



MPO Staffing and Organizational Structures

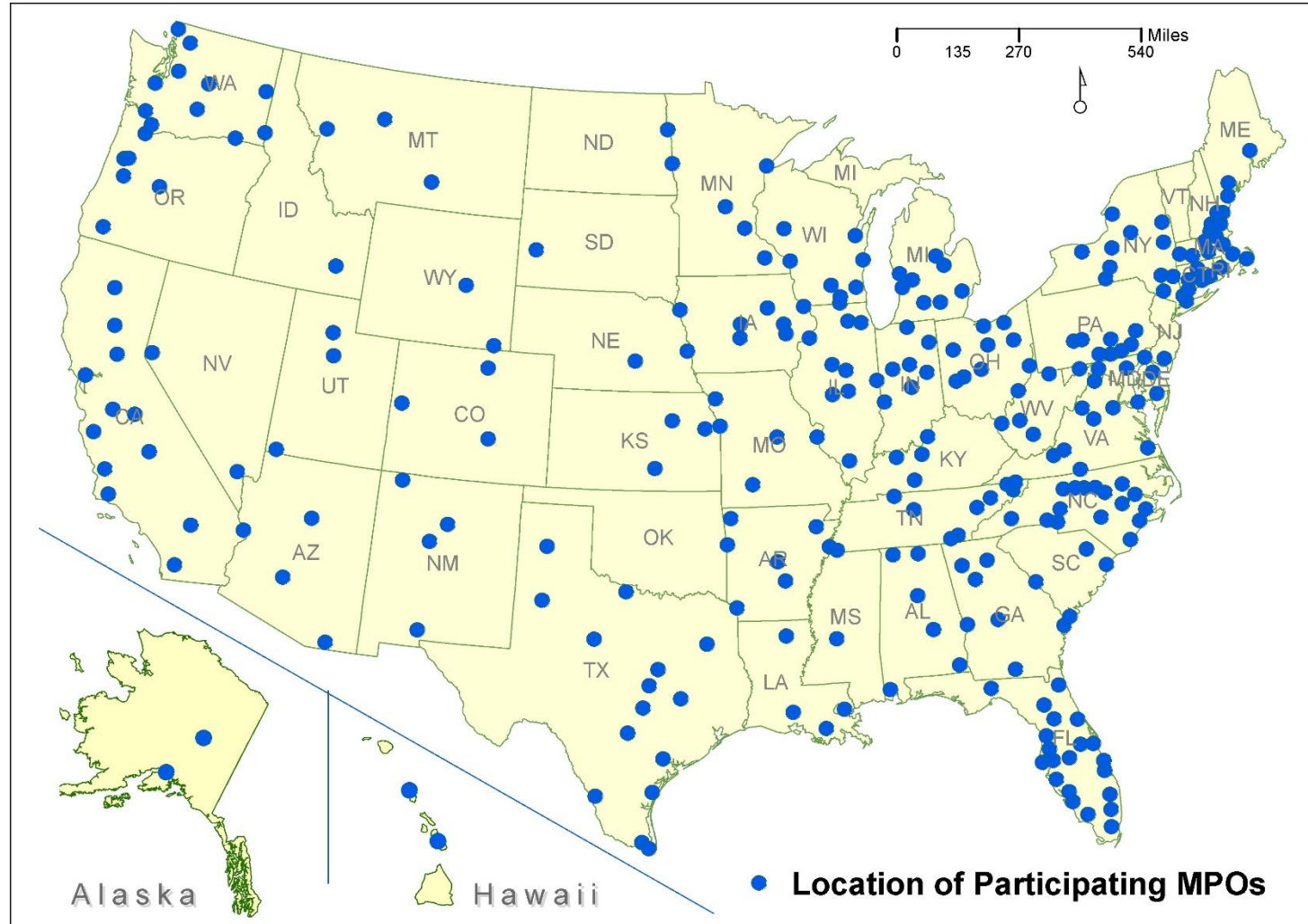
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for
U.S. Dept. of Transportation, FHWA

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Project Scope

- FHWA contracted with CUTR at USF to research and prepare report, Staffing and Administrative Capacity of MPOs (May 2010).
- Project involved national survey of MPOs and follow up case study research.
- Purpose – help MPOs evaluate their staffing and organizational structures in light of planning responsibilities, budget, and policy environment.
- Research updated and another report produced, MPO Staffing and Organizational Structures (October 2017).
- Total of 279 MPOs or 70% participated in survey

Map of Participants



Survey Scope

Topics covered in the FHWA reports include:

- MPO governance
- MPO organizational structure
[Organization funding
- Work planning
- Staffing arrangements, employee retention,
technical skills
- Use of consultants
- Use of advisory committees

2017 report also includes information on:

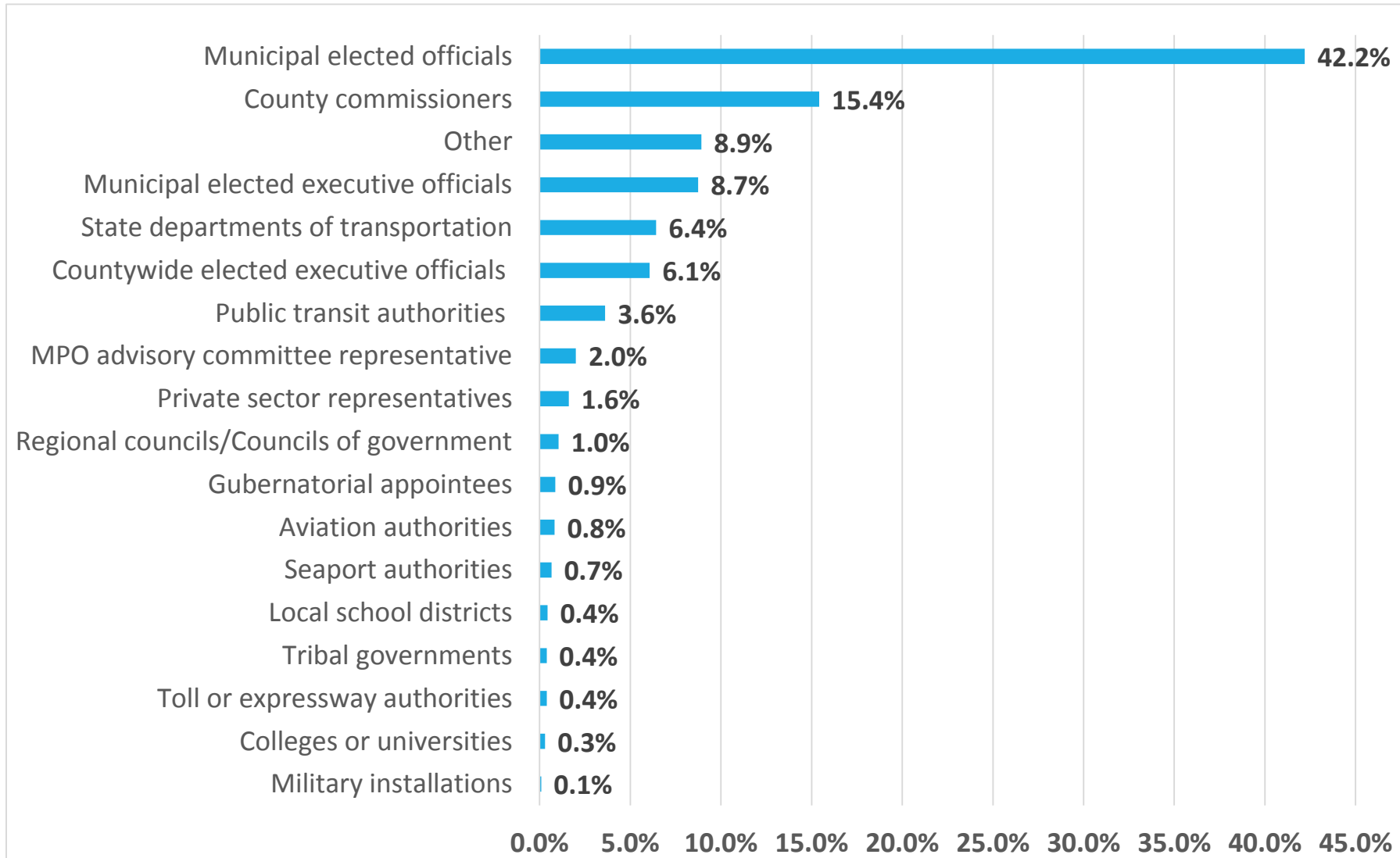
- Performance management
- Scenario planning

Survey Results

Governance

- Vast majority of seats on MPO boards belong to local (municipal, county) elected officials.
- Intergovernmental balance on board achieved through:
 - Allocation of seats (most common)
 - Rotation of seats among subset of local governments, and
 - Weighted voting.
- Over 50% of MPO boards have non-voting members, with State DOT representative by far the most common.
- Over 90% of MPOs have a technical advisory committee. Over 30% have citizen and pedestrian/bicycle advisory committees.

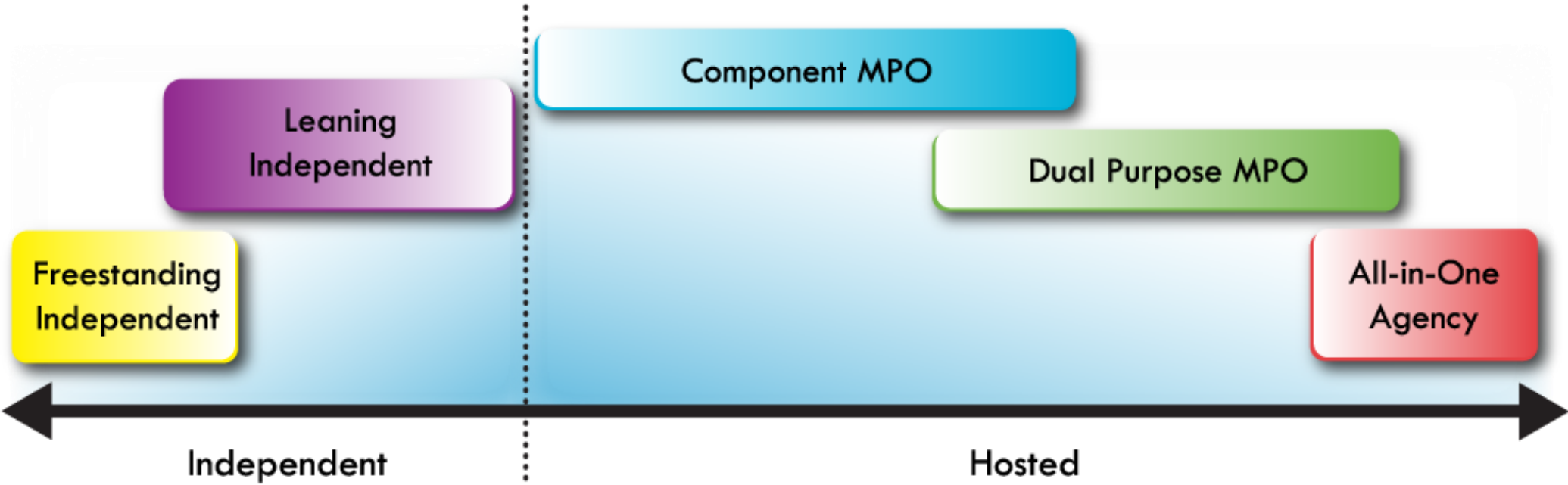
Board Composition – Percent of All Seats



Administrative Structure

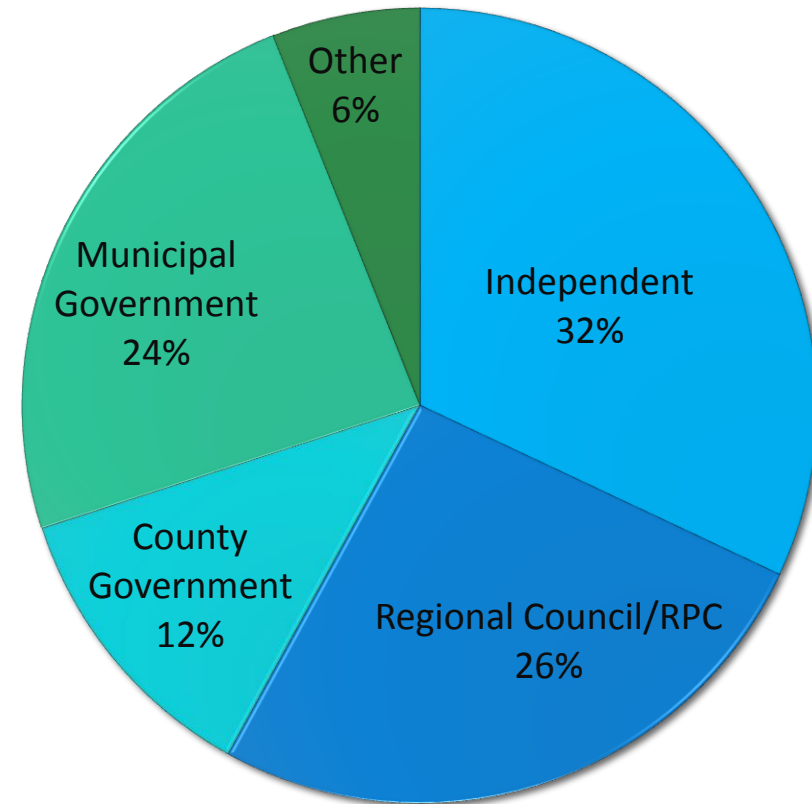
- More than 2/3 of MPOs are hosted by another entity/agency (i.e., acts as fiscal agent and hires employees).
- Regional council/RPC most common host (39%), followed by municipal government (35%), and county government (17%).
- MPOs structures span continuum ranging from fully independent to completely integrated with their host agency.

MPO Hosting Continuum



Types of Hosting

- More likely to be hosted if the MPO is a non-TMA
- Regional Council/RPC is most common host
- Combined, local governments host 36% of all MPOs



Host Agencies / Characteristics Shared with Host Agencies

- Vast majority (81%) of hosted MPOs do not share same name and logo as host agency.
- Vast majority (84%) of hosted MPOs have separate board from host agency.
 - MPOs hosted by regional council more likely to have same board as host agency or a subset of that board.
- 63% of hosted MPOs have budget integrated with budget of the host agency.

Advantages of Hosted Structure

- Reduced cost of operations (shared resources, economies of scale)
- Financial assistance
- Enhanced coordination of planning efforts

Disadvantages of Hosted Structure

- Administrative rules/procedures of host agency
- Blurring between MPO and host agency responsibilities, identities, and boundaries
- Lack of autonomy and independence

MPO Staffing and Use of Consultants

- Median number of employees: 5 full-time and 1 part-time.
- Average of 1 employee per 50,600 population in planning area.
- Staff specialization starts to occur when staff size reaches 8.

Specialties on Staff

- MPOs were asked: Did any staff member spend more than half of their time in a specialized area?

Specialty	Percent of MPOs with this Specialty	Median Staff Size
GIS	43.2%	10
Travel Demand Modeling	25.7%	14
Transit	34.6%	8
Bicycle and Pedestrian	35%	10
Public Involvement	24.5%	11
Safety	16.7%	13

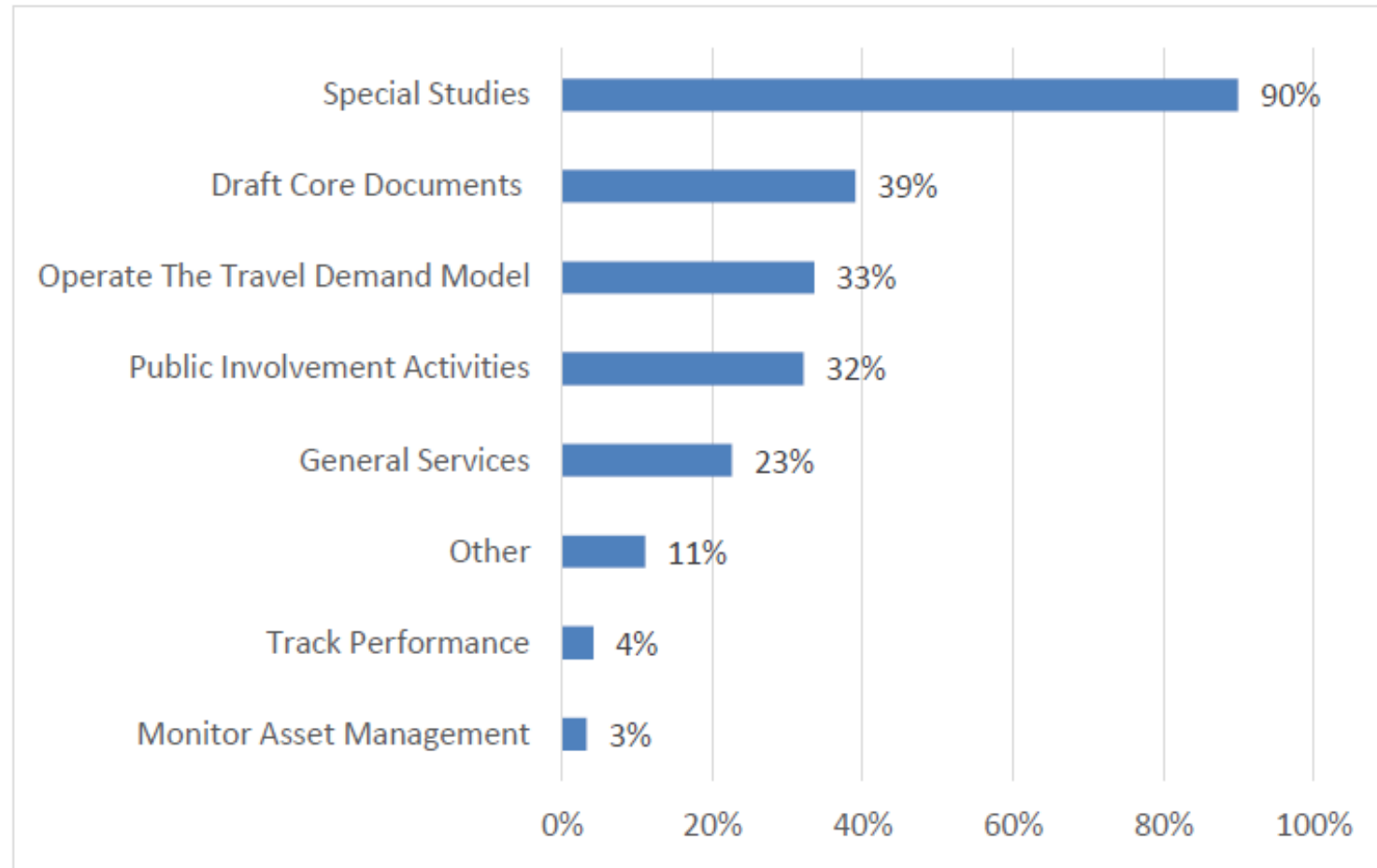
Only selected results are shown

MPO Staffing and Use of Consultants (cont.)

- Staff time is allocated, on average:
 - 20% to public involvement activities
 - 22% to committee management
 - 23% to general administration

- On average, 27% of MPO budgets are spent on consultants.

Uses of Consultants



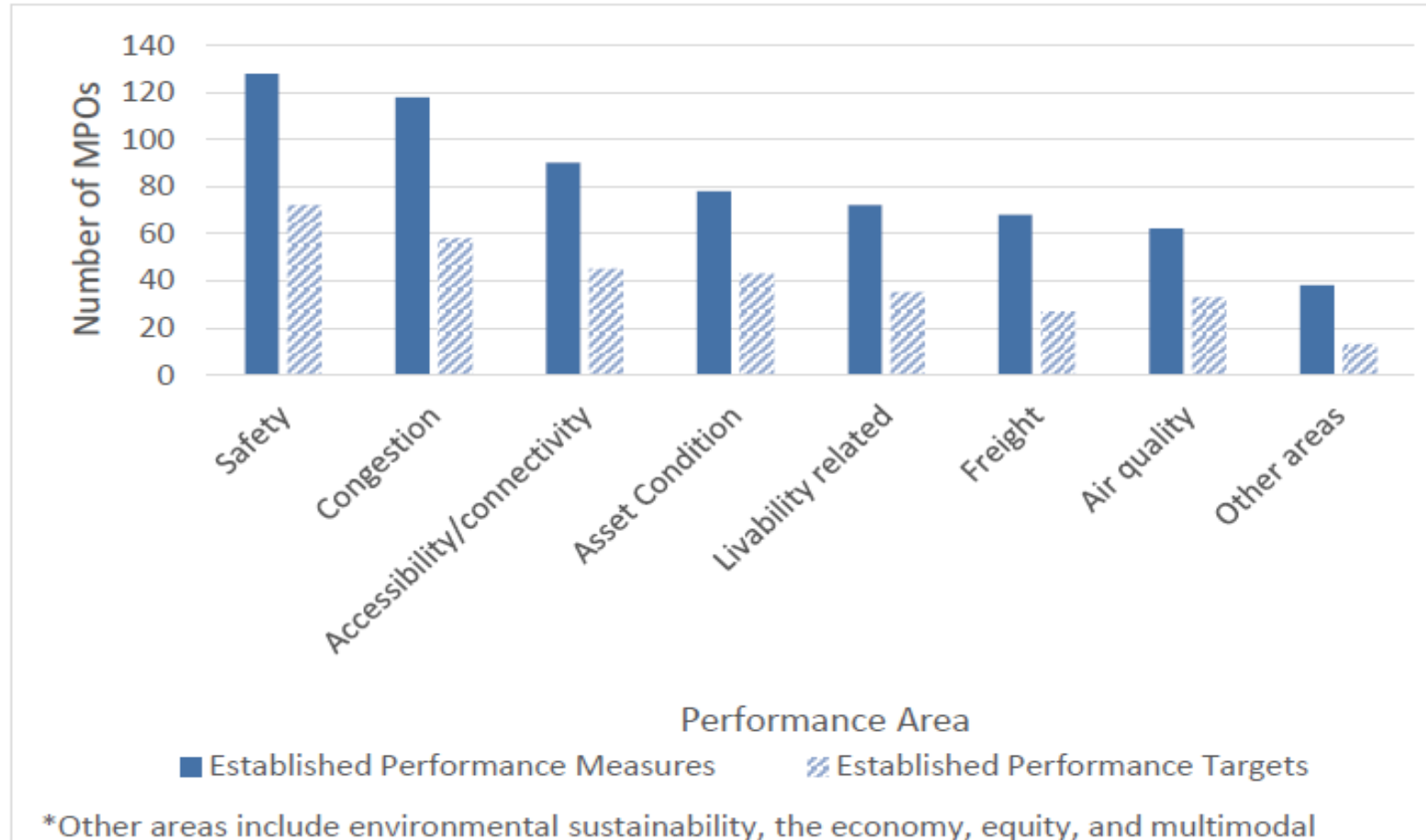
MPO Workforce Issues

- Larger MPOs tend to have more stable staff rosters, with smaller MPOs having more difficulty retaining employees.
- 2/3s of MPOs reported pay was competitive.

Performance-Based Planning and Programming/Scenario Planning

- As of early 2016, 94% of MPOs were already transitioning to performance-based planning and programming as directed by MAP-21.
- About ½ of MPOs said implementation of PBPP has required reallocation of resources and prioritization of tasks.
 - 80% said it increased staff workload by 20% or less.
- 58% of MPOs used scenario planning in development of their most recent LRTP.

Uses of Performance Measures/Targets in LRTPs



Discussion Questions

- How well does your MPO governance and administrative structure work? Has a change ever been considered?
- Do any MPOs/RPCs have non-voting members on their boards?
- Have any MPOs/RPCs ever undertaken a strategic planning effort?
- What orientation and education do you provide for board members? Have you developed a board handbook?

Discussion Questions

- What advisory committees do you have? Are they effective in providing input in drafting plans etc., including input on how MPO decisions will impact local governments?
- Do you feel you receive adequate technical support from FHWA and WisDOT? For what areas could you use more assistance?

Discussion Questions

- Do you have staffing issues (e.g., retention, obtaining staff with needed expertise, training, etc.)?
- Do you have a budget for regular consultant assistance? For what projects/studies/plans do you use consultants?