

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 23-5343, FOR THE PURPOSE OF RELEASING THE DRAFT 2023 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP) AND PROJECT LIST FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND POLICY DISCUSSION

Date: June 2, 2023

Department: Planning, Development &
Research

Prepared by:

Kim Ellis, RTP Project Manager

Kim.ellis@oregonmetro.gov

ISSUE STATEMENT

A major update to the [Regional Transportation Plan](#) (RTP) is underway and must be completed by Dec. 6, 2023 when the current plan expires.

The RTP is the state- and federally-required long-range transportation plan for the greater Portland region. The RTP is the blueprint for transportation in our region and a key tool for implementing the region's [2040 Growth Concept](#) and [Climate Smart Strategy](#). Together, these plans will help ensure that greater Portland thrives by connecting people to their jobs, families, schools and other important destinations and by allowing business and industry to create jobs and move goods to market.

We are at pivotal moment. The greater Portland region continues to grow and change. The most recent census data shows our region continues to grow more diverse.

By 2045 more than 2 million people are expected to be living within the metropolitan planning boundary for the RTP – about one-half million more people than today.

The greater Portland region is facing urgent global and regional challenges, and the future is uncertain. The impacts of climate change, generations of systemic racism, economic inequities and the pandemic have made clear the need for action. Systemic inequities mean that communities have not equally benefited from public policy and investments, and our changing climate and the pandemic has exacerbated many disparities that Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) communities, people with low income, women and other marginalized populations already experience. Safety, housing affordability, homelessness, and public health and economic disparities have been intensified by the global pandemic.

Approval of Resolution No. 23-5343 by the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and the Metro Council approves releasing the draft 2023 RTP, draft project list and draft High Capacity Transit Strategy for public review and policy discussion.



**Draft 2023 RTP Goals developed by
JPACT and Metro Council with input from
MPAC and Metro's Committee on Racial
Equity (CORE)**

Follow-up to May 16 Council Work Session Direction

At the May 16 work session, staff heard questions and concerns from Council about whether the mix of projects in the draft RTP project list do enough to accelerate progress toward the region's climate, equity and safety goals, particularly in the near-term. As a tool to inform the decision-making process in the fall, Council requested staff to develop RTP adoption scenarios that show potential approaches to best align the draft project list with each of these three RTP outcomes. These scenarios should reflect community priorities identified through ongoing RTP engagement activities and policy priorities identified by Council and JPACT during the series of joint workshops in 2022-23. In response, staff identified three potential RTP adoption scenarios for further Council feedback and discussion:

- **Climate first** adoption scenario - *Focus on investments with the greatest potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.*
- **Equity first** adoption scenario - *Focus on investments that provide the greatest benefit to communities in equity focus areas and advance community priorities (e.g., safety, affordability, walking, biking and transit connections).*
- **Safety first** adoption scenario - *Focus on investments that improve safety in high injury corridors to ensure progress toward Vision Zero – the region's goal to eliminate fatal and serious injury crashes by 2035.*

At the June 13 Council work session, staff will provide an update on TPAC's recommendation to JPACT on releasing the draft RTP, the draft project list and draft High Capacity Strategy for public review and seek feedback from Council about the potential RTP adoption scenarios listed above. This work session is also an opportunity for Council to provide guidance to JPACT councilors as they consider TPAC's recommendation to JPACT on June 15. On June 29, Metro Council will be asked to vote on JPACT's recommendation.

QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

- Does Council have additional feedback for staff on the potential RTP adoption scenarios?
- Does Council support releasing the draft 2023 RTP and project list, and the draft 2023 High Capacity Transit Strategy for public review?

ACTION REQUESTED ON JUNE 29, 2023

Approve Resolution No. 23-5343.

POLICY OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Recommend approval of Resolution No. 23-5343 as recommended by JPACT.
2. Recommend approval of Resolution No. 23-5343 with changes.
3. Do not recommend approval of Resolution No. 23-5343, and refer back to JPACT.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends approval of Resolution No. 23-5343 on June 29, 2023.

ANTICIPATED EFFECTS

On June 15, 2023, JPACT will be requested to make a recommendation to the Metro Council to support releasing the draft 2023 RTP and project list, and the draft 2023 High Capacity Transit Strategy for a 45-day public comment period. On June 29, Metro Council will be requested to take action on JPACT's recommendation on release of the draft plan and project list for public review. The comment period is planned for July 10 to August 25, 2023.

The 45-day public comment period provides an opportunity for local, regional, state and federal agencies and special districts, federally recognized tribes, business and community leaders, the public and policymakers to provide additional feedback on before the draft 2023 RTP and project list, and the draft 2023 High Capacity Transit Strategy are finalized for consideration by MPAC, JPACT and Metro Council. The comment period will include a public hearing and consultation with tribes and federal and state agencies.

In early fall, following the public comment period, staff will compile public comments received and work with the Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee (TPAC) and the Metro Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) to make recommendations for revisions to the draft plan in early fall as part of the final adoption process for the 2023 RTP. TPAC and MTAC will be asked to identify remaining policy issues to be discussed by MPAC, JPACT and the Metro Council prior to adoption of the 2023 RTP and HCT Strategy. The 2023 RTP will be adopted by Ordinance as a land use action to meet federal and state requirements. The HCT Strategy will be adopted by Resolution.

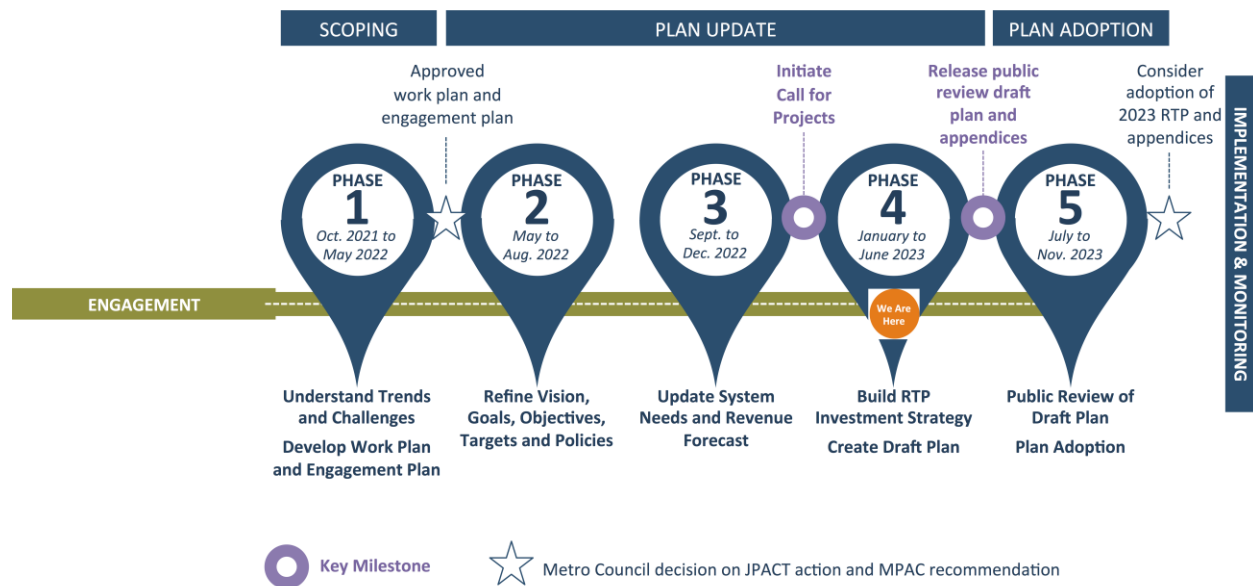
MTAC and TPAC will be requested to make final recommendations to MPAC and JPACT, in October and November, respectively. MPAC and JPACT will be requested to make final recommendations to the Metro Council in October and November, respectively. The Metro Council is anticipated to consider final action on 2023 RTP, project list and the HCT Strategy on November 30, 2023.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Metro is the regional government responsible for regional land use and transportation planning under state law and the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Portland metropolitan area. Metro is the only regional government agency in the U.S. whose governing body is directly elected by voters. Metro is governed by a council president elected region-wide and six councilors elected by district. The Metro Council provides leadership from a regional perspective, focusing on issues that cross local boundaries and require collaborative solutions. As the federally designated MPO, Metro is responsible for leading and coordinating updates to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) every five years. Metro is also responsible for developing a regional transportation system plan (TSP), consistent with the Regional Framework Plan, statewide planning goals, the Oregon Transportation Planning Rule (TPR), the Metropolitan Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Rule, the Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP), and by extension state modal plans. As a result, the RTP serves as both the Federal metropolitan transportation plan and the regional TSP for the region.

The timeline for the RTP update is shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Timeline for the 2023 RTP Update



During the past year, Metro has extensively engaged with policymakers, jurisdictional staff, federally recognized tribes, transportation agencies, community-based organizations and business groups, businesses, and members of the public to update the region’s vision, goals and policies for the transportation system and understand the region’s transportation trends¹, needs² and ³, and priorities for investment.

This engagement also shaped the Call for Projects held from January 6 to February 17, 2023 and subsequent engagement of the public and a technical analysis of the projects submitted by jurisdictional partners, development of the 2023 HCT Strategy, and identification of future regional planning activities recommended following adoption of the 2023 RTP.

Public engagement and outreach activities on the draft project list and investment priorities continued from March through May 2023, and are documented in **Attachment 1**. Activities included:

- **Community partnerships (through November 2023).** Metro partnered with seven community-based organizations: Centro Cultural, Community Cycling Center, Next Up, OPAL, The Street Trust, Unite Oregon and Verde. These community partners engaged people of color, youth and other marginalized communities in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties, with a focus on engaging people at the intersection of

¹ The emerging transportation trends research summary is available at:

https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2022/10/12/Metro-Emerging-Trends-summary-final_1.pdf

² Factsheets summarizing the regional transportation needs assessment are available at:

<https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2022/11/29/2023-RTP-Needs-Assessment-fact-sheets.pdf>

³ Research about trends and needs of the region’s urban arterials is available at:

<https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2022/10/24/Safe%20and%20healthy%20urban%20arterials%20policy%20brief.pdf>

multiple communities who have been underrepresented in decision-making processes. Organizations primarily engaged community members in the draft project list and the High Capacity Transit Strategy.

- **In-language community forums:** Metro worked with community engagement liaisons to hold four in-person culturally specific forums in Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish and Russian languages that included participants from all three counties. These are communities who are typically underrepresented in online survey feedback. The forums focused on receiving feedback on similar questions to those in the online survey including near-term investment priorities. The forums also provided opportunities to hear community members experiences traveling around the region and their ideas for improving the system.
- **Online interactive public survey (April 3 – May 1, 2023).** A third interactive public survey for the 2023 RTP provided an opportunity for the public at-large to provide feedback on the RTP goal areas and the draft project list. The survey was promoted through Metro’s email lists, website, social media and project partners. More than 800 people responded to the survey.
- **Community Leaders Forum (April 13, 2023).** Metro convened community leaders forum in early April will focus on the draft RTP project list and outcomes of the high level assessment of the draft project list Results of the forum will be reported to decision-makers at their meetings leading up to the release of the draft plan and project list for public review in July.
- **Consultation meetings with Tribes and Federal, State and regional agencies (multiple dates in April, May and June 2023).** Metro consulted with Tribes, in coordination with Metro’s Tribal Liaison, resource agencies, and with Federal, State regulatory agencies to share process information and review the draft RTP goals and policies, project list and the technical analysis completed to date, including methods and data sources. Metro also reviewed the updates made to the draft 2023 RTP responding to the feedback and information provided by Tribes and consulting agencies during the scoping phase in 2022.
- **Business Leaders Forum (May 25, 2023).** Metro partnered with the Portland Business Alliance to convene businesses and business organizations from across the region to discuss the draft RTP project list and findings from the technical evaluation and from the [Regional Freight Delay and Goods Movement Study](#). Feedback received at the forum will be added to the Phase 4 Engagement Report in Attachment 1.

Common themes heard during the most recent engagement activities follows:

Safety is the top priority across community input.

- Concerns about safety included both personal safety and traffic safety. These concerns overlap for transit riders and people walking and biking, where there is not good lighting, sidewalks or places to wait for transit.
- Participants cited harassment, unpredictable, unsafe, racist and sometimes violent behavior on transit and at transit stops.
- Community members described feeling scared to bike, not having safe sidewalks to walk on.

Climate and equitable transportation are also important outcomes to focus on in the near-term.

- Community members expressed concerns about the impacts of added vehicle capacity on greenhouse gas emissions.
- Community members cited transit, active transportation and carpooling as climate strategies.
- Concerns about affordable transportation are a top concern related to equity, as well as equitable access to the transportation system. Affordability concerns are related to transit fares, future tolling and the cost of vehicles, and in particular electric vehicles.
- Displacement continues to also be a concern, particularly as community members consider how they could be impacted by investments in their areas.

Investments in biking and walking, transit and roads and bridges are top priorities.

- **Transit:** Community members identified a need for both investment in transit capital and operations. Improvements in frequency and reliability were reoccurring themes.
- **Investments in biking and walking:** Community members identified investments in transit stops, such as lighting, shelters and bathrooms, as priority investments. Community members across many engagement activities discussed the need for better access to transit. Barriers along sidewalks for people with disabilities who need to access transit were also cited.
- **Roads and bridges:** comments include a desire for more local connections.

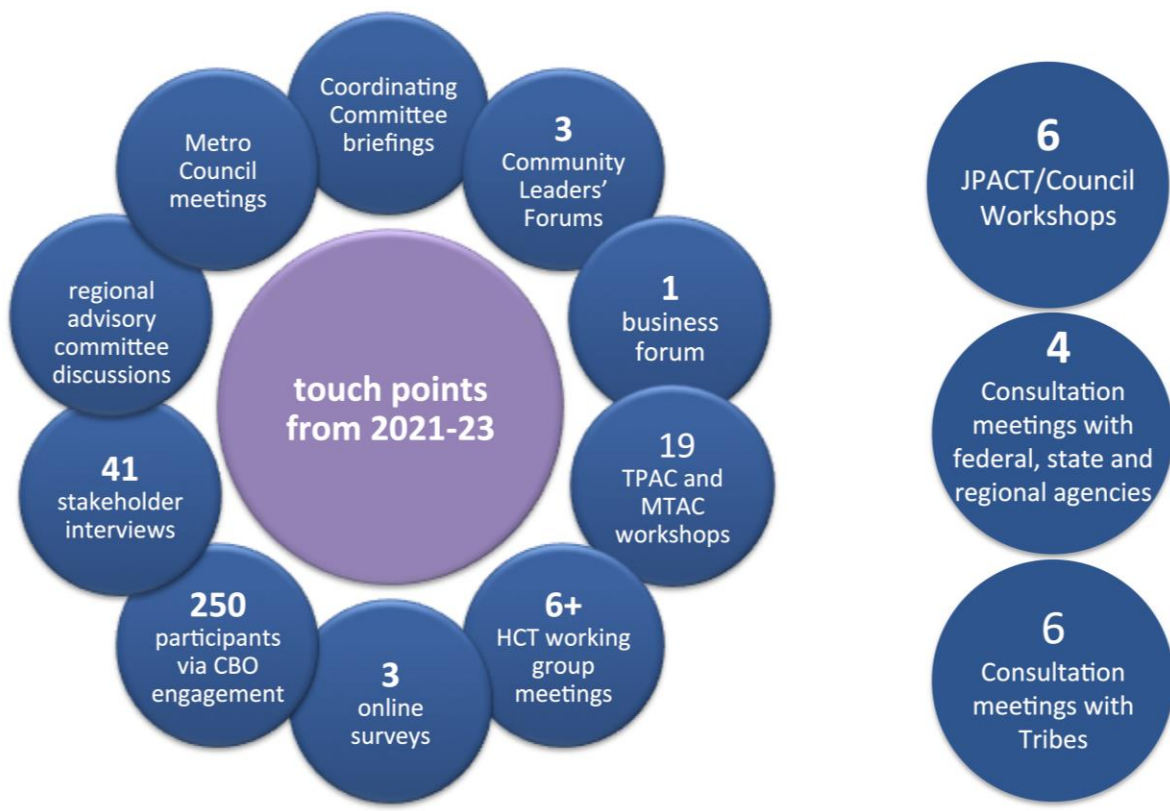
Maintenance is a top community priority.

- Specifically maintaining road surfaces (fixing potholes) and transit maintenance, are important investments for community members.

In addition to community engagement, Metro staff provided briefings and presentations to regional advisory committees, including Metro's Committee on Racial Equity (CORE), TPAC, MTAC, JPACT, MPAC and county-level coordinating committees (policy and staff).

Figure 2 illustrates the range of engagement and outreach activities in support of the RTP update.

Figure 2. Summary of key touch points from 2021 to May 2023



Summary reports of all engagement activities are available on the project website at: <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/2023-regional-transportation-plan/engagement>.

Summary of 6/2/22 TPAC Discussion and Recommendation on Resolution No. 23-5343

At the June 2, 2023, TPAC meeting, TPAC voted that JPACT recommend approval of Resolution No. 23-5343, releasing the draft 2023 RTP, the draft project list and the draft HCT Strategy for public review and policy discussion. During the committee's discussion, members acknowledged that while some chapters of the draft plan were not yet finalized for TPAC review, they supported moving forward to the public review process. TPAC recommended one amendment to Resolution No. 23-5343 to acknowledge the projects submitted by jurisdictions reflect priorities identified through adopted local Transportation System Plans and other locally adopted plans within revenues expected to be available within the regionally-coordinated financially constrained revenue forecast, and provide eligibility for strategic state and federal funding opportunities.

TPAC community members raised concerns about the priorities in the draft RTP project list, commenting that they do not adequately reflect investment priorities identified by marginalized communities through the extensive engagement conducted to date. A community member commented that the projects reflect government priorities, but not

fully community priorities. It was noted people have often been excluded from decision-making processes that identified the projects in the first place.

TPAC considered but did not support a proposed amendment by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to remove Section 3.3.3.2 from Chapter 3 (policies regulating the addition of roadway capacity to the motor vehicle network) of the public review draft 2023 RTP, pending further discussion. While several members had questions and also supported more discussion, the amendment failed. Metro staff have scheduled two meetings with ODOT staff in June on this topic, and will schedule time for additional TPAC discussion of the policies regulating the addition of roadway capacity to the motor vehicle network in Section 3.3.3.2 of Chapter 3 during the public comment period. Outcomes recommended from these discussions will be reported to JPACT and the Metro Council following the public comment period.

ANALYSIS/INFORMATION

Known Opposition. None known. There is broad support for updating the RTP to better address urgent global and regional challenges and variations of disparities and needs across the region and gaps in investment and funding.

How is this related to Metro's Strategic Plan? The RTP update is guided by the [Metro Council's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) and supporting Metro Racial Equity Framework and the [Planning and Development Department Strategy for Achieving Racial Equity](#) using a targeted universalism⁴ approach. This will ensure that people situated in different positions in society because of institutionalized racism can access the same opportunities.

How does this advance Metro's racial equity goals? The RTP advances equitable outcomes by eliminating disparities as a priority policy outcome. The project team has been partnering with Metro's DEI team to apply Metro's Racial Equity Framework throughout the planning, data collection and analysis and engagement process.

How does this advance Metro's climate action goals? The RTP is a key tool for implementing [2040 Growth Plan](#), adopted in 1995, and the [Climate Smart Strategy](#), adopted in 2014 and approved by the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) in 2015. The strategy was incorporated into the RTP in 2018. This RTP update is an opportunity to update the strategy and consider how the plan's policies and investments can be recalibrated to accelerate reducing greenhouse gas emissions and support implementation of the [Governor's Executive Order 20-04](#) on Climate Change and the [Statewide Transportation \(STS\) Strategy for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#). The update is also addressing new statewide requirements adopted through the [LCDC Climate Friendly Equitable Rulemaking process](#).

⁴ Targeted universalism means addressing the disparities that affect the most disadvantaged will generate solutions to address most of the needs of other vulnerable groups.

Explicit list of stakeholder groups and individuals who have been involved in policy development. To date, the project team has engaged the following groups, public agencies and individuals in the update:

- **Community leaders and community-based organizations** for marginalized and underrepresented communities⁵, health and equity interests, environmental protection, affordable housing, transportation, and social, climate and environmental justice.
- **Business, economic development and freight groups**, including Greater Portland Inc., large and small employers, freight shippers, business organizations, associations and chambers of commerce.
- **Local jurisdiction staff and elected officials representing counties and cities in the region** (through county coordinating committees, TPAC/MTAC workshops and regional technical and policy advisory committees).
- **Special districts**, including TriMet, SMART, C-TRAN, the Port of Portland and the Port of Vancouver (through TPAC, MTAC, JPACT and MPAC briefings and consultation activities).
- **Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (SW RTC) and other Clark County governments** (through Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC), SW RTC, TPAC, JPACT and MPAC briefings).
- **State agencies**, including the Oregon Department of Transportation, the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC), the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), the Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission (LDCD), the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) (through TPAC, MTAC, JPACT and MPAC briefings and consultation activities).
- **Federal agencies**, including the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (through TPAC and consultation activities).

Legal Antecedents. Several federal, state and regional laws and actions relate to this action, including:

Federal laws and actions include:

- 23 U.S. Code 134: Metropolitan Transportation Planning.
- 23 U.S.C. 150: National goals and performance management measures.
- 23 CFR 450 and 771: USDOT rules that govern updates to RTPs.
- Clean Air Act [42 U.S.C. 7401 and 23 U.S.C. 109(j)], as amended.
- US EPA transportation conformity rules (40 CFR, parts 51 and 93).
- Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), signed into law in 2012.
- Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), signed into law in 2015.
- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed into law in 2020.

⁵ Marginalized and underrepresented communities include Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) communities, people with low income, people with limited English proficiency, youth, older adults and people experiencing a disability.

State laws and actions include:

- Statewide planning goals
- Oregon Transportation Planning Rules (OAR Chapter 660, Division 12)
- Oregon Transportation Plan and implementing modal plans, including the Oregon Highway Plan
- Oregon Clean Air Act State Implementation Plan (SIP)
- Oregon Metropolitan Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Rules (OAR Chapter 660, Division 44)
- [Governor's Executive Order 20-04](#) on Climate Change, signed in March 2020.

Metro Council actions include:

- Ordinance No. 14-1346B (For the Purpose of Adopting the Climate Smart Communities Strategy and Amending the Regional Framework Plan to Comply with State Law), adopted by the Metro Council on December 18, 2014.
- Resolution No. 16-4708 (For the Purpose of Approving the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion), adopted by the Metro Council on June 23, 2016.
- Ordinance No. 18-1421 (For the Purpose of Amending the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan to Comply with Federal and State Law and Amending the Regional Framework Plan), adopted by the Metro Council on Dec. 6, 2018.
- Ordinance No. 21-1457 (For the Purpose of Adopting the Distribution of the Population and Employment Growth to Year 2045 to Local Governments in the Region Consistent with the Forecast Adopted by Ordinance No. 18-1427 in Fulfillment of Metro's Population Coordination Responsibility under ORS 195.036), adopted by the Metro Council in February 2021.
- Resolution No. 22-5255 (For the Purpose of Adopting the Work Plan and Engagement Plan for the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Update), adopted by the Metro Council on May 5, 2022.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1. Phase 4 Public Engagement Report

Resolution No. 23-5343: 6/2/23 TPAC Recommendation to JPACT

Exhibit A to Resolution No. 23-5343: Working draft of the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). This draft is subject to copy edits, technical corrections and minor updates as it finalized for public review.

Exhibit B to Resolution No. 23-5343: DRAFT 2023 RTP Project List (*Attached*)

Exhibit C to Resolution No. 23-5343: DRAFT 2023 High Capacity Transit Strategy (*Attached*)