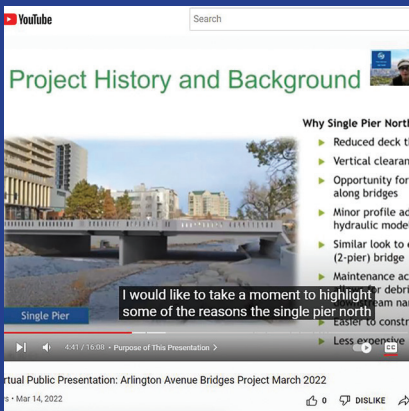
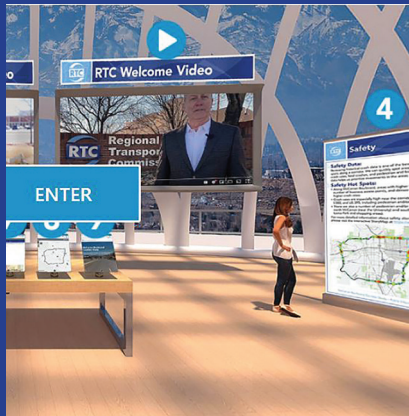




# 2022

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN



**The Public Participation Plan articulates the RTC's commitment to an open and transparent interface with the public and relevant agencies to support the regional transportation planning process.**

# Table of Contents

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
RTC Planning, Public Transit, and Engineering.....	1
2.0 FEDERAL REGULATIONS .....	2
3.0 RTC PLANS & PROGRAMS .....	4
Regional Transportation Plan .....	4
Regional Transportation Improvement Program .....	5
Unified Planning Work Program .....	5
Public Participation Plan.....	5
4.0 PUBLIC/AGENCY INVOLVEMENT IN THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN .....	5
5.0 PARTICIPATION POLICIES, TACTICS, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES .....	8
RTC Policy for Public Involvement.....	8
Public Outreach Toolbox.....	10
Equity and Accessibility .....	11
Access to Outreach Venues .....	11
Public Outreach Communication .....	12
Website.....	12
Social Media .....	13
6.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN REQUIREMENTS .....	13

## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is a guide for the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County (RTC) public participation activities. The PPP articulates the RTC's commitment to an open and transparent interface with the public and relevant agencies to support the regional transportation planning process.

The preparation of the PPP is a regulatory requirement of the federal transportation legislation — the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The IIJA seeks to ensure that citizens are afforded the opportunity to be an integral component of the planning efforts that will shape their communities in the future.

The goal is to provide the highest-quality participation for transportation decision-making by identifying and involving various stakeholders, including community residents, in the planning process. Below are the overarching implementation tactics of the PPP which are consistent with the requirements outlined in Code of Federal Regulations Title 23, Section 450.216:

- Seek maximum public participation throughout the planning process in a timely manner.
- Seek Board and elected-representative involvement to ensure coordination with high-level regional and statewide plans.
- Use effective, accessible, and equitable avenues for distributing information and receiving comments while engaging traditionally underserved populations.
- Inform and educate the public during the planning and decision-making process using accessible tools.

- Explore and expand the use of virtual engagement to increase the amount and value of public participation.
- Design initiatives that will support and encourage effective participation.
- Conduct outreach that bridges language, cultural, and economic differences.
- Provide reasonable accommodation and access to people with disabilities, so that they can easily participate in the regional planning process.
- Consider, evaluate, and respond to public input.
- Evaluate the public participation process regularly.

### RTC Planning, Public Transit, and Engineering

The RTC serves three significant roles for the Reno-Sparks urban area. It is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), public transportation service provider, and implementer of infrastructure improvements and the pavement preservation program for the regional road network. In its role as the MPO, the RTC develops four federally required documents:

- Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) (20-year plan)
- Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) (5-year plan)
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) (2-year plan)
- Public Participation Plan

As the agency responsible for preservation of the regional road network, RTC conducts planning, design, and construction of regional road projects. In addition to new capacity, the RTC seeks to maximize the life of existing roadway infrastructure by funding a preventive maintenance program that keeps regional roads in good condition.

The RTC's regional Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) program enhances the operational efficiency of the existing regional roadway network by coordinating traffic signals and other communications technology.

As the transit service provider, the RTC contracts with private service providers to operate the RTC RIDE fixed-route service, the demand-responsive RTC ACCESS paratransit service, FlexRIDE, and RTC VANPOOL. The RTC RIDE also operates RTC REGIONAL CONNECTOR commuter service between Reno and Carson City.

The RTC offers two bus RAPID transit services utilizing an all-electric bus fleet as part of the fixed-route system. The RAPID Virginia Line, which operates on Virginia Street, provides service in the urban area providing high-frequency connections between Meadowood Mall and Downtown Reno. The RAPID Lincoln Line operates on the 4th Street/Prater Way corridor between Reno and Sparks. RTC's FlexRIDE is a curbside-to-curbside transit service available in select areas of Sparks/Spanish Springs, Somersett/Verdi, and the North Valleys and is operated by the RTC ACCESS contractor.

The regional transportation and transit decisions are made by the RTC Board of Commissioners. The RTC has established advisory committees to provide input and recommendations to the RTC Board of Commissioners, including the RTC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Citizens Multimodal Advisory Committee (CMAC), and the Regional Road Impact Fee Technical Advisory Committee (RRIFTAC).

Committee meetings are open to the public and occur regularly. RTC also participates in the Regional Vision Zero Truckee Meadows Task Force (VZTM). VZTM is a regional committee dedicated to safety and is not an advisory committee to the RTC.

The PPP includes a list of key stakeholders, tools, and outreach best practices used by the RTC for public engagement. Additionally, the RTC tracks and evaluates social media outreach by measuring analytics. The RTC also produces weekly "The Road Ahead" (TRA) segments. TRA is a two-minute informational series that airs on KOLO 8 News three times a week. Additionally, the RTC distributes monthly e-Newsletters to regional and statewide stakeholders and members of the public.

## 2.0 FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Public participation/involvement has been a part of federal transportation legislation since the enactment of the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and included in all transportation authorizing legislation since then. The current transportation bill is the IIJA.

The RTC implements a performance-based planning program consistent with IIJA requirements. The RTP identifies performance measures and targets. The RTC publishes these findings in its annual report and shares progress toward its goals with the community. The performance measures are linked to the RTP project selection and prioritization process.

Federal regulations require that the MPO adopt a participation plan that will:

- Develop consultation with all interested parties.
- Provide reasonable opportunities and adequate notice to comment on the contents of the RTP and RTIP, and demonstrates explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of these plans.
- Provide the MPO opportunities to hold in-person and virtual public meetings.
- Provide accessible electronic and virtual outreach materials to be compliant with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The term “interested parties” includes individuals, affected public agencies, the freight industry, private providers of transportation, users of public transportation, users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled community, and others.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, states that “no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” To see RTC’s Title VI information visit: [www.rtcwashoe.com/about/title-vi/](http://www.rtcwashoe.com/about/title-vi/). In accordance with federal guidelines, the RTC must submit a Title VI that details the RTC’s plans and strategies to engage minority and limited-English proficiency (LEP) populations in its planning and programming activities to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). As a recipient of federal funds, and per Title VI and its implementing regulations, the FTA directs RTC to:

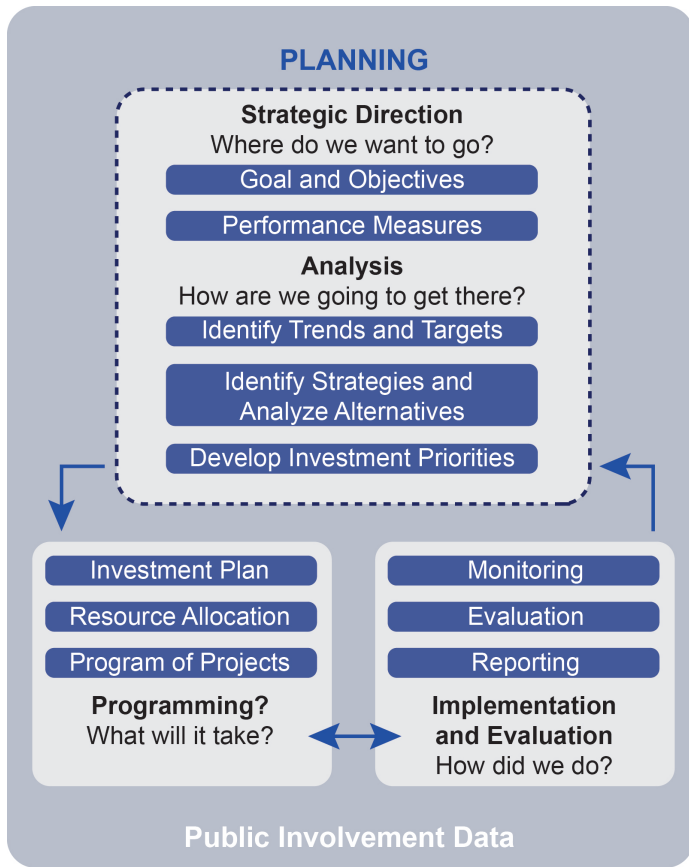
- Ensure the level and quality of public transportation service is provided in a nondiscriminatory manner.
- Promote full and fair participation in public transportation decision-making without regard to race, color, or national origin.
- Ensure meaningful access to transit-related programs and activities by persons with LEP.

The RTC’s PPP describes a process that seeks out and considers the needs of the traditionally underserved people who live near existing transportation systems. These populations, such as low-income and minority households, often face challenges accessing employment and other services.

For equitable decision making, the RTC’s Title VI Policy ensures public meetings are held in locations near transit routes. Key information is available in English and Spanish to ensure access for persons with LEP.

## Regional Transportation Plan

The foundation of the RTC planning process is the RTP. The RTP identifies the facilities, services, and programs necessary to meet the increasing multimodal travel demands through a minimum of a 20-year period. It includes transportation policies that address safe and healthy communities, economic prosperity and equity, innovation, sustainability and climate action, and increased travel choices. A PPP specific to the RTP may be adopted at the beginning of the development of a new plan. By federal regulation, the RTP must be updated at least every four years.



## 3.0 RTC PLANS & PROGRAMS

In its role as the MPO, the RTC develops four federally required documents (described below):

- Regional Transportation Plan
- Regional Transportation Improvement Program
- Unified Planning Work Program
- Public Participation Plan

The RTP development process is a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive effort. It is based on a community outreach process designed to best understand the region’s diverse and complex transportation needs through a community-based approach.

## Regional Transportation Improvement Program

The RTIP is a five-year, multimodal transportation program for Washoe County. It includes transit, paratransit, major street and highway capital projects, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and transportation system and demand-management programs.

The RTIP is the RTC's principal means of implementing long-term transportation planning objectives through annual programming of specific projects.

## Unified Planning Work Program

The UPWP is a document that describes the transportation-related planning activities scheduled during a two-year period. These activities are performed by the RTC utilizing federal planning funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), FTA, and state and local funds. The UPWP is developed in coordination with the RTC's budgeting process.

## Public Participation Plan

The PPP establishes policies, processes, and methods for the RTC to engage the community, stakeholder groups, and other interested parties in transportation and transit planning. The Plan provides policy for timely public notice of information that is critical to major plans and studies, allowing the public access and transparency to key decisions.

## 4.0 PUBLIC/AGENCY INVOLVEMENT IN THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The RTC coordinates with the following parties in the region in an effort to include them in the transportation planning process. This is by no means an exhaustive list, and depending on the type of outreach effort or specific plan/program needs, several additional stakeholders may be involved.

### 1. Local/Regional Agencies

- City of Reno
- City of Sparks
- Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority
- Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency
- Washoe County
- Washoe County Health District-Air Quality Management Division
- Washoe County School District

### 2. Tribal Governments

- Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe
- Reno-Sparks Indian Colony

### 3. Federal Agencies

- Bureau of Land Management
- Environmental Protection Agency



- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Transit Administration

#### 4. State Agencies

- Nevada Department of Public Safety
- Nevada Department of Transportation
- Nevada Division of Environmental Protection
- State Historical Preservation Office

#### 5. Committees

- RTC CMAC
- RTC TAC
- RTC RRIFTAC

#### 6. Regional Task Force

- Vision Zero Truckee Meadows Task Force — This regional task force includes participation from the local jurisdictions, including staff from public works, planning, communications, first responders; state and federal partners; non-profit groups; educational institutions; and members of the public.

The RTC also conducts outreach to those directly and indirectly affected by the transportation plans, programs, and projects in the region, which includes but is not limited to:

- Directly and indirectly affected public
- Elected officials, policymakers, and decision-makers
- Local, regional, state, and federal public agency staff
- Property owners, including those of abutting properties and those in the vicinity of a proposed project
- Freight operators via rail, air, and highway routes
- Providers/users of private transportation services, such as taxis, shuttle buses, limousines, and vanpools
- Providers/users of public transportation services
- The business community
- Advocacy groups, such as neighborhood groups, Chambers of Commerce, homeowners' associations, public-interest groups for bicycle/pedestrians, civil rights, non-profit and senior citizen organizations
- Underserved communities, such as people with disabilities, youth, elderly, low-income, and ethnic minorities
- Schools, such as Washoe County School District, Truckee Meadows Community College, and University of Nevada, Reno



- Members of the public with LEP
- Media serving LEP
- Emergency service providers and users
- Project-specific community working groups

RTC Committee and Stakeholder Quick Reference:

The regional transportation and transit decisions are made by the RTC Board of Commissioners. RTC has established advisory committees to provide input and recommendations to the RTC Board of Commissioners. Committee meetings are open to the public and meet regularly. All committee meetings are located on the RTC Washoe website and Vision Zero Truckee Meadows website. The Vision Zero Truckee Meadows Task Force is a regional committee dedicated to safety and not an advisory committee to the RTC.

Committee	Main Focus
<b>TAC</b>	A standing committee of professional agency staff that provide feedback to staff and the RTC Board of Commissioners.
<b>CMAC</b>	A standing committee of community members that provides feedback to staff and the RTC Board of Commissioners.
<b>RRIF</b>	An advisory committee that reviews and recommends modifications, additions, or updates to be made to the Regional Road Impact Fee General Administration Manual and Capital Improvements Plan. Also serves as part of the appeal process as outlined in the manual.
<b>Vision Zero Truckee Meadows Task Force</b>	The multi-jurisdictional task force responsible for making recommendations to improve pedestrian safety throughout the community.

## 5.0 PARTICIPATION POLICIES, TACTICS, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES

### RTC Policy for Public Involvement

The following principal objectives for public involvement are critical to the successful development and implementation of RTC's transportation plans and project outreach.

1. Seek valuable public participation throughout the planning process.
  - Utilize public involvement in the development of transportation plans, programs, and projects. Incorporate identified local, regional, state, and federal priorities and needs pertaining to all modes of transportation.
  - Offer early, continuous, and equitable opportunities for the public to be involved in the identification of social, economic, and environmental impacts of proposed transportation decisions.
  - Provide opportunities for all affected individuals and entities to participate in the planning process.
  - Encourage proactive participation to denote early and continuous involvement in important policy or project decisions before they are finalized.
  - Engage the public in early stakeholder participation to foster project transparency and understanding.
2. Seek Board and elected-representative involvement to ensure coordination with high-level regional and statewide plans.
  - Ensure that the decision makers are equipped with the information they need to make critical decisions for the future of our community.
  - Refer to the Nevada Department of Transportation's Public Involvement Plan when coordinating with State-led plans, projects, and programs.
3. Use effective, accessible, and equitable avenues for distributing information and receiving comments while engaging traditionally underserved populations.
  - The RTC's stakeholders include not only the general public and local and tribal units of government, but businesses, industries, and transportation service providers as well as organizations that represent people with specific transportation needs and different outreach needs.
  - Seek out and consider the viewpoints of vulnerable road users and stakeholders including seniors, minorities, low-income individuals, LEP groups, and people with disabilities during public outreach.
  - Utilize available data sources to assist in the identification of underserved and disadvantaged populations.



4. Inform and educate the public during the planning and decision-making processes using accessible in-person and virtual tools.
  - Include information on agendas to inform the public how they can request additional assistance if needed.
  - Use ADA-accessible visualization techniques and virtual tools.
  - Hold public meetings that are at ADA-compliant buildings, convenient locations and times, in buildings that are on RTC transit routes, within project limits when possible, and engage the public through virtual meetings to provide for greater convenience.
5. Design participation initiatives that will support and encourage effective participation.
  - Utilize visualization and online tools to describe transportation plans when warranted.
6. Conduct outreach that bridges language, cultural, and economic differences.
  - Provide technical information and meeting notices online.
  - Utilize social media to disseminate information about RTC initiatives and to seek input including virtual public meetings.
  - Utilize the "select language" tool on the RTC website which translates content in 20 different languages.
7. Provide reasonable accommodation(s) and access to people with disabilities, so that everyone can easily participate in the regional planning process.
  - Ensure everyone has access to the information they need to participate in the planning process for our community.
8. Consider, evaluate, and respond to all public input.
  - In-person, online, and survey public input will be summarized and include responses that explain the consideration of the planning decisions or course of action. This includes public comments submitted in-person during meetings and online submittals from virtual meetings and surveys.
9. Evaluate the public participation process regularly.
  - Evaluate the PPP to confirm that the process is open and accessible to everyone, procedures of the policy are being implemented and followed in accordance with statewide and federal regulations (requirements outlined in Code of Federal Regulations Title 23, Section 450.316), and compliant with the objectives in this plan.
  - The RTC encourages public participation throughout the plan/project. Ongoing input requires continuous review and updates to the public participation process to ensure that the policies and procedures meet federal requirements.

## Public Outreach Toolbox

The RTC's public participation goal is to provide the highest-quality participation for transportation decision-making by identifying and involving various stakeholders, including the general public, in the planning process. To achieve its public participation goal, the RTC has a toolbox of public participation methods that can be used to involve the community throughout the process.



There are a variety of tools available to ensure that a diverse public is well-informed and able to play an active role in the transportation planning process. The RTC uses a diverse set of methods to communicate to the public, including, but not limited to:

- In-person public meetings
  - Translators to help everyone understand the information
  - Court reporters to record questions and comments
- Accessible virtual public meetings
- Presentations
- Press releases
- Fliers
- Graphics and infographics
- Signage
- Informational booths at events
- Media relations
- The RTC Board eNews monthly electronic newsletter
- Television segments
- Advertising
- Mailers
- Door-to-door and business-to-business stakeholder outreach
- Weekly stakeholder email updates for large transportation projects
- Social media campaigns, updates, and interactions
- Videos
- Business-support programs
- Large- and small-scale events
- Project renderings and video simulations to help the community visualize improvements
- Project-specific websites
- Newspaper advertisements in English and Spanish
- Public hearings

- RTC advisory committee meetings
- Regional task force meetings
- RTC Board meetings
- City and County governing bodies
- City and County advisory committee meetings
- Stakeholder meetings

## Equity and Accessibility

The RTC uses several techniques for bridging language, cultural, and economic differences that affect participation. The RTC selects the approach that is best suited for each plan or project, which may include having translators available at public meetings, translating meeting materials, and targeted outreach to local community organizations.



It is a priority for RTC to promote and provide safety, economic prosperity, equity, and innovation to all members of our community. In our pursuit to serve our community, including those members who are most vulnerable and underserved, we adhere to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the ADA standards and requirements.

Section 508 requires that all information and technology be accessible to persons with disabilities. Title II of the ADA requires nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in public accommodations and in commercial facilities by ensuring that buildings and facilities, in terms of architecture and design, transportation, and communication are made accessible to individuals with disabilities.

With this in mind, the RTC has taken the following steps in the structuring of its buildings and facilities, transportation systems, information technologies, and outreach programs to accommodate the needs of disabled and vulnerable individuals in our community.

## Access to Outreach Venues

The RTC holds its public meetings at locations where reasonable accommodations and access can easily be provided for individuals with disabilities. Public meeting locations are chosen within the ADA paratransit service area and based on accessibility to public transportation routes. RTC ACCESS buses, equipped with a vertical platform lift, provide door-to-door, prescheduled transportation for people who meet the eligibility criteria of the ADA. The RTC ACCESS transit system provides services to passengers unable to ride RTC RIDE independently some or all of the time.



Examples of the typical locations where RTC holds public meetings include:

RTC Administrative Offices  
1105 Terminal Way  
Reno, NV 89502

RTC 4TH STREET STATION  
200 E. 4th Street  
Reno, NV 89501

RTC CENTENNIAL PLAZA  
1421 Victorian Avenue  
Sparks, NV 89431

Public institutions, such as schools or university campuses

Private venues, as reasonable and appropriate

## Public Outreach Communication

The RTC ensures marketing and communication collateral printed and electronic materials meet ADA standards. Printed marketing, communication, and outreach materials include high-contrast visual elements, 14-point or greater font size, and are produced in English and Spanish.

PDF documents are made accessible, searchable, and fillable. The RTC can provide documents with larger font sizes upon request.

## Website

The RTC website is Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) based. An HTML-based website provides persons with disabilities who use screen readers and speech-to-text tools the ability to easily read and comprehend critical information comparable to their non-disabled peers.

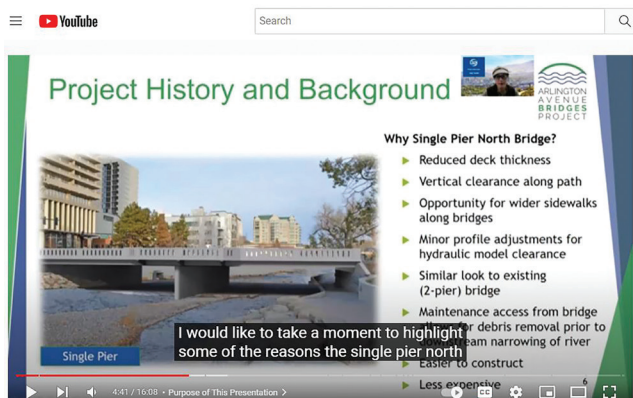
The RTC meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) by making PDFs accessible, providing imagery tags, maintaining HTML-coded public transportation bus schedules, and through the UserWay application. The UserWay application helps those who are visually impaired and suffer from dyslexia by identifying and reading each page element aloud. The RTC website has an accessibility menu that allows users to change the contrast, font size, text spacing, line height, cursor size, and saturation. It also has a tool that is dyslexia friendly and a tool to highlight links.



The application is also a useful tool in assisting the RTC in the automatic identification and remediation of issues and provides the RTC the ability to improve the user experience by manually inputting explanatory text tags. The RTC extends further vigilance in this area by manually reviewing and testing the site to ensure all elements of the website comply with ADA standards.

## Social Media

On social media, the RTC provides alternative text for all images posted for e-reader utilization. The RTC creates narrated videos for the visually impaired. Closed captioning is available for individuals who are hearing impaired.



## 6.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN REQUIREMENTS

The RTC has established the following requirements regarding the public participation process, consistent with U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) requirements.

1. **Public Process Review** — The RTC shall, periodically, review its public involvement processes to ensure their effectiveness in providing full and open access to all parties. These procedures shall also be reviewed by the FHWA and the FTA to ensure compliance with federal regulations. A public comment period of 45 days is required before the public involvement process is initially adopted or revised. The public participation process shall be evaluated periodically, to ensure that the RTC is making the best use of all available methods to engage the public.
2. **Committee Review** — The RTC's Technical Advisory Committee and Citizens Multimodal Advisory Committee will review the RTP, RTIP, PPP, UPWP, and any amendments to these documents, as well as any corridor studies. It is the responsibility of these committees to advise and make recommendations to the RTC Board of Commissioners.
3. **Public Comment** — RTC will provide at least 21 days for public review and comments on updates to the RTP and RTIP prior to an RTC Board public hearing. If there is an amendment to the RTP or RTIP, a seven (7)-day public comment period will be held.





However, in the event that an amendment requires a transportation conformity analysis, a 21-day public comment period will be provided. Notice of the opening of the public comment period and the availability of the document for review will be published in local newspapers of general circulation and on the agency's website and social media accounts. The public comment period will begin on the date noted in the published notice.

4. Public Hearing — A formal public hearing will be conducted prior to RTC approval/adoption of the RTP, RTIP, and any associated amendments, including accompanying air quality conformity determinations, as required by federal regulations.

Comment Summary — The RTC will prepare a summary analysis and report on the disposition of any and all applicable comments received during the public comment period and at the public hearing. The RTC will consider and address all public comments.



5. Revisions — In those instances where the final RTP or RTIP differs significantly from the draft that was made available for public comment and/or raises new substantive issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the draft, the RTC shall provide additional opportunities for public review and comment. The RTC will, at a minimum, issue a second notice allowing, at a minimum, for an additional 21-day public comment period.

6. Administrative Modifications — RTIP changes that are considered non-substantive in nature (administrative modifications) will not be subject to the public comment and public hearing process cited herein. These actions will be processed through the electronic Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (eSTIP) and include the following:

- a) An increase of less than 25%, or any decrease or removal, of the federally-funded portion of a project
- b) Minor adjustments to project limits
- c) Addition or deletion of a phase without major change to the scope
- d) Movement of projects between fiscal years included in the RTIP
- e) Minor changes to funding sources
- f) Changes made to an existing project's non-federal funding amounts
- g) Addition of a regionally significant project that does not require air quality conformity and is programmed with 100% non-federal funds

7. Formal Amendments — In the event that a change in the RTIP falls outside of the criteria for an administrative modification, an amendment will be made, and will follow the process outlined above in numbers two through five of this section. Amendments will also be processed through the eSTIP for the following actions:

- a) Addition or deletion of any federally-funded project
- b) An increase of more than 25% of the federally-funded portion of a project
- c) Substantial changes to the scope that would result in an air quality conformity determination
- d) A change in a funding source for a project from non-federal to federal

Public notices of public participation activities and time established for public review of and comments on the RTIP will satisfy the FTA Section 5307 Program of Projects (POP) requirements.



**Building A Better  
Community Through  
Quality Transportation.**

[rtcwashoe.com](http://rtcwashoe.com)

