

## CHAPTER 3



*Photo: Public Meeting at South Hadley Town Hall*

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Draft Regional Transportation Plan for the Pioneer Valley (RTP) underwent a public review and comment period consistent with the Pioneer Valley Region Public Participation Process. Early in the development of the RTP a series of focus groups were convened to assist in the development of the draft document. Focus groups consisted of a core group of representatives that were invited to participate in a discussion on the development of the vision statement, goals, needs, and strategies included in the RTP. Comments received as part of the focus groups were used to assist in the development of the problem statements included in the RTP. There were a total of four focus groups on the RTP.

- November 14, 2018 – Bicycle and Pedestrian
- November 14, 2018 – Infrastructure
- December 4, 2018 – Transit
- December 6, 2014 – Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change

To begin each focus group, staff developed a short video describing regional transportation from the viewpoint of the average citizen. This video helped to set the tone for discussion by identifying the regional transportation needs and priorities of a select group of residents. Comments received as part of the focus groups were used to develop a draft vision, goals, needs, strategies and problem statements for the

RTP. This draft version was distributed to the JTC, MPO, and through the PVPC website in January 2019 to continue to solicit comments.

A series of RTP informational products were developed beginning in the fall of 2018 to begin outreach efforts and education on the RTP process. These products are summarized below:

- RTP Webpage - <http://www.pvpc.org/projects/2020-regional-transportation-plan-update>
- RTP Article - <http://www.pvpc.org/content/lot-can-happen-four-years>
- RTP FAQs - <http://www.pvpc.org/sites/default/files/RTP%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions.pdf>
- RTP Brochure
- RTP Survey

All of the products were made available on the dedicated webpage for the RTP update. The RTP article also appeared in PVPC's quarterly newsletter. A copy of the RTP brochure and survey have been included as part of the appendix to this document.

## A. RTP SURVEY

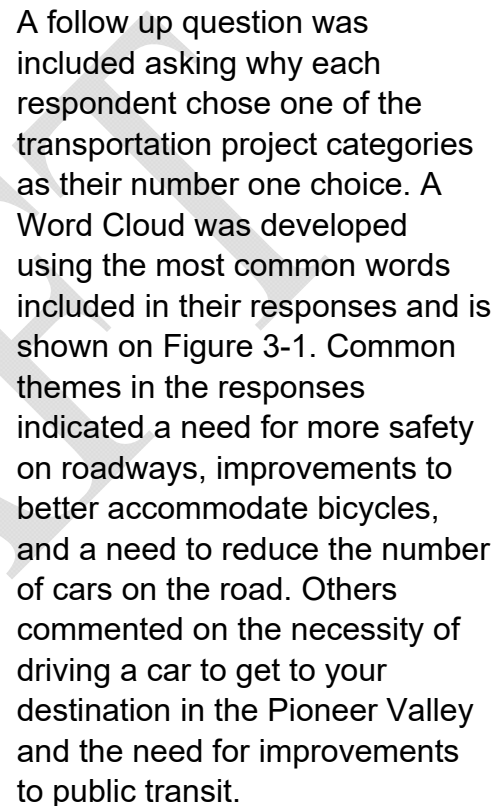
A brief survey was developed in consultation with the JTC to obtain public input on the content of the RTP. The survey was provided in both English and Spanish. To date, over 100 responses have been received. Significant responses have been summarized below.

Respondents were asked to rank a list of transportation improvement categories from most important to least important. This information is summarized in Table 3-1.

**Table 3-1 - What Type of Projects are Important to You?**

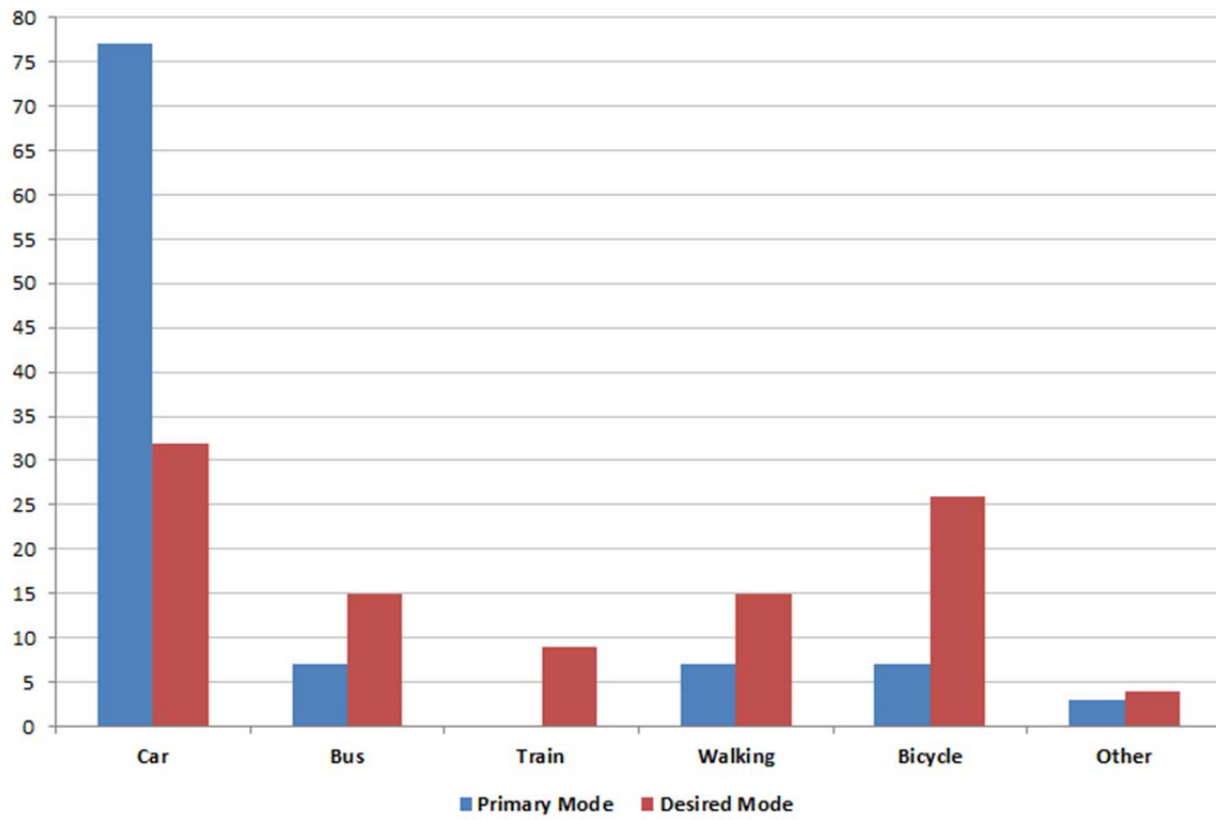
<b>Transportation Improvement Project Category</b>	<b>Score</b>
Projects that enhance the movement and connectivity of pedestrians and bicycles (ex. on road bike lanes and sidewalks)	6.37
Projects that expand or enhance transit. (ex. express bus service and improved bus stops)	6.22
Projects that improve Safety. (ex. improvements that reduce accidents)	5.64
Projects that improve the roadway surface. (ex. paving streets)	5.17
Projects that protect or enhance Environmental Resources such as Wetlands, Streams, Wildlife, and Air Quality. (ex. upgrades to culverts)	4.63
Projects that promote responsible Economic Growth and Development. (ex. multi-modal transportation centers)	4.4
Bridge Projects (ex. repairing bridges with structural deficiencies and/or weight restrictions)	4.27
Projects that preserve Existing Regional Assets such as Parks, Historic Areas, and Farms. (ex. off road bike paths and trails)	4.23
Projects that reduce Traffic Congestion and Travel Time. (ex. signal timing improvements)	4.08

### Figure 3-1 – Transportation Improvements Word Cloud



Chapter 3 – Public Participation

**Figure 3-2 – Primary Vs. Desired Transportation Modes**



Each survey respondent was asked to define what the term “regional transportation” means. This question was included to gain insight on how the average person perceives the regional transportation system. This information was compiled into a Word Cloud that is shown on Figure 3-3. The word “connected” appeared on a large percentage of the definitions. Many responses talked about a transportation system that connects all residents and communities to different transportation modes, areas of employment, schools, and shopping areas. Another common response was that transportation be both safe and accessible.

[illegible]

## B. RTP OUTREACH

PVPC reached out to local groups and organizations to give a presentation on the RTP. Table 3-2 summarizes the outreach on the RTP that has occurred to date.

### Table 3-2 – RTP Outreach Events

Date	Event
Monthly	Pioneer Valley Joint Transportation Committee Meetings
Monthly	Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Meetings
February 12, 2019	West Springfield Rotary Club
February 13, 2019	Transportation Evaluation Criteria Scoring
February 21, 2019	Pioneer Valley Commissioner Meeting
March 20, 2019	Western Massachusetts Historical Commission Coalition
May 20, 2019	Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce Meeting
June 6, 2019	MassDOT CIP Public Meeting at Springfield Public Library

### **C. DRAFT RTP**

The PVPC utilized existing committees such as the Joint Transportation Committee, Pioneer Valley Executive Committee, and Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization to provide routine status updates in the development of the Draft RTP. A brief presentation on the RTP was given, and comments received as part of the meeting were incorporated into the Draft RTP. The monthly JTC meetings were particularly useful to receive feedback from local communities on the content of the RTP.

An environmental consultation day will be scheduled to allow the opportunity for discussion and comment on the potential environmental impacts of transportation projects included in the regional transportation plan. PVPC will provide large scale maps of transportation improvement projects included in the RTP and invite the public and special interest groups to comment on the Draft RTP.

Three public meetings were scheduled to solicit public comments on the Draft Regional Transportation Plan during the formal public participation process:

- June 25, 2019 – Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Springfield, MA
- June 26, 2019 – Northampton City Hall, Northampton, MA
- June 27, 2019 – Westfield, City Hall, Westfield, MA

Paper copies of the Draft RTP were made available during the formal public participation process on request. The Draft RTP was also available for download from PVPC's web page at [www.pvpc.org](http://www.pvpc.org).

**Table 3-3 – Comments Received on the Draft RTP**

Comment	From	MPO Response

This section will be added after the formal public participation process is completed in July.

DRAFT

