

Frequently Asked Questions

2020 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

For the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

What is the RTP?

The Pioneer Valley Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) outlines the direction of transportation planning and improvements for the Pioneer Valley through the year 2040. It provides the basis for all state and federally funded transportation improvement projects and planning studies. The RTP is the Pioneer Valley's blueprint for maintaining a safe and efficient transportation system for all modes of travel. It identifies the region's goals, strategies, and projects to both enhance and maintain our transportation system.

What does the RTP include?

The long range plan concentrates on both existing needs and anticipated future deficiencies in our transportation infrastructure for all modes of travel. It presents the preferred strategies to alleviate transportation problems and creates a schedule of regionally significant projects that are financially constrained - in concert with regional goals and objectives and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) legislation.

What is not in the RTP?

The RTP does not include transportation infrastructure that is not eligible for federal transportation dollars. This includes functionally classified local roads and some collector roads in rural areas. The RTP does not specifically identify maintenance projects or include funding for the design of transportation improvement projects.

What is the duration of the RTP?

The RTP is a true long range planning document and must cover a timeframe of at least 20 years.

How often is it updated?

Federal law requires metropolitan areas to have a long-range transportation plan that is updated every four years.

Can the RTP be amended?

Yes, the RTP can be amended at the discretion of the Pioneer Valley MPO. All amendments must be coordinated through the MPO and include a public participation component.

What is financial constraint?

Financial constraint demonstrates that the estimated available funds for transportation for the region are greater than or equal to the financial needs of the region over the life of the plan.

How are projects prioritized?

Transportation improvement projects are prioritized using the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) developed for the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization. The TEC considers a broad range of scoring criteria to rate potential project benefits and impacts on the regional transportation system. More information on the TEC is available [here](#).

How are projects funded?

Projects included in the RTP are funded through the Pioneer Valley Transportation Improvement Program (TIP.) More information on the TIP is available [here](#).

What is a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)?

Federal transportation legislation requires that a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) be designated for each urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 people in order to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process, as a condition of Federal aid. In the Pioneer Valley Region, the MPO is a forum for cooperative decision making and jointly develops, reviews, and endorses major planning documents such as the RTP, TIP, Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and any transportation plan or program that may be required by federal and state laws and regulations.

In the Pioneer Valley, the MPO is comprised of eleven voting members representing the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA), the PVPC, and locally elected officials. More information on the Pioneer Valley MPO is available [here](#).

Why should I get involved?

Gathering public input is an important part of the development of the RTP. PVPC staff collects, analyzes, and summarizes all comments and responses received throughout the RTP planning process. The information and ideas help refine the plan to ensure it reflects community values and interests.

What if a project is not included in the RTP?

Projects that are not included in the RTP are not eligible to receive federal transportation funding. In some cases, a project may be included in the RTP as a "Visionary" project, meaning the project is important but does not currently have an identified source of funds. A project can be amended into the RTP if it has been approved by the MPO and has dedicated funding.