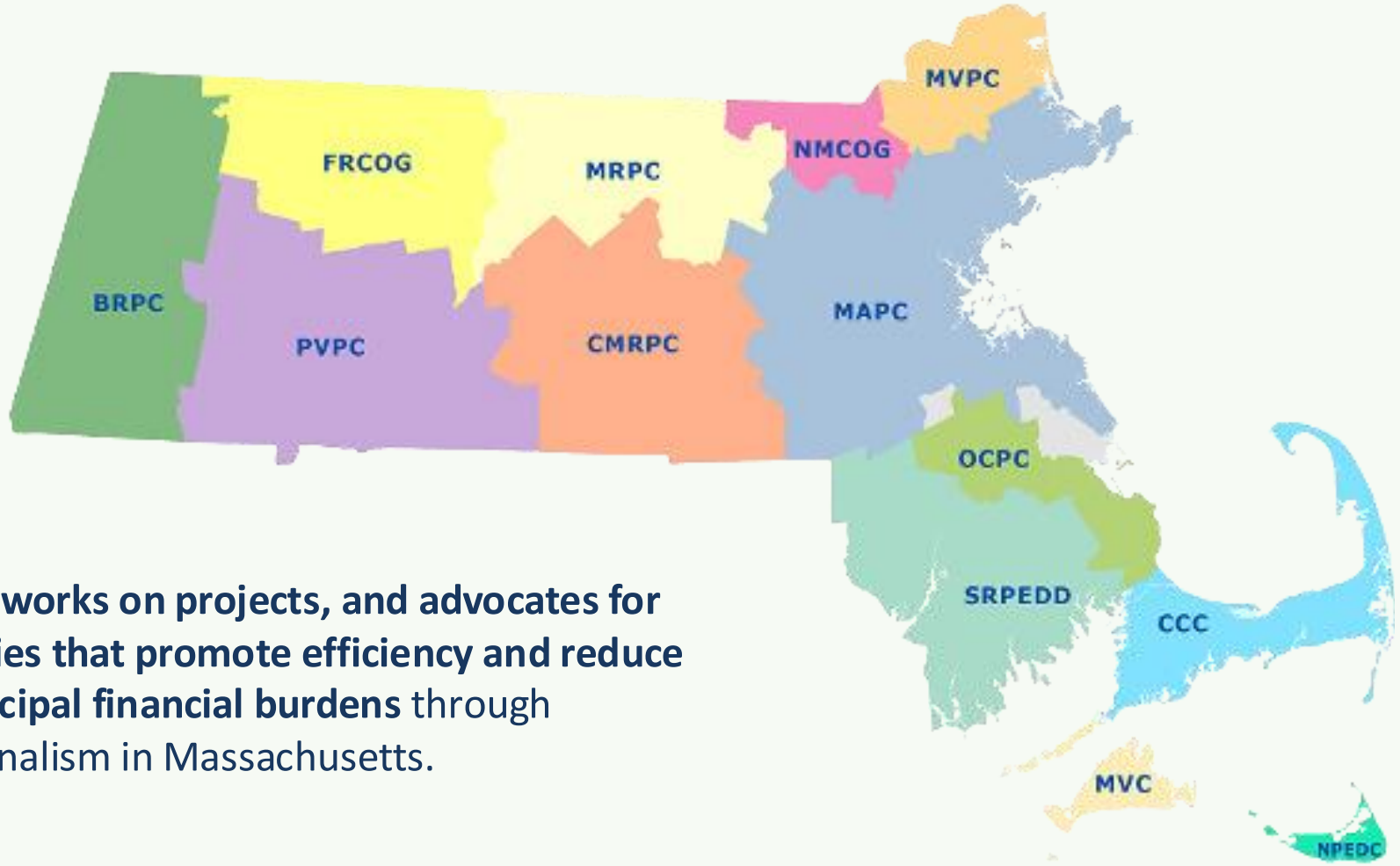


Credit: Secretary of the Commonwealth

Unlike most of the US, county governments are not prevalent in MA

- 6 Intact County Governments
  - Barnstable County
  - Bristol County
  - Dukes County
  - Nantucket County
  - Norfolk County
  - Plymouth County
- 8 County Governments abolished between 1997 and 2000

Regional Planning Agencies



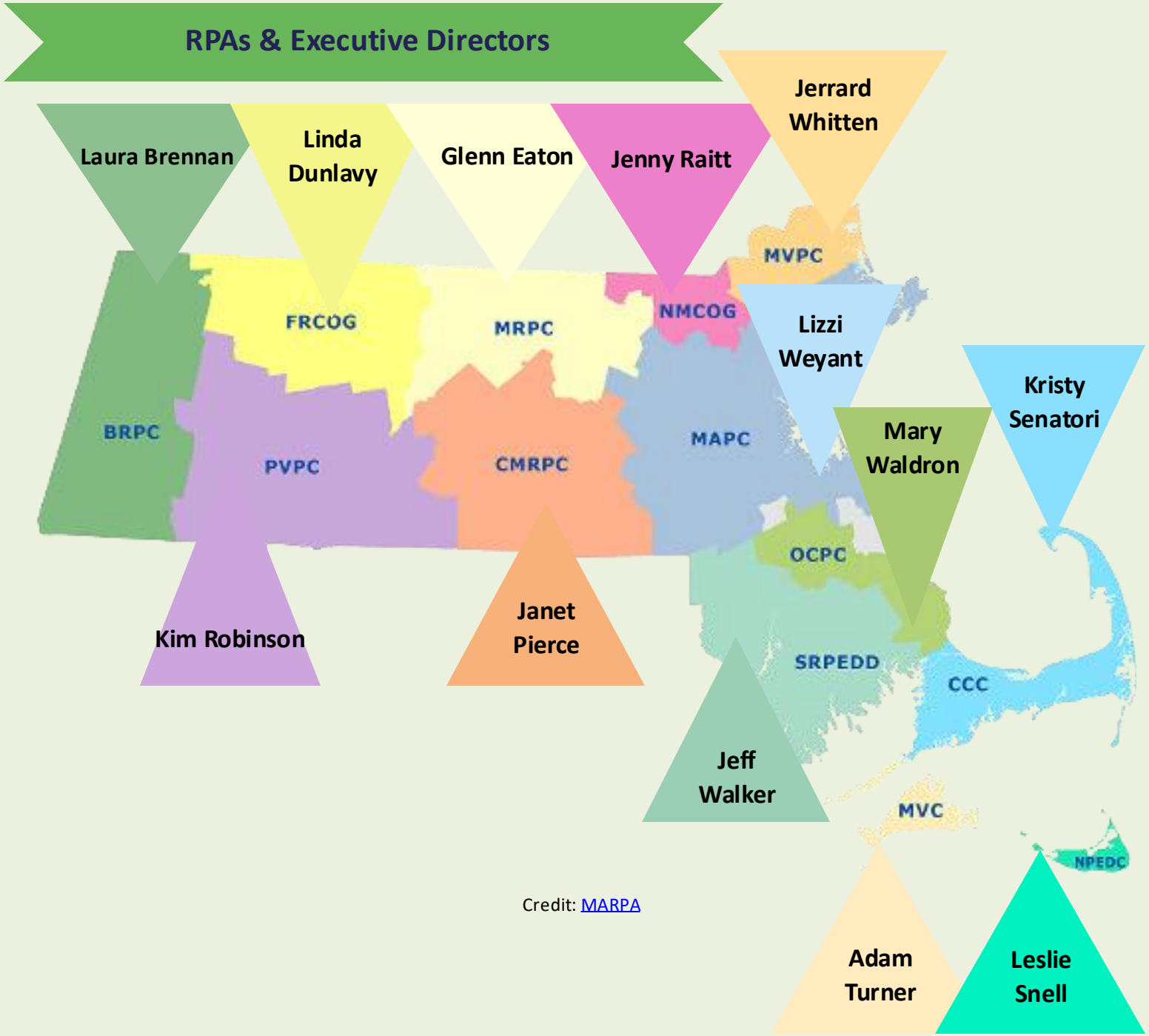
RPAs **works on projects, and advocates for policies that promote efficiency and reduce municipal financial burdens** through regionalism in Massachusetts.

Credit: MARPA

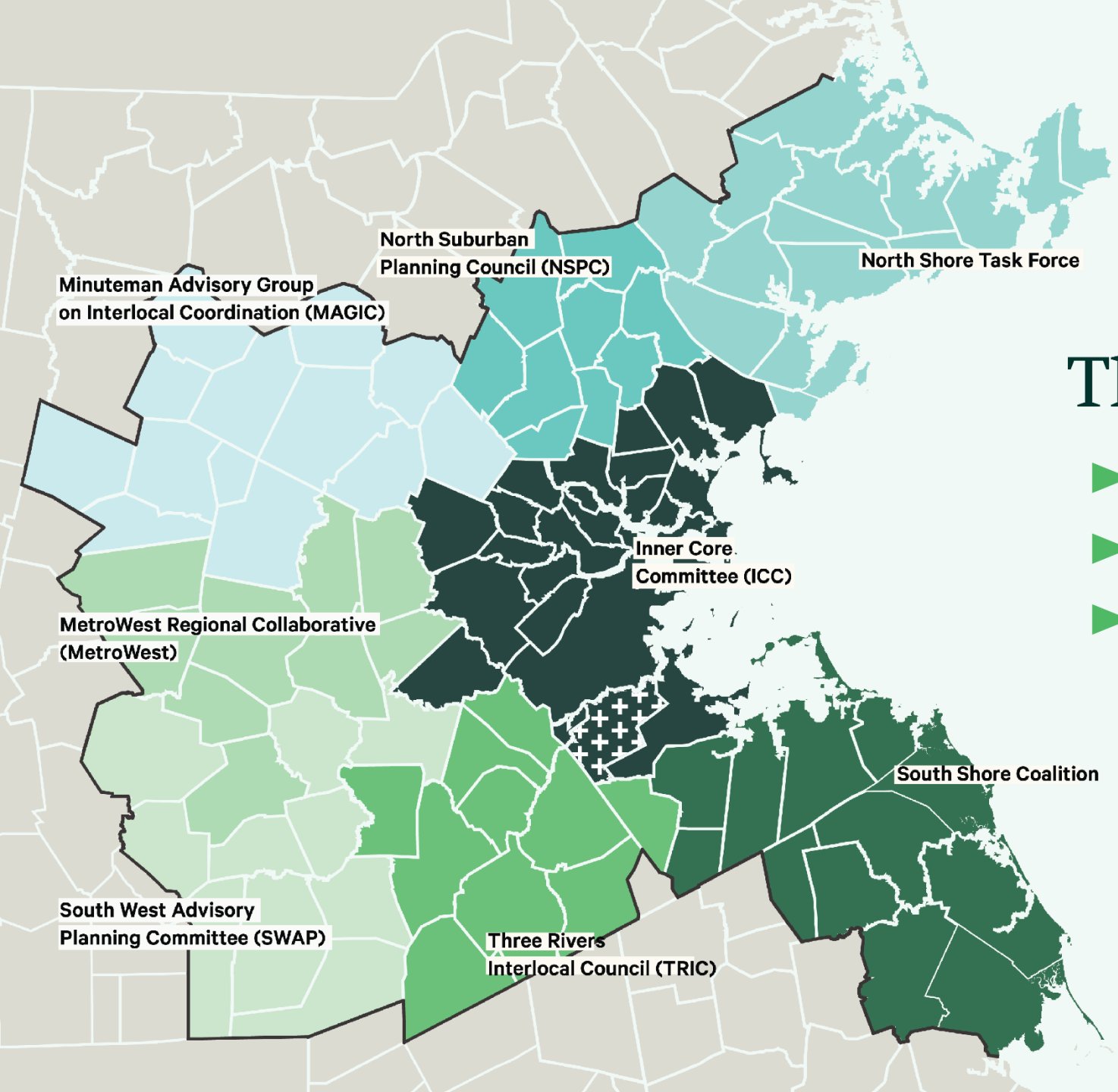
MAPC

Who is my RPA?

Every municipality is a member of one of the Commonwealth's **13 Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs).**



Credit: MARPA



The MAPC Region

- **101** cities & towns
- **8** subregions
- **3.4 million** residents

MAPC's purpose and role

We work towards a more equitable, sustainable, collaborative, and climate resilient future for the people who live and work in Greater Boston.

We do this by drafting and helping to implement local and regional plans; engaging residents and community stakeholders in the planning process, especially people who have been excluded or marginalized in the past; advocating for changes in public policy and funding; conducting research and data analysis; and encouraging inter-municipal and regional collaboration.

Learning Check!

Are all municipalities within a county government?

Municipal Government Powers

Dillon Rule in 1900s made clear that municipalities are "creatures of the state" and with Supreme court ruling is legal principle that local government only has certain powers.

MA Home Rule Amendment in 1960s empowered municipalities to self-government but:

- State supremacy- local rules cannot violate state and federal laws
- Prohibited powers- Section 7 restricts authority around taxation, elections, etc.

Municipal Government Powers

Home rule petitions- if municipalities want to go outside standard authority, must pass a local vote and request approval from State

Section 7 of the Home Rule amendment says that municipalities lack the power to:

- *Regulate elections (other than charter powers specifically granted)*
- *Levy, assess and collect taxes*
- *Borrow money or pledge credit of the municipality*
- *Dispose of park land*
- *Enact private or civil law governing civil relationships except as an incident to an exercise of an independent municipal power; or*
- *Define and provide for the punishment of a felony or to impose imprisonment as a punishment for any violation of law*

Municipal Charters

Charters are the "constitution" of your community

Because of Home Rule Amendment, municipal charters are varied

Usually includes:

- Creation of general management position
- Boards and Commissions (elected and appointed)
- Establishing departments
- Establishing procedures for preparing budget and capital plans

MASS MUNICIPAL DATA HUB

Find detailed information about Massachusetts communities

Choose a Community

Enter name of city or town

CHOOSE ON MAP → SEE MAP + ALL DATA →

NEW: DOWNLOAD ALL DATA →

Sort Communities by

Demographics +
Governance +
Geography +
Municipal Finances +
Representation +

Explore Forms of Government

SEE OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT GUIDE →

Choose a Community

Enter name of city or town

Find all communities by governance

Choose a form of goverment

SEE ALL DATA →

Products & Services Listings

Search MMA Partners by Business Name and Keyword

Search Products by Business Name and Keywor

Search by Category

SEE ALL LISTINGS →

Municipal Election & Annual Town Meeting Dates

Choose a Community

Enter name of city or town

SEE ALL DATES →

Note: Occcasionally these dates will change. Please let us know if an update is needed.

20 DataCommon

MAPC OPEN DATA · 2008 · 2024

Understand your community through data

Discover housing, demographics, transportation, environment, and more—and explore the communities that matter to you.

1 **Subregion or RPA or All communities in Massachusetts**

All communities in Massachusetts

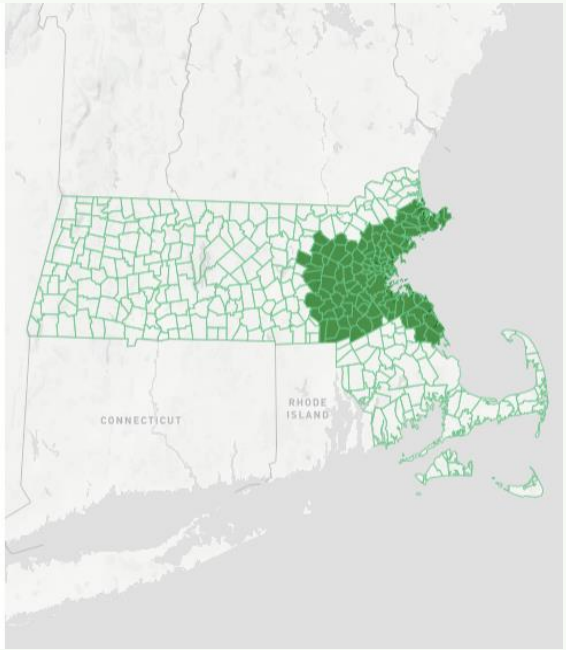
2 **Community**

Search for a community ...

Choose a Subregion or RPA or search a community

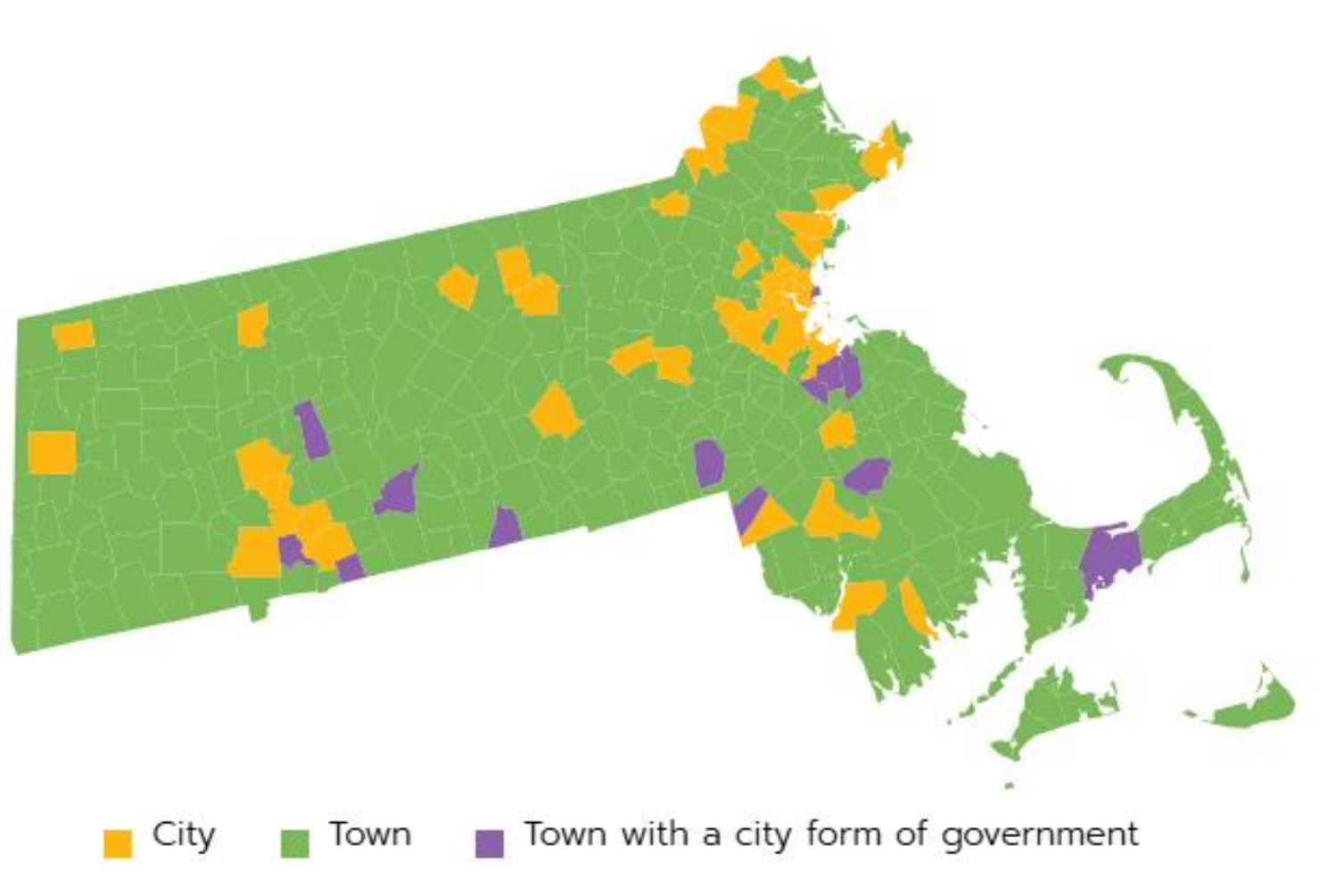
Every profile includes

9	PNG	PDF	20+
topics	per chart	full export	visualizations



MAPC

Municipal Government in Massachusetts

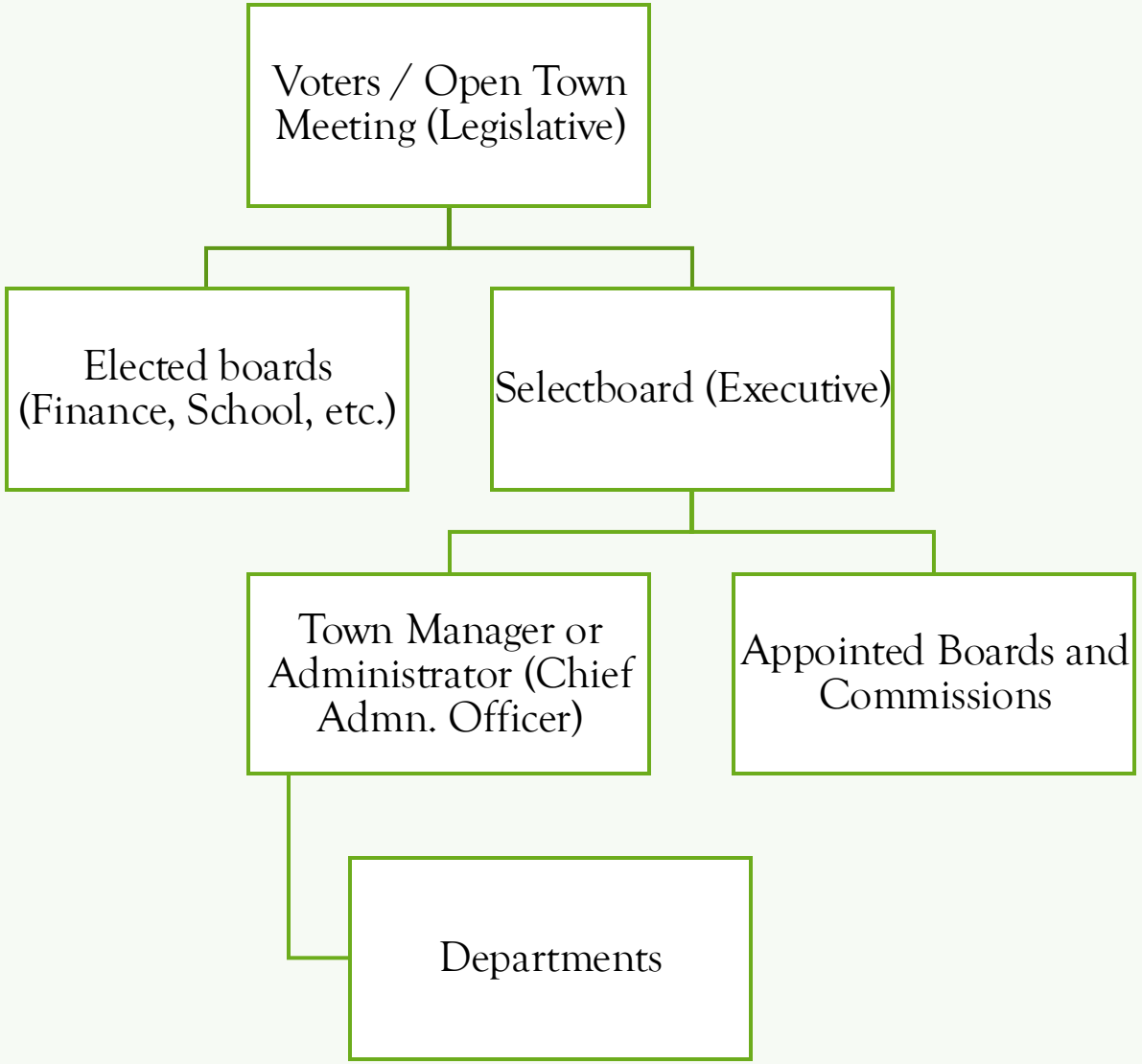


351 Communities

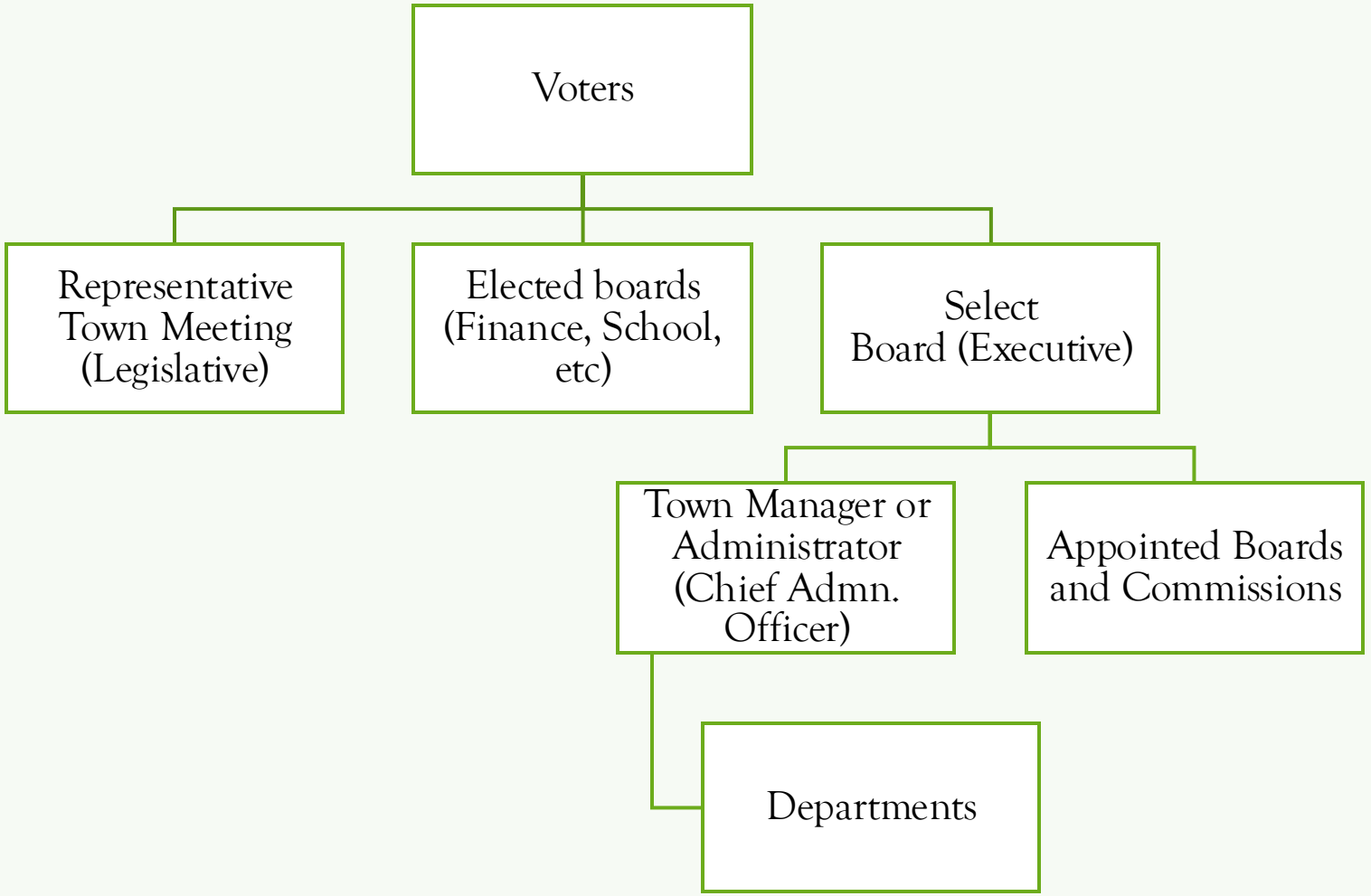
- 292 Towns
- 59 Cities

Credit: MMA.org

Open Town Meeting/Select Board/Town Manager or Administrator



Representative Town Meeting/Select Board/Town Manager or Administrator



Town Government
Town Meeting

Open Town Meeting	Representative Town Meeting
Any registered voter is eligible to vote	Voters are elected by precinct- size varies from less than 100 to more than 300
260 Towns	32 Towns

Town Government

Town Meeting

- For towns, the **Legislative Body** is Town Meeting
- Must meet annually
- Many towns hold Special Town Meetings other times of year, often Fall
- Duration varies widely

Town Government

Town Meeting



Powers and Responsibilities

- Pass Town Budget (July 1 to June 30)
- Authorize debt issuance
- Enact bylaws

Town Meeting Warrant- Official agenda for town meeting

- Approved by Select Board, often times includes recommendations of Select Board and Finance Committee
- Articles can include:
  - Budget matters (appropriations/bond appropritions)
  - Zoning
  - Home Rule Petitions
  - Enacting "Local Options"
  - Land sale/acquisition

MAPC

Town Government

Select Board

Select Board is the **Executive Branch** for town government

- Usually 3-5 members
- Elected in the Spring, rotating terms
- Most meet weekly or biweekly

Select Board Responsibilities include:

- Hire Town Manager/Administrator (in some cases also department heads)
- Prepare Town Meeting Warrant
- Appoint certain boards/commissions/committees
- Municipal Policies
- Involved in town finance
  - Review budget
  - Set tax rates
  - Accept grants
  - approve debt
  - Execute contracts

Town Government

Town Managers and Administrators

In Select Board Communities, Town Manager and Administrators are the **Chief Administrative Officer**

- 177 Town Administrators
- 79 town Managers

Powers and Responsibilities

- Role is not described in statute- responsibilities vary based on Town charter, by-law or special acts
- May include:
  - Preparing budgets and capital plan
  - Personnel and hiring
  - Liaison between Select Board
  - CBA Bargaining

Town Government
School Committees

School Committee

- Usually 5-9 elected members
- Town manager/administrator is usually a member only for purposes of approving CBA
- Established in town Charters

Powers and Responsibilities may include:

- Hiring/evaluating superintendent
- Budget authority- including setting final budget allocations and approves transfers
- Bargaining and approving school employee CBAs. School CBAs will not go to town meeting

Town Government

Schools

Superintendent

- Chief executive officer and advisor to School Committee
- Responsibility for day to day operations

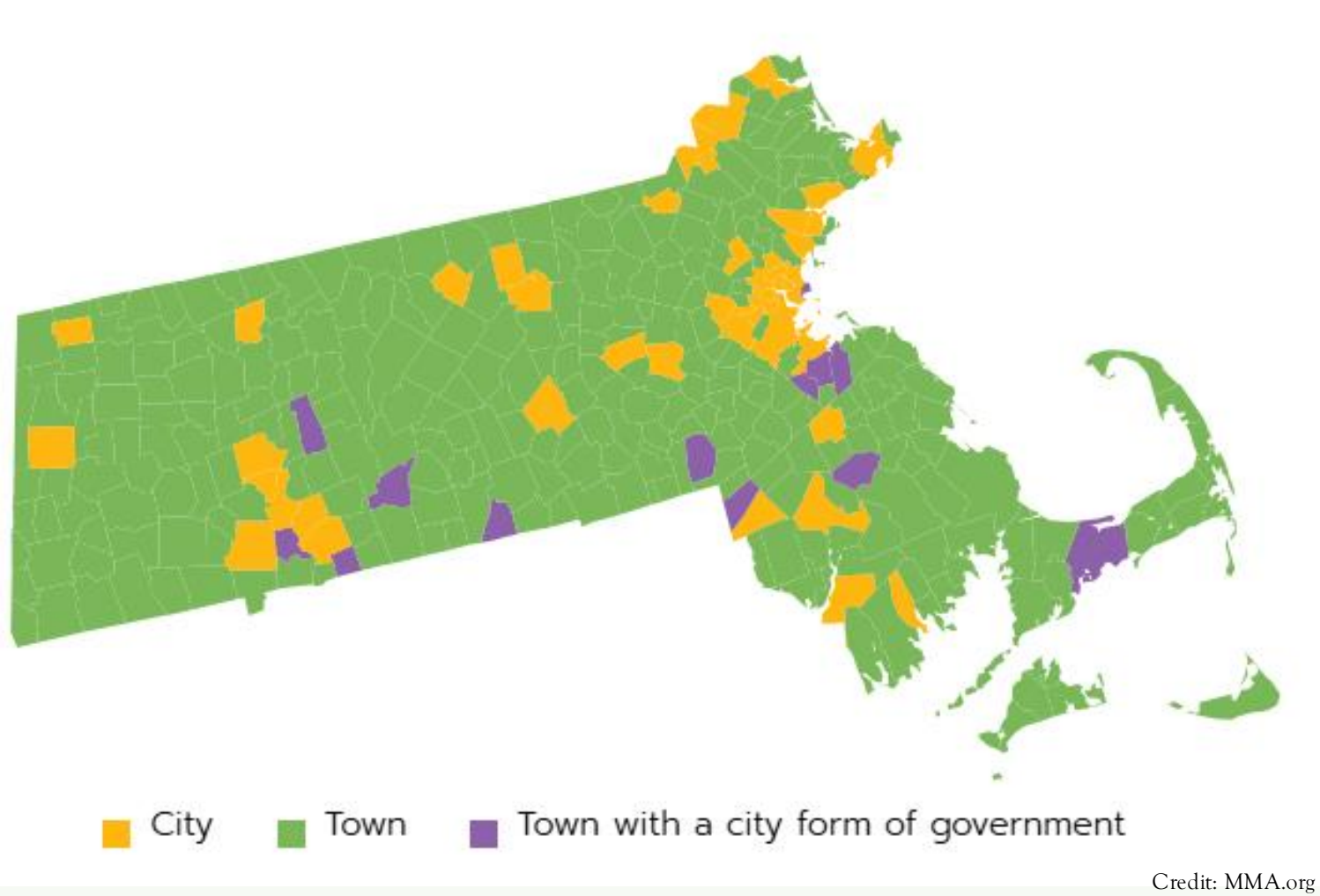
Regional Schools

- Districts are functionally independent units of local government
- Governed by a regional school committee with representation from each member

Budget

- Unlike municipal budgets, approved as one number. Sets final budget allocations and approves transfers
- Often about half or more of a municipal budget

Municipal Government in Massachusetts

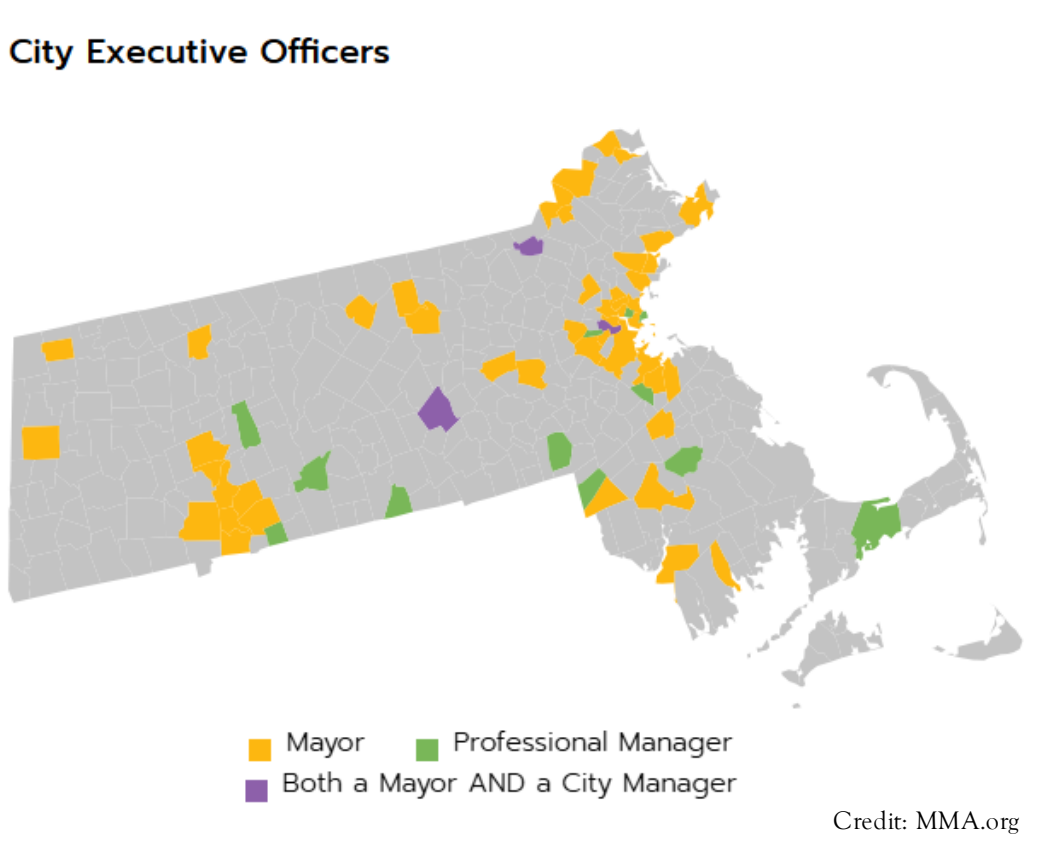


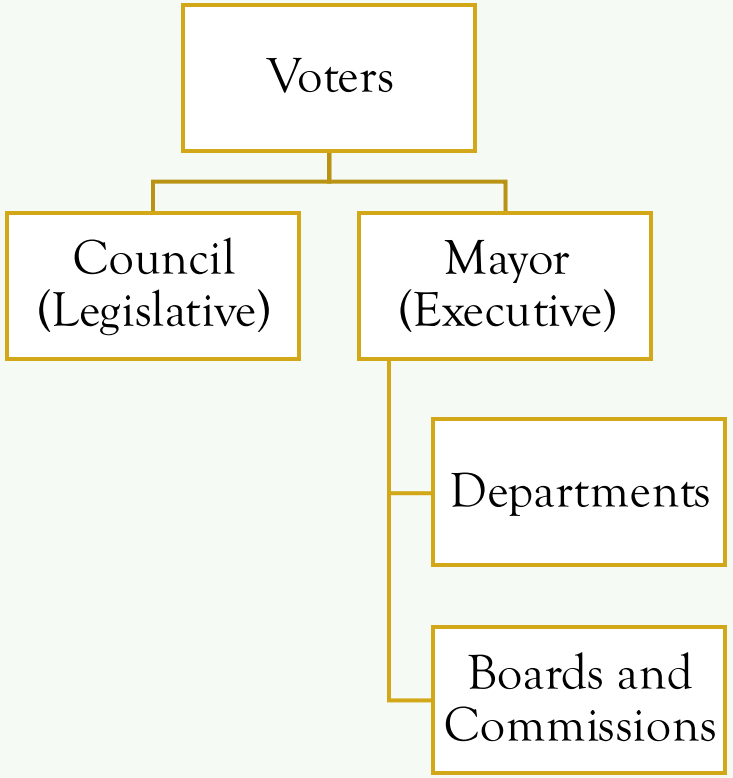
Credit: MMA.org

351 Communities

- 292 Towns
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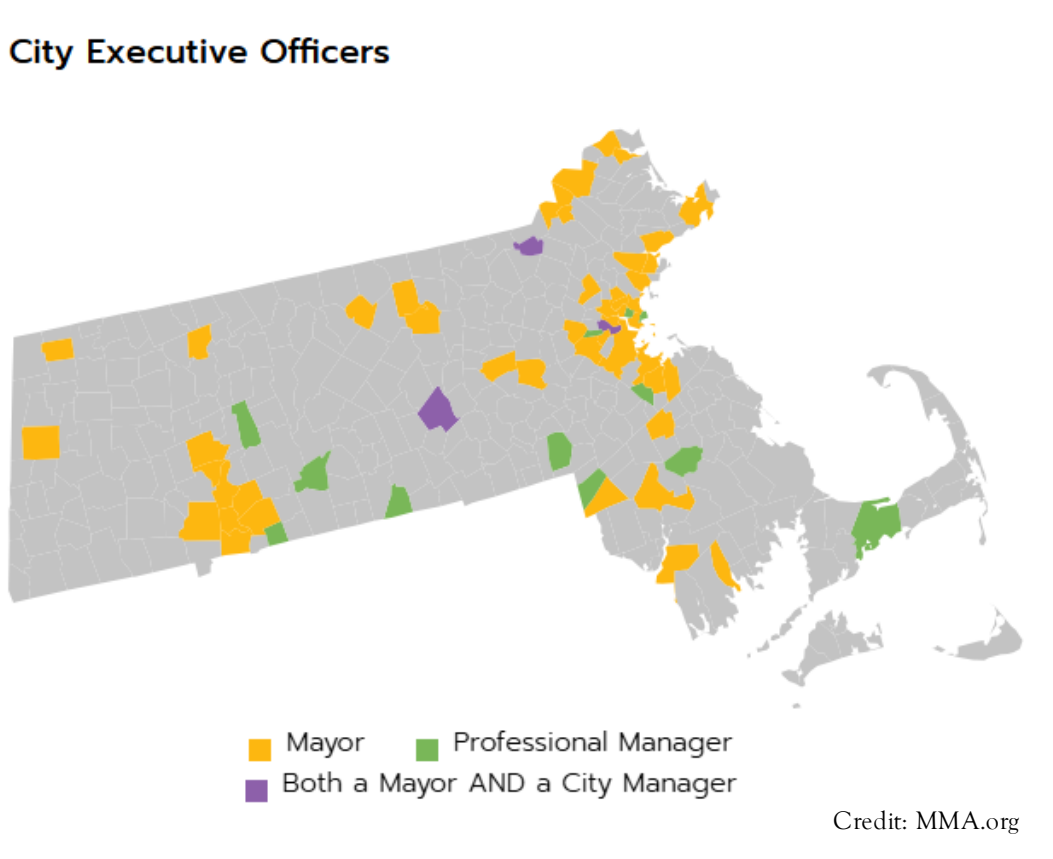
Mayor/Council

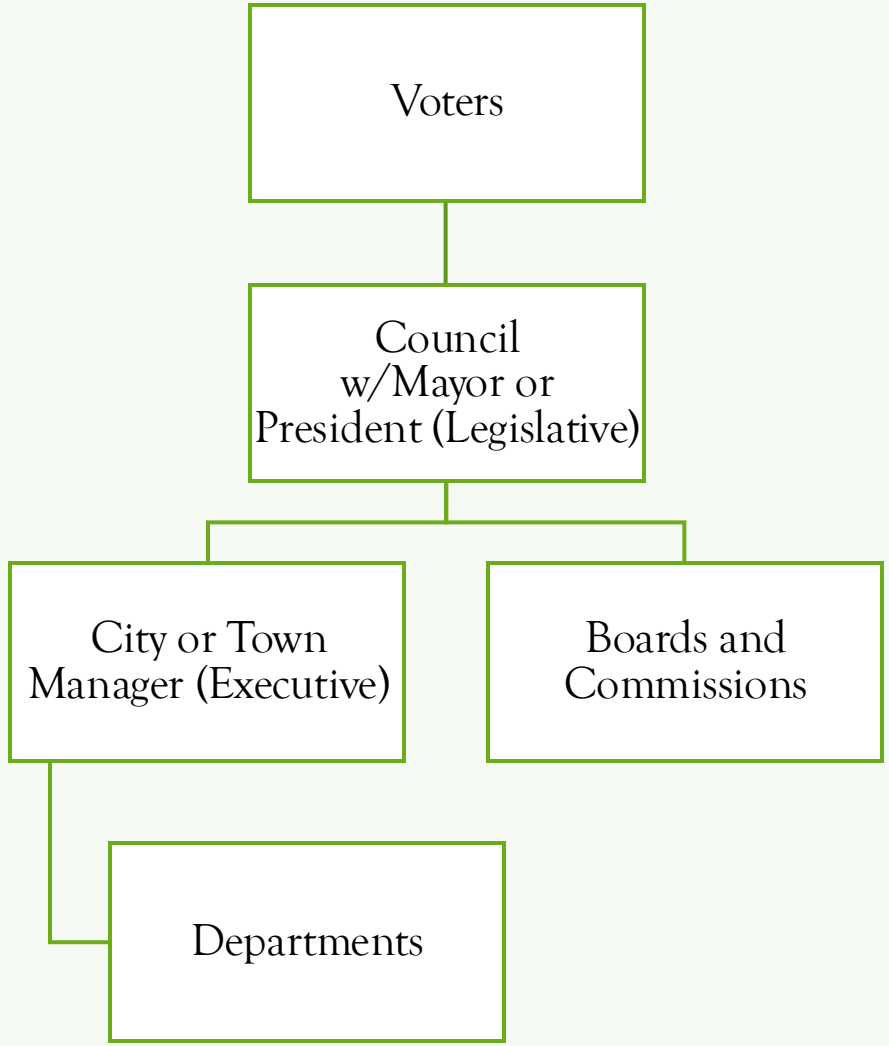




"Strong" Mayor Model

Council/Manager





"Weak" Mayor Model

City Government

Mayor

Mayor serves as **Chief Executive Officer**

- 24 have 2 year terms, the others have 4 year terms

Powers and responsibilities are determined and defined locally but usually include:

- Appoints key officials and some boards
- Oversee administrative functions of the city
- Develop budget
- Execute laws and ordinances passed by Council
- Authority to veto certain actions
- In most cities, mayor also serves on School Committee, and often as chair

City Government

City Manager

City Manager is the Chief Administrative Officer

- Similar to Town Managers, role is determined and defined locally
- Most responsibilities include:
  - Budget and capital planning
  - Appoint and supervise staff
  - Negotiate agreements with city unions
  - Jurisdiction over use of city facilities (except school and library)
  - Coordinate city communications

City Government

City Council

City Council is the **Legislative Branch** for cities

- City Council is similar to representative town meeting as a representative form of government
- Usually a 2 year terms with an odd number of members
- Most are a combination of at-large and district seats
- Typically meeting weekly or biweekly

Powers and Responsibilities

- Approve, reduce, or reject budget proposal submitted by chief executive (cannot increase)
- Authorize debt or override question on a ballot
- Pass ordinances

MAPC

City Government

Schools

School Committee

- Usually 5-9 elected members
- Many include a seat for Mayor and/or Council President
- Established in city Charters

Powers and Responsibilities may include:

- Hiring/evaluating superintendent
- Bargaining and approving school employee CBAs. School CBAs will not go to town meeting

Learning Check!

Do City councilors and Town Select Board members have a similar role in their governments?

Resources:
Municipal Budgets and Capital Planning

Most Requested



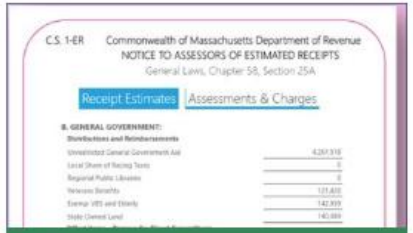
Municipal Finance Training and Resource Center →



Bulletins, Guidelines and Opinions (IGR/BUL/LFO) →



Data Analytics & Visualizations →



Cherry sheet & state payment reports →

City & Town

DLS Publications and Financial Tools →

Key Resources to Understanding Your Local Government

- Community Charter
- Who appoints key position
- How and when the budget and capital plan are developed
- How municipal and school officials work together

Municipal Energy and Sustainability Managers ACADEMY

Questions?



Q&A Discussion

- Q: Is Town Coordinator a different role?
  - Not different than a manager/administrator, just titled different.
- Q: Department of Labor Services is a great resource to learn about charger changes.
- Q: How does an Energy Manager/municipal energy management staff interact with municipal leadership? When have you gone to the city council/town meetings before?
  - Municipality 1: have gone to get a grant proposal approved from the Select Board. Before submitting any proposal, you have to plan to meet with them, and any changes have to be approved by them.
  - Municipality 2: Sometimes when the state has made a change in how regulations, they may ask for information from specific municipal staff like an energy manager.
  - Municipal 3: Spoke to them in the lead up to the town meeting to get approval on any sustainability related task. General outreach on projects that may be working towards the Select Board's goals. Informing residents about energy rates. Approval for facility projects.
- Q: Don't municipalities have power to levy, access and collect taxes?
  - They are allowed borrowing, but any other function regarding collection of taxes has to be within the state provisions.
- Q: Are interactions between town employees and the Select Board auditable?
  - Abided by Open Meeting Law requirements. The Attorney General has resources on the Open Meeting Law requirements.

Q&A Discussion

- Q: Do you have resources that we can point people towards when explaining how sustainability roles in local government works?
  - A: It is generally difficult to develop a one size fits all description as responsibilities vary across municipalities. Recognize the need for such resource. MESM Academy wants to create such resource in the future.
  - Some municipalities have webpages that describe the work. For example: https://www.watertown-ma.gov/sustainability
- Q: Does the MAPC Data Common include data for all communities in the state?
  - For datasets that are state-wide, yes
- Q: When there is a sustainability project, are there best practices around involving businesses?
  - There will be a procurement training in the future to discuss this!

Next Steps

Reminder to please complete the anonymous evaluation form!

Upcoming Events:

- **10/28:** Optional office Hours
- **10/29:** Introduction to Municipal Financing Training
- **11/04:** Designing Outreach Materials on Canva *(MassEnergize Webinar)*
- **11/09:** Using MassEnergyInsight Training
- **11/16:** Mass Save Municipal Programs & Incentives Training
- **11/23:** Leominster School Decarbonization Tour *(in-person site visit!)*

