

Broad public input on the Public Participation Plan

The ad-hoc committee that created the Public Participation Plan provided focused public input. Broad public input was sought twice: after the committee had created the Purpose and Objectives, and during the 45-day public comment period on the draft Plan.

We designed an online survey using Survey Monkey and collected responses from June 23 to July 16, 2017. We linked to the survey on the RVARC web page and Facebook page. RIDE Solutions included the survey in their newsletter. A paper version of the survey was available at the RVARC Open House on June 29, 2017. Respondents could enter their email for a chance to win one of ten \$5-Starbucks gift cards.

Responding to feedback from the first survey, we designed a second survey for a pop-up booth held at Krogers grocery store at The Towers on Wednesday, August 2, 2017 from 4:00 – 6:00 pm. We distributed 20 \$5-Kroger gift cards as survey incentives.

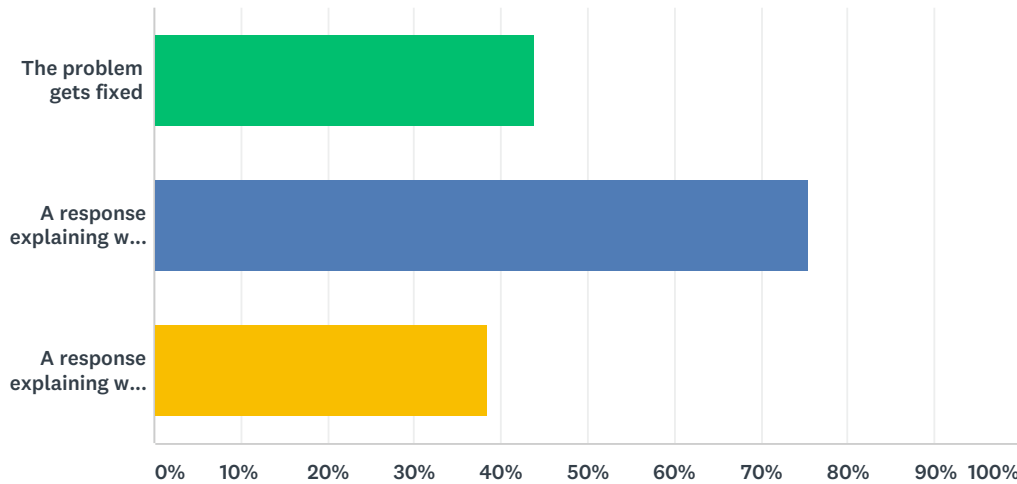
We collected a total of 82 responses, 62 from the online survey and 20 at the pop-up booth (Table 1).

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF SURVEY RESPONSES

Survey #1	# responses
Web link	13
RIDE Solutions newsletter	47
Open House	2
Total responses	62
Survey #2	
Pop-up booth	20
Total responses, both surveys	82

Q1 MEANINGFULNESS: If you shared your transportation problems, what would convince you that the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization listened and considered your input?

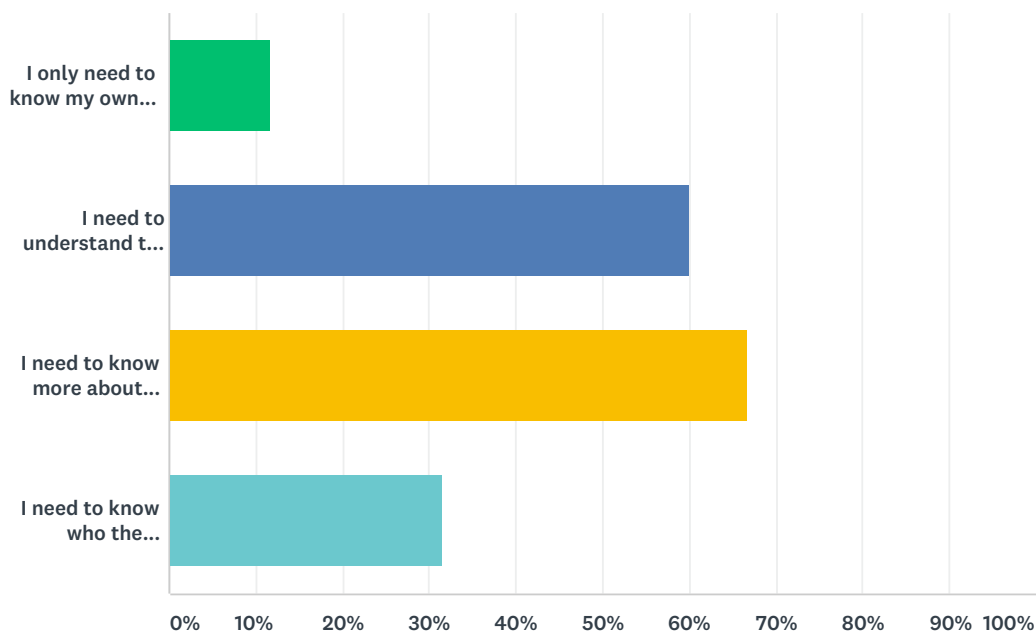
Answered: 57 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The problem gets fixed	43.86%	25
A response explaining when and how the problem will be fixed.	75.44%	43
A response explaining why the problem won't be fixed.	38.60%	22
Total Respondents: 57		

Q2 QUALITY INPUT: What do you need to know to give thoughtful, practical input on transportation planning?

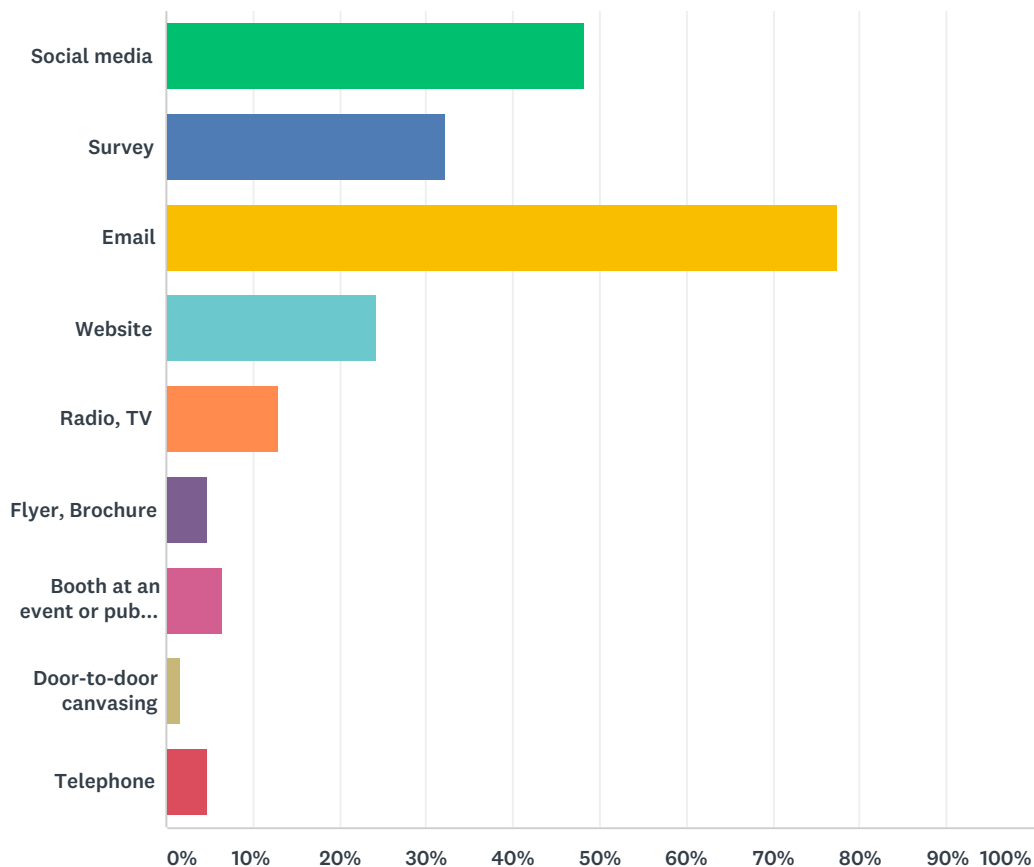
Answered: 60 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I only need to know my own transportation experiences	11.67%	7
I need to understand the state and federal strings attached to funding	60.00%	36
I need to know more about other people's transportation needs and challenges	66.67%	40
I need to know who the decision makers are	31.67%	19
Total Respondents: 60		

Q3 QUANTITY: To get a high quantity of responses, public input should be easy. What is the easiest way to reach you?

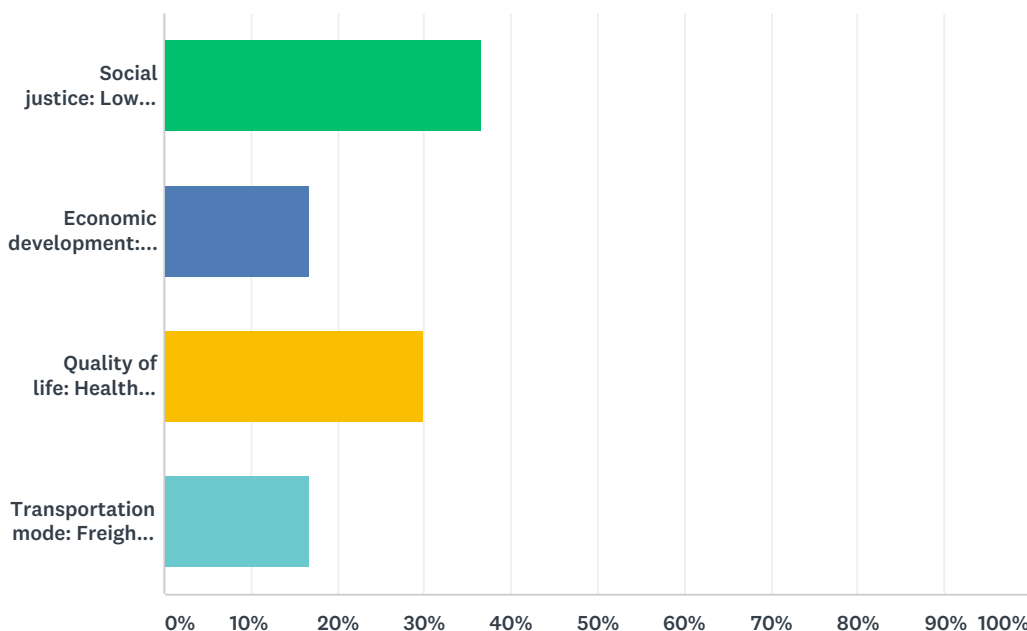
Answered: 62 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Social media	48.39%	30
Survey	32.26%	20
Email	77.42%	48
Website	24.19%	15
Radio, TV	12.90%	8
Flyer, Brochure	4.84%	3
Booth at an event or public place	6.45%	4
Door-to-door canvasing	1.61%	1
Telephone	4.84%	3
Total Respondents: 62		

Q4 VARIETY OF INPUT: Hearing from lots of people is great, but not as helpful if they are all the same experiences and perspectives. Some people have extra challenges in providing input, or are underrepresented in public input. Which category is most important to you?

Answered: 60 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Social justice: Low income, Disability, Minority, Limited English Proficiency	36.67%	22
Economic development: Business, Marketing, Tourism, Recreation	16.67%	10
Quality of life: Health, Education	30.00%	18
Transportation mode: Freight, Transit, Bicycle, Pedestrian	16.67%	10
TOTAL		60

RVTPO Responses to individual comments	
MEANINGFULNESS: If you shared your transportation problems, what would convince you that the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization listened and considered your input?	RVTPO Response
a response explaining either way (fixed or not fixed)	This is addressed in the Public Participation Plan.
A response of if, when and how the problem can be fixed. I am not aware that the TPO responses to input unless there is a specific ask. I would suggest that the meeting times be circulated as save the date, going to happen, happening, just happened and what occurred.	This is addressed in the Public Participation Plan.
an explanation of priorities and primary focus areas	This is addressed in the Long-Range Transportation Plan
bus routes can not be changed ever by request to help moms with babies get to WIC in NW	Your comment has been forwarded to the appropriate agency.
QUALITY INPUT: What do you need to know to give thoughtful, practical input on transportation planning?	
I need to know potential projects and their cost	This is addressed in the Long-Range Transportation Plan
They need to stop saying that they don't have money in the budget to improve public transportation and spend money extending hours	Your comment has been forwarded to the appropriate agency.
To provide quality input I need to hear about how decisions impact the neighborhoods, the valley and the commonwealth. Planning needs to be local, regional and state.	This is addressed in the Long-Range Transportation Plan
Trends/statistics of transportation over past few years	This is addressed in the Long-Range Transportation Plan
what are the current goals, issues, and priorities in play?	This is addressed in the Long-Range Transportation Plan
QUANTITY: To get a high quantity of responses, public input should be easy. What is the easiest way to reach you?	
A time and place for persons to share. Give and take for the public.	This is addressed in the Public Participation Plan.
just don't ever call on the phone--so many scammers that we can't even answer it anymore	This is addressed in the Public Participation Plan.
Mail	This is addressed in the Public Participation Plan.

VARIETY OF INPUT: Hearing from lots of people is great, but not as helpful if they are all the same experiences and perspectives. Some people have extra challenges in providing input, or are underrepresented in public input. Which category is most important to you?	
Increased Bicycle-safe roadway options.	The Long-Range Transportation Plan addresses all transportation modes
Particularly the Valley Metro Bus	The Long-Range Transportation Plan addresses all transportation modes
Some of the above groups have limited input. Barriers; time of meetings, English as the main language, and the lack of response when people do speak out. Why care? No one listens or at least they don't hear what I say".	By providing feedback, we hope people will feel that their voice does make a difference
this question is confusing: do you mean which category of people do i feel are underrepresented? or just which category is most important to me?	RVTPPO staff are pursuing training and resources to improve survey quality
This question makes no sense. Most important for what	RVTPPO staff are pursuing training and resources to improve survey quality
The Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization seeks public participation to protect the integrity and transparency of transportation planning. The four goals of the public participation plan are meaningfulness, quality, quantity, and variety of input. Does this miss anything?	
a willingness to listen to the public when there are questions that need to be answered.	Included in the Objective "meaningful to the public"
"quality" is super subjective. everybody wants quality, but nobody's definition of quality is the same as someone else's. this seems like it should be something more related to "purpose" and whether that purpose achieves the goals of the plan/organization	"High quality" input is defined in the Public Participation Plan
Buses need to be running lot later then what they are now doing	Your comment has been forwarded to the appropriate agency.

Communication between planners and all stakeholders	Included in the Objectives "high quantity" and "variety of input"
design (good design is comprehensible to non- english language speakers)	RVTPPO staff are pursuing training and resources to improve survey quality
Education, this process is complex and long; the public needs to understand the process	Included in the Objective "high quality"
I think those 4 cover it.	
I think you covered it.	
I would add "equality" to ensure that all ages and demographics are included.	Included in the Objective "variety of input"
no	
No	
no	
no	
no	
No	
No	
No	
NO. Great survey.	
no--it sounds good to me.	
Nothing I can think of at this time.	
openness and accessibility	Included in the Objectives "high quantity" and "variety of input"
Reliability	
Strategic, long-term thinking about current and future transportation needs	Included in the Objective "high quality"
They are not recognizing the importance of public transportation. They just want to put a money value on it instead of understanding that the money will make itself back	Are you referring to federal and state legislators and decision-makers? The RVTPPO hopes to leverage federal and state funding to meet our region's transportation priorities, including public transportation, and does from time to time inform legislators of our priorities.

<p>This may be the goal. The voice of authority are the staff and community representatives of the TPO. There isn't any reason for transportation users to bother making time to be heard. Deaf ears?</p>	<p>Included in the Objective "meaningful to the public"</p>
<p>Transparency itself, and responding to concerns.</p>	<p>Transparency is included in the Purpose of public participation. Responding to concerns is part of the Objective, "meaningful to the public"</p>
<p>When driving pass a bus stop I notice that there are very few seats or shelters.</p>	<p>Your comment has been forwarded to the appropriate agency.</p>
<p>You sure confused me</p>	<p>RVTPPO staff are pursuing training and resources to improve survey quality</p>
<p>Other comments?</p>	
<p>As an advocate for people with disabilities I've been advocating for better public transportation throughout the years. We need this so we can have a more productive social life in the community.</p>	<p>The Long-Range Transportation Plan addresses all transportation modes</p>
<p>i almost missed the link to this survey, and i bet a lot of people will.</p>	<p>The survey was included in a follow-up eblast which improved the response rate.</p>
<p>I am interested in connecting transportation to community based art. This is art that is meaningful and life improving rather than decorative. The transportation experience could be improved though this colaboration.</p>	<p>RIDE Solutions, like RVTPPO, is a program of the Regional Commission, and has art and transportation programs.</p>
<p>I know the city of Roanoke cannot do anything about Valley Metro but you could be our voice in meetings. We would like the bus routes to go until 11pm and run on Sundays and Holidays. A lot of people have to work those days and late hours who do not have cars or any other transportation. Bus routes don't go far enough, like all the way down Electric Road from Tanglewood Mall to Lewis Gale Hospital. They don't stop in front to the WIC office in NW. Mothers have to walk to blocks to get there with babies and toddlers. Covered shelters at bus stops would be appreciated.</p>	<p>Your comment has been forwarded to the appropriate agency.</p>

<p>I think it would be good to have particular problems (examples) that you are trying to solve and go from there. YOu might even have test people who agree to report every day on their experiences to help fill out the information you get.</p> <p>Transportation access depends upon so many things and people's access to jobs depends upon transportation. I don't have this issue now, but in the past I have been unable to keep jobs because transportation was unreliable and there was no back up/alternative way of getting to work.</p>	<p>Goal A of the Long-Range Transportation Plan is Economic Competitiveness and Prosperity, which includes job access.</p>
<p>need more time to be able to transfer from one bus to another . bus running a little late like 2 minutes the dispatcher or supervisor whoever it is. can't call the driver to see where he/she is before letting the other buses go especially when it is on a Saturday and the buses are running hourly and people are trying to get to WORK.</p>	<p>Your comment has been forwarded to the appropriate agency.</p>
<p>No</p>	
<p>Please continue to work on the proposed transportation plan and extend para transit service area and extend hours of operation for Star and Cortran. Thank you.</p>	<p>Your comment has been forwarded to the appropriate agency.</p>
<p>Roanoke City has asked for citizen input before when funding grant monies. There is so much money - the group is given the money. Each group is challenged to spend the monies and prioritize the projects that need funding. Each group makes their list...lists are compared. You get to listen and also to speak to persons with various transportation needs.</p> <p>EX: Polling place was wrong. Person had no car, no bus service to transport to correct voting precinct.</p>	<p>That sounds like a fun and effective way to get public input.</p>
<p>The lack of public transportation in Roanoke concerns me. Also the lack of funding given to its development and the lack of priority given to it by the city.</p>	<p>Your comment has been forwarded to the appropriate agency.</p>

Why does variety of input matter? Are you saying one squeaky wheel should balance 30 educated answers?	Sometimes it is a balance between what the majority want and what is essential for a minority. More often, it is simply a matter of trying to learn about all the different challenges faced.
Feel free to tell us a little bit about yourself, such as what interests or organizations you represent.	
Bicycle, pedestrian safety on the roadways	The Long-Range Transportation Plan addresses all transportation modes.
Bike commuter	
Bike commuting, access for all.	The Long-Range Transportation Plan addresses all transportation modes.
Commissioner for RRHA; transit professional	
Continue to Improve bike riding options in the valley	The Long-Range Transportation Plan addresses all transportation modes.
ensuring that people with disabilities have access to suit their transportation needs	Through the Objective "variety of input", we strive to ensure that people with disabilities have a voice in transportation planning.
Franklin County	
I am a local small business owner who is very active in my church and serves on a handful of boards in my community. I love cycling and playing sports, attending concerts/festivals and eating.	
I am a physically challenged community advocate. And I currently work for The Blue Ridge Independent Living Center.	
I am legally blind and represent a group of blind/legally blind individuals, many of whom feel trapped by inadequate transportation, especially evenings and weekends.	
I am retired from the City of Roanoke and sit on the board of the Blue Ridge Independent Living Center.	
I commute by bicycle 16 miles each work day. Some roads, particularly in Vinton are far from bike-friendly. This needs to be improved.	The Long-Range Transportation Plan addresses all transportation modes. And-- 16 miles, wow!
I have 2 young children and my family enjoys being outside, so environmental betterment is important to me.	

I like to bike and am big on bike safety. Real bike access means people can get anywhere.	The Long-Range Transportation Plan addresses all transportation modes.
I live and work in southwest Roanoke county; I strongly feel that improving transportation will improve the quality of life for all residents of the valley. Safe biking and pedestrian lanes (and public trans) are needed for better access to schools, libraries, shopping, and work... So much within a couple of miles for most people, but you have to get in your car to go anywhere safely.	The Long-Range Transportation Plan addresses all transportation modes.
I teach at Community High School and am a co-director of Liminal Art Gallery.	
I work at the Science Museum of Western Virginia. I cycle and walk daily, using both as modes of transportation. I really appreciate the new bike share program.	
I work for Roanoke City Parks and Recreation and I care very much about increasing Roanoke's livability.	Goal E of the Long-Range Transportation Plan is "Healthy Environment"
I work in the non-profit sector as a disability advocate with a focus on home modifications for people with disabilities.	
i'm a Roanoke IMBA member and new board member, and i'm on the Big Lick SOUP organizing committee. i'm from the Roanoke area, but lived elsewhere for almost 20 years and returned 1.5 years ago.	Welcome back!
I'm active, speed skating and roller skating. I don't represent any organizations.	
I'm an advocate for people with disabilities. I use public transportation a variety of community events. I used to work for the Salem Red Sox, but had to quit due to lack of evening public transportation	Goal A of the Long-Range Transportation Plan is Economic Competitiveness and Prosperity, which includes job access.
Individuals with disabilities	
middle income/live in low income area/work for a non-profit	
New in town (5 mths), refugees, average low-to-low-middle income folks, older adults	

<p>Professionally, I work to make local food systems more resilient - think farmers markets. Personally, I'm a big advocate for pedestrian and bicycle issues.</p>	<p>The Long-Range Transportation Plan addresses all transportation modes.</p>
<p>Public education, the cycling community, nonprofits, ELLs, economically disadvantaged children</p>	
<p>represent the Rescue Mission of Roanoke</p>	
<p>Rescue Mission of Roanoke</p>	
<p>resident of Roanoke City. I am interested in the buses running later and operating on Sunday. A lot of folks who need to use the bus line after hours so they can get to and from work, and also to church or the grocery store. I would like to see more people utilize the bus service so that we could get more cars off of the road to cut down on the carbon emissions in the valley.</p>	<p>Your comment has been forwarded to the appropriate agency.</p>
<p>Telecommuter, bicycle leisurely for recreation, environmentalist concerns. Love the Greenways !</p>	
<p>I am interested in voicing a choice for transportation options. I don't seem to hear about ways to offer my insights. Somehow the dates for public input are not arriving to me so I respond. Valley Metro used to have a citizen's advisory committee. Is it still active?</p>	<p>Valley Metro does not have a citizen's advisory committee. We are not aware that it ever has. The Objective "High quantity" means we will try to make it easy to provide input, getting the word out in many different ways so that you will hear about it in time.</p>
<p>What interests me is that I have a safe, quality ride to work such as a bus. Later on I will want a safe, comfortable, and quality ride to shop, doctor visits, social trips and things designed for retired people. I am interested in transportation that can serve more than just the high population areas. I want a bus/train something that is affordable and will serve rural areas.</p>	<p>Goal B of the Long-Range Transportation Plan is "Accessible and Connected Places". While the RVTPO area is the urbanized area, we coordinate with other agencies to support rural areas.</p>

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

The Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization (RVTPO) is developing a new public participation plan. Please help by taking this short survey about our public participation Purpose and Objectives.

The purpose of public participation is to promote the integrity and transparency of the transportation planning process.

We want our public participation to be:

Meaningful to the public. People should feel that their comments matter. Public input into a transportation plan should be timely, happening early enough to influence the outcome, and continue as the plan develops. The RVTPO is accountable to the public for their input: a comment may or may not change the plan, but the RVTPO will at least justify how the comment influenced their thinking.

High quality. When people understand that transportation planning is complex, regional, and long-term, they can give input that is relevant, thoughtful, and practical. The RVTPO will educate and explain. The RVTPO strives for clarity of purpose and clarity of expectation when seeking public input.

High quantity. The RVTPO needs lots of public input. The RVTPO will make it easy to participate and provide different ways to participate.

Variety of input. The RVTPO seeks a breadth of representation in public input that is from different points of view, different needs, and different backgrounds.

1. Rank the four Objectives with 1 being most important and 4 least important.

Objective	Rank (1-4)
Meaningful to the public	
High quality	
High quantity	
Variety of input	

2. Please describe in your own words what the four Objectives mean to you.

Objective	
Meaningful to the public	
High quality	
High quantity	
Variety of input	

Other comments _____

3. To get a high quantity of responses, public input should be easy. What is the best way to reach you? Facebook? Direct mail? Booth at an event?

Other comments:

Tell us a little more about yourself. What organizations or interests do you represent?

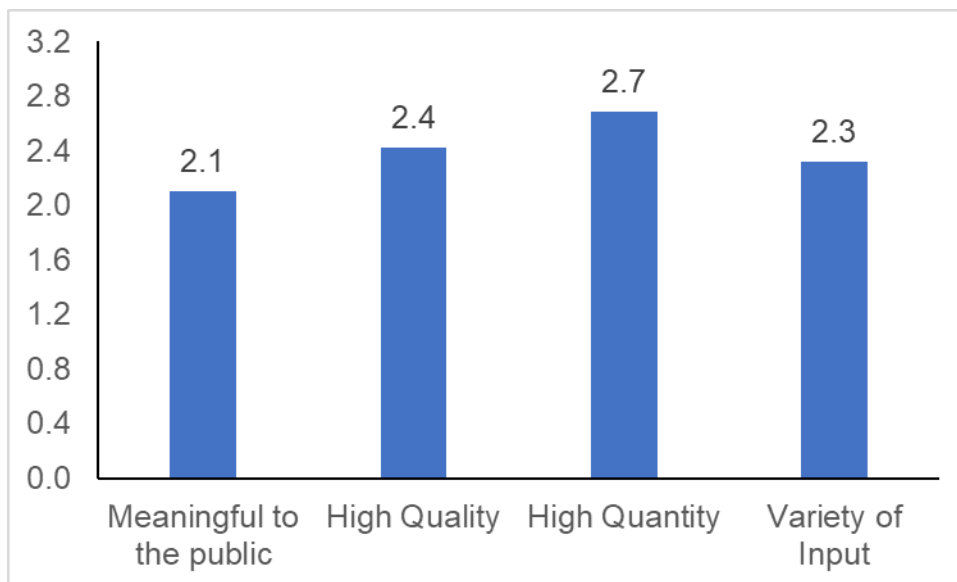
If you'd like to know more about how to participate in transportation planning, please leave your contact information below.

Name:

Email:

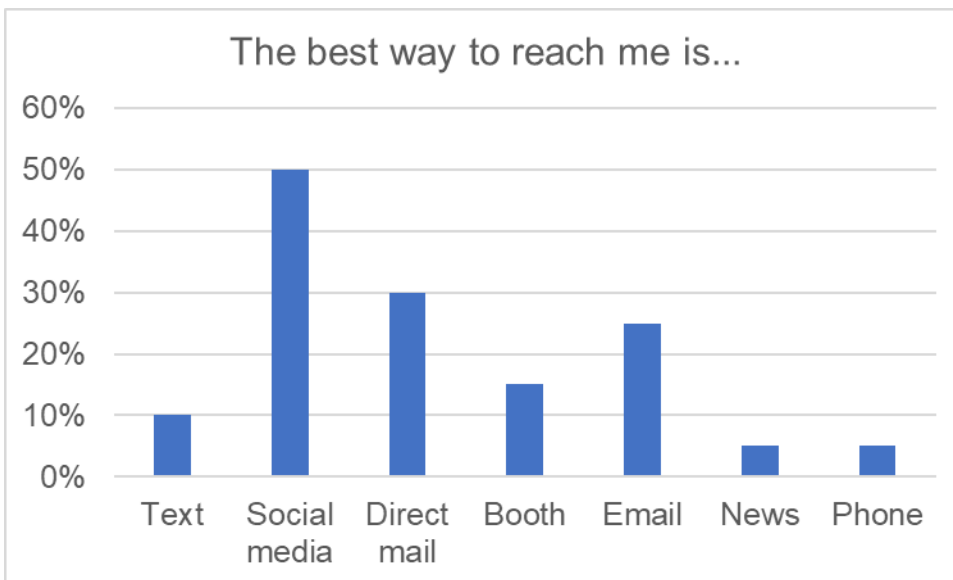
Other contact info:

1. Rank the four Objectives with 1 being most important and 4 being least important.



2. Please describe in your own words what each Objective means to you.

Objective			
Meaningful to the public	More bikes	transportation buses to longer hours running to where buses don't run	
High Quality			not a lot of traffic
High Quantity			
Variety of Input			different people



Individual responses:

direct mail gets recycled

Not direct mail, I toss, sorry

Other comments, individual responses:

More bike paths and bike parking. More pedestrian pathways

Love the greenway - interested in biking


Demographic information

Respondent	Age	Gender	Race	Transportation Mode	Other
1	middle aged	male	white		
2	millennial	male	African American	drive	
3	26	female	white	drive, bike, walk	Altus chocolate, E Campbell, interested in pedestrian/bike planning
4				drive	Sales rep covering a large geography - lots of windshield time!
5				I drive	
6				use the bus & car	
7				take bus, bike, cab	
8	26			I take the bus everywhere	
9					Wife is teacher. I am just finishing my degree. Moved to Roanoke from Norfolk 1 year ago


10				buses or walk	I believe the city of Roanoke should make more sidewalks. More hours for buses to run longer hours. Republicans
11					Roanoke Symphony, Opera Roanoke, the parks
12	millennial - 20			drive	I've never rode the city bus
13				biking, biking	
14	23		white	I drive usually, but wouldn't be opposed to biking.	Altus chocolate, science museum volunteer. Interested in bike planning and pedestrian planning
15	millennial	male	white		
16				I drive my own vehicle	
17					poor blue collar, paints
18	50			bike for recreation	1 child, home car agency owner, 15 employees, liberal & Democrat
19	retired				Retired city fire with state and city. Democrats

Public comment

In compliance with federal law, the draft Public Participation Plan was released for a 45-day public comment period, beginning with notices in the Roanoke Times and the Roanoke Tribune. Copies of the draft plan were placed in 14 libraries in the TPO area with blank comment forms. A link to the plan and online comment form was posted on the RVARC web page and Facebook page. Members of the Public Participation Plan ad-hoc committee were encouraged by email to submit comments and to forward the links to their clients and networks. Feedback from the Policy Board and Transportation Technical Committee resulted in a reorganization for more logical flow, to delineate federal requirements more clearly. To make the document shorter and less intimidating to the public, appendix materials were omitted from the document and made available on the website. A public hearing was held on February 22, 2018.

 Tue 1/16/2018 12:03 PM
Morgan Romeo
RE: Public Participation Plan

To: Rachel Ruhlen

 You replied to this message on 1/16/2018 12:05 PM.

Hi Rachel,

I just read through the plan – it looks awesome. You did such a great job capturing all of the opinions and statements made by the committee and stakeholders – kudos to you!

I have only one comment, and that is regarding page 15 – the example comment about the mother and WIC. While I think it's a great example in a verbal setting, the placement of the quote is awkward and almost offensive regarding that population. A mother trying to get her baby to WIC *could* be interested. I understand the context because I was at the meeting where this example was given, but in writing it could be taken as something else.

Just my thoughts.
Morgan

Thank you for both comments! I'll remove the quote. I see what you mean – we definitely don't intend to be offensive. Glad you caught that!
Rachel




Tue 1/23/2018 12:22 PM

Marc Davis

RE: Public Participation Plan

To: Rachel Ruhlen

Cc: Karen Michalski

 You replied to this message on 1/23/2018 2:04 PM.

Good afternoon Rachel.

I have reviewed the Public Participation Plan as requested. Overall I feel that the Plan is well worded and does have people with disabilities in mind. There are a couple of areas that I feel could be tweaked to be more inclusive.

Objective 3, Variety of input- page 16

There are several groups referenced in regards to points of view represented by people of varied demographic indicators (color, race, etc.) but no mention of gender biases or members of the LGBT community. They should most likely be included in this section to reduce the possibility of someone feeling excluded or ostracized.

Objective 4.2, Public participation strategies- page 21

There is reference to a telephone option to allow people to call and participate but no mention of TDD machines for the hearing impaired. Implementation of a TDD machine would also give the hearing impaired an opportunity to participate via telephone.

Objective 4.3, Final comment and public hearing- page 26

There is mention of a public hearing that will allow people in the community to voice their opinion of the plan. There is no mention of formats available for those with visual and /or hearing impairments that will allow them to participate. It may be advantageous to offer accommodations prior to the public hearing with formats for the hearing and /or visually impaired in an effort to maximize inclusivity for people with disabilities in mind.

I hope this feedback is helpful. If we can be of further assistance, please don't hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,

Marc K. Davis
Community Services Manager
Blue Ridge Independent Living Center
1502B Williamson Rd. NE
Roanoke, VA 24012

Thank you Marc! Those are all good suggestions and I'll make those changes.

"I myself quit driving because of sickness that endangered me & others. The plan needs to be affordable for people w/ lower incomes also availability counts. It is hard for people to save just for a ride on the trains." – Betty Penn

Response: Thank you for your comment! We hope public participation is affordable and convenient to the public, but we also understand affordable transportation is a priority, particularly for people with low-income.

I support the current draft of the Public Participation Plan. It represents the committee's feedback and suggestions. – Stacie Lea Turner

Response: Thank you for your comment – and for your contributions to the draft Plan!

I support the Public Participation Plan. – Aaron Fallon

Response: Thank you for your comment – and for your contributions to the draft Plan!

I support the Public Participation Plan. Our committee had 30 to 40 people participate at one meeting or another and we worked hard to create a good Plan. – Michelle Via

Response: Thank you for your comment – and for your contributions to the draft Plan!