

RVTPO Federal Certification Review 2020 Public Input Survey Results

A survey to collect public input on the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization's planning and programming process was available for fifteen days between March 26 – April 10, 2020. Sixty-five people took the survey (attached). The survey was promoted through:

- Survey link on the RVARC blog (Transportation) and the RVARC Facebook page
- Newspaper ads in the Roanoke Times and the Roanoke Tribune (one day in the paper copy and 10 days on the Roanoke Times website)
- Emailed survey link to about 200 people who had taken an RVTPO survey, served on a committee, or participated in a workshop or meeting
- Survey link in the RVARC e-newsletter
- Facebook post on RVARC Facebook page
- Facebook post boosted to RVTPO zip codes

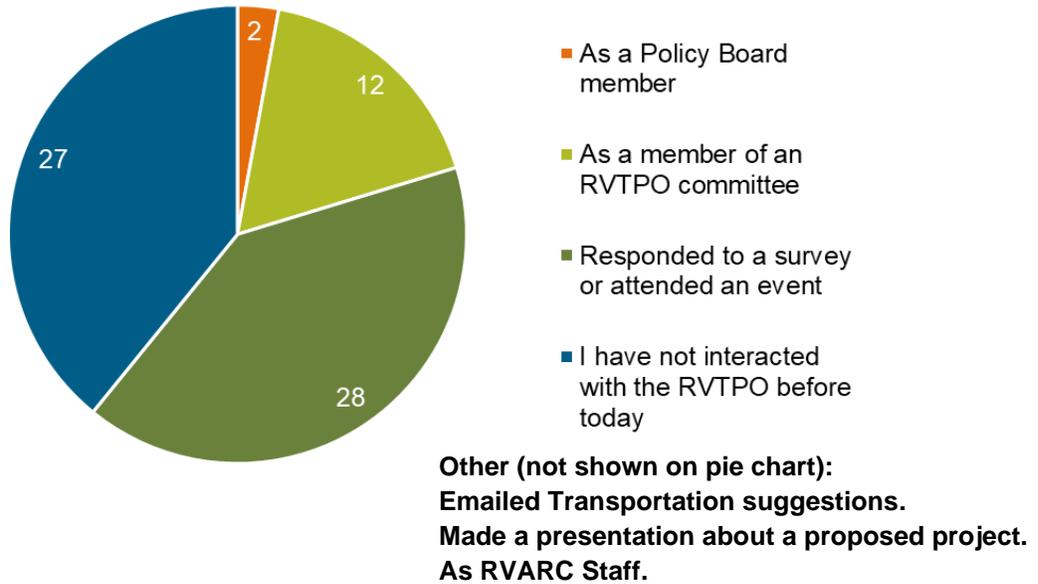
The survey had two introductory multiple-choice questions, eight open-ended questions, and demographic questions.

Multiple-Choice Questions

The first question asked “How have you interacted with the RVTPO?” People were able to select more than one response which were as follows:

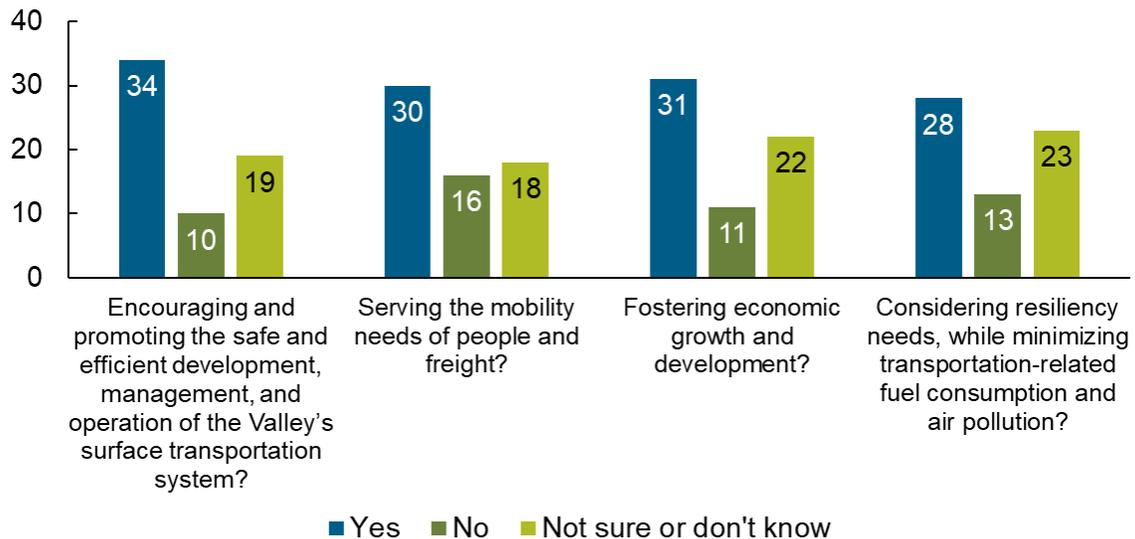
- 28 people had previously completed a survey or attended an RVTPO event
- 27 people had never before interacted with the RVTPO
- 12 people had previously or are currently serving on a RVTPO committee (e.g. Transportation Technical Committee, Public Participation Plan Committee, Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Subcommittee, etc.)
- 3 people provided another interaction with RVTPO (as RVARC staff, emailed transportation suggestions, made a presentation about a proposed project)
- 2 people had previously or are currently serving on the RVTPO Policy Board

How have you interacted with the RVTPO?



The second question asked if the survey respondent agreed that the RVTPO was accomplishing four areas of the transportation planning process as outlined by federal legislation.

Federal legislation established metropolitan planning organizations such as the RVTPO to achieve the following goals. Do you agree that the RVTPO's transportation planning process is



Open-Ended Questions

Survey participants could comment on up to eight open-ended questions which corresponded with the main agenda items to be discussed at the Federal Certification Review. Each of the questions provided links to the related document or information. Nineteen people commented on at least one of the eight questions; forty-six people did not provide feedback on any open-ended question.

| Number of people | who answered | this number of questions |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| 46 | | 0 |
| 13 | | 1 |
| 4 | | 2 |
| 1 | | 2 |
| 1 | | 5 |

The open-ended questions were introduced with this text:

“The Federal Review Team is particularly interested in the following areas of the RVTPO’s transportation planning and programming process. If you have feedback on these areas, please let us know.” (followed by the eight areas)

1. The RVTPO’s Policy Board and Committee structure, study area boundary, or work program

- You should be spending more time serving smaller communities. Larger ones have their own Transportation and Planning staff
- Franklin County should be added.

2. How the RVTPO budgets for the planned investments in the Long-Range Plan

- See above
- Budgeting for planned investments in the long range plan is increasingly difficult, if not impossible, given Virginia's move to the Smart Scale funding process. Funds are no longer dedicated to local jurisdictions through urban or secondary funding formulas and the Smart Scale process, despite its benefits, does not provide a guaranteed funding source for localities that predictably permits an effective budget process.

3. How projects are selected for pursuit of funding, the programs that fund projects, and their inclusion in the Long-Range Transportation Plan

- Look at changes in resurfacing. You seem to resurface when there is no need. Take a look at extending a road life another year or two to save money or use the money somewhere else.
- There is far too much redundancy in these operations with many resources be splurged in one area while other areas go unserved/neglected
- Also see above

- 4. How the RVTPO applies the ten Federal Planning Factors in its transportation planning efforts**
 - Local needs are best assessed by people there, not by the federal government

- 5. How the RVTPO prioritizes transportation investments in its Transportation Improvement Program**
 - There is too much focus on highways and trails. There need to be more options for poor people to move around using bus.

- 6. How the RVTPO conducts transit planning in coordination with its locality partners and transit agencies**
 - There need to be buses going to the county and nearby towns where there are jobs.
 - Public transportation is a weakness
 - Obviously the coordination between the city and surrounding counties needs to improve. Hopefully you can create interoperability between all jurisdictions.
 - As an ADA accessibility consultant, I am appreciative of the fact that I was invited on a walking tour of downtown Vinton to identify areas for improvement to accessibility.

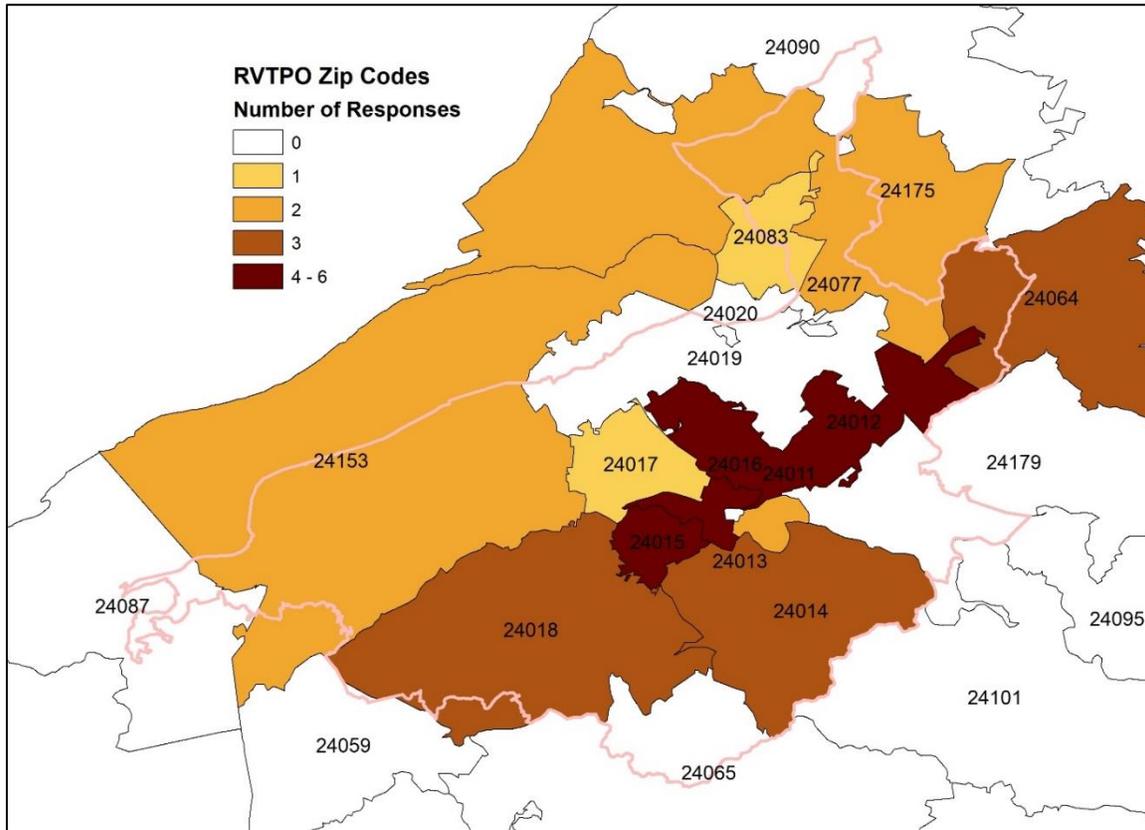
- 7. How the public is involved in the planning and financial programming process**
 - Public outreach for input is extremely insufficient.
 - Be aware one time does not fit everyone's schedule
 - As I've never heard of the RVTPO before and I've had many thoughts over the years on areas that needed work I can't say y'all are getting the word out very well.
 - A shroud of secrecy is kept at all times with members of the public being outright ignored at times, finding out the most basic information is a struggle.
 - When you bring a conceptual plan to the very first public meeting it's pretty obvious you've already decided what you're going to do, and the hearing is just to check a box
 - Their meetings need to be more formal to be more effective, ie...Microphones & limit time for public speakers. 2) when they receive professional grade letter or email from general public, they should acknowledge receipt.
 - Non-biased public input is crucial; many surveys sent out are flawed by being compiled by biased staff, so don't present both sides of an issue.

- 8. Please provide any other comments, questions, concerns regarding the RVTPO planning and programming process, or leave blank if you don't have anything to add.**
 - If the RVTPO truly valued my input, they would present the information in terms that can be understood by the public. These lengthy documents crammed with language that is not understood by the average citizen does not promote public input. It only furthers the opinion of many that the government serves its own interests while pretending to care what the public thinks. It furthers my opinion that the poor and the interests of the poor are not considered as the documents linked are not written to be understood by those outside the field of transportation.

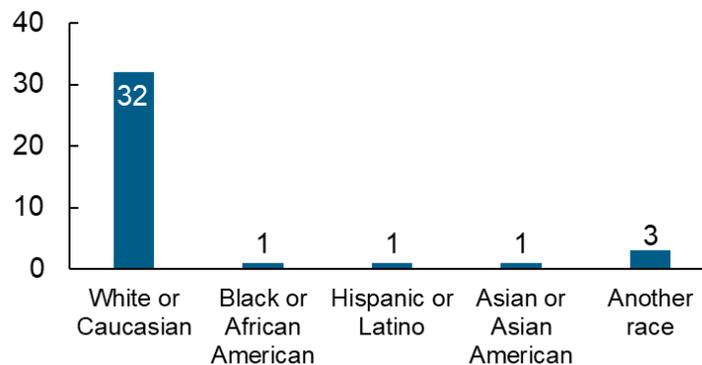
- The outdated practice of adding lanes to the interstate and other highways is expensive and dangerous. Please stop wasting money by adding lanes and instead enforce speed limits and other safety rules as well as getting the tractor trailers off the road and onto trains.
- Let's keep the passages open for low wage to get groceries, etc. You can close it down later and have them wandering the streets. Would that make you happy?
- Terrible survey. Questions were unclear to incomprehensible. Full of bureaucratic jargon, they're worded like they were copied from government policy documents .
- I am concerned with your lack of legitimacy and use of public funds.
- The whole thing is far too opaque, legitimate concerns are met with responses like: "you don't know all of the factors" when the concerned citizens ask for information we are told it can not be shared due to "privacy concerns" just another bloated bureaucracy mismanaging funds.
- I am a bicyclist who lives in Blue Ridge, and bikes the Rt 460 corridor daily as far west as the Kroger. Much further than that toward Roanoke, and being on a bike becomes hazardous. Two things: it seems that 460 out in my direction, with its wide and mostly well-maintained shoulders, could have bike lanes added with not too much trouble. As it is, I almost never see another cyclist, and I suspect one reason for this is the lack of dedicated bike lanes. Secondly, Roanoke seems uniquely positioned to foster mass transit from outlying areas, as it is fed by four valleys, funneling traffic into the urban area. In light of climate change, it is urgent that we get people out of their cars (as a nation, we set a record last year at 3.3 trillion miles driven, with 1.6 billion tons of CO2 released). Geographically, we are well-placed to do this. But as people are unlikely to part with car travel on their own, how can we incentivize this shift? Of course there would need to be a workable alternative - feeder buses with smaller vans at the terminus point, perhaps. Typically, economics speaks more loudly than conscience on lifestyle matters. Tolls to enter the metro area? Steep parking fees downtown? Increased state gas taxes? My thoughts, for what they are worth.
- Did not respond to effective suggestions after soliciting input.
- U.S. 460 needs to be widened going east toward downtown.

Demographic questions

Thirty-six of 65 survey participants provided their zip code: 24012 and 24016 (6 each); 24015 (5); 24014, 24018, 24064 (3 each); 24013, 24153, 24175 (2 each); 24017, 24083, 24121, 24151 (1 each).



Thirty-seven of 65 survey participants provided their race/ethnicity:



This survey had no or low participation from some zip codes and from people who identify as minorities. As discussed with the Federal Team, staff are experimenting with different strategies to improve public participation from under-responding zip codes and race/ethnicities.

How are we doing?

If you need assistance with this survey, please email rrehlen@rvarc.org or leave a message at (540) 343-4417. Due to COVID-19, we are not in the office but will get back to you promptly.

The Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization (RVTPO) is responsible for planning the Roanoke Valley's future transportation system and programming funds to fulfill that vision. The RVTPO's work is primarily funded by the federal government which reviews regulatory compliance every four years. The Federal Team will consider public input to assess the quality, effectiveness, and any areas of concern on the RVTPO's performance-based multimodal transportation planning and programming process.

The RVTPO and the Federal Team appreciate your input!

1. How have you interacted with the RVTPO?

- As a Policy Board member
- As a member of an RVTPO committee
- Responded to a survey or attended an event
- I have not interacted with the RVTPO before today

Other (please specify)

2. Federal legislation established metropolitan planning organizations such as the RVTPO to achieve the following goals.

Do you agree that the RVTPO's transportation planning process is

| | Yes | No | Not sure or don't know |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Encouraging and promoting the safe and efficient development, management, and operation of the Valley's surface transportation system? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Serving the mobility needs of people and freight? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Fostering economic growth and development? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Considering resiliency needs, while minimizing transportation-related fuel consumption and air pollution? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Evaluate the RVTPO Process Part 1

The Federal Review Team is particularly interested in the following areas of the RVTPO's transportation planning and programming process. If you have feedback on these areas, please let us know. Otherwise, scroll down to skip to the next page.

3. The RVTPO's Policy Board and Committee structure, study area boundary, or work program

4. How the RVTPO budgets for the planned investments in the Long-Range Plan

5. How projects are selected for pursuit of funding, the programs that fund projects, and their inclusion in the Long-Range Transportation Plan

6. How the RVTPO applies the ten Federal Planning Factors in its transportation planning efforts

Evaluate the RVTPO Part II

The Federal Review Team is particularly interested in the following areas of the RVTPO's transportation planning and programming process. If you have feedback on these areas, please let us know. Otherwise, scroll down to skip to the next page.

7. How the RVTPO prioritizes transportation investments in its Transportation Improvement Program

8. How the RVTPO conducts transit planning in coordination with its locality partners and transit agencies

9. How the public is involved in the planning and financial programming process

10. Please provide any other comments, questions, concerns regarding the RVTPO planning and programming process, or leave blank if you don't have anything to add.

Wrap-up

Almost done! Just a couple more questions. Demographic data will be separated from your previous answers.

11. To ensure that public input is received from all parts of the region, please provide your zip code.

12. To ensure that public input is representative of the population of our region, please indicate your race/ethnicity. Select all that apply.

- White or Caucasian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian or Asian American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Another race

13. If you would like to be notified of future RVTPO public input opportunities, please provide your email address.