

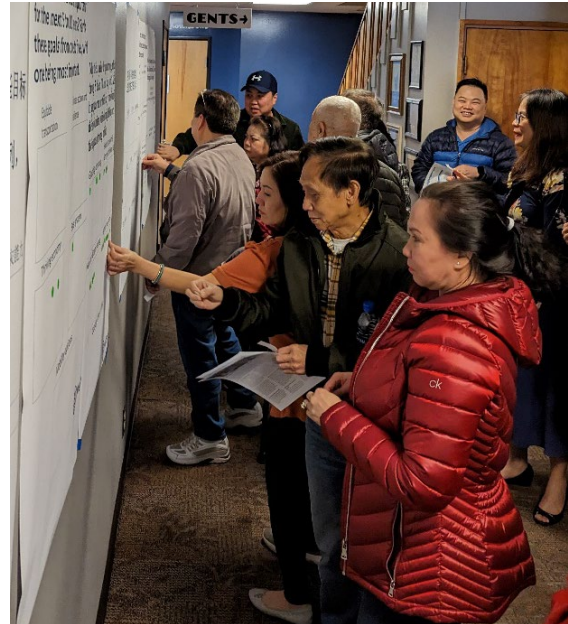
# Summary of language specific community forums

**2023 Regional Transportation Plan**

April 15, 2023

## Participant overview

In early 2023, regional agencies submitted draft lists of priority investments for the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Metro asked the public to weigh in on how the draft investment list aligns with regional priorities and community needs. During the comment period, Metro partnered with the Community Engagement Liaisons (CELs) Program to provide four language-specific project forums, which included community members from the Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Spanish-speaking community. Participants were asked to consider the long-term future of greater Portland, and to provide feedback on priorities the region should focus on in the near term (next five to 10 years). A total of 59 participants attended the forums (16 Russian, 20 Vietnamese, 17 Chinese, and six Spanish). Each participant received a \$50 gift card to Fred Myers for taking time to attend the project forums.



## Engagement goals

The main objectives of the of project forums included:

- Inform community members about the purpose of the Metro Regional Transportation Plan.
- Share the high-level considerations that go into creating the constrained and unconstrained list for the RTP, including budget, timeline, transportation mode, geographic diversity, etc.
- Hear from community members about their short- and long-term transportation needs and priorities. Learn how projects on the list address their needs and those of their family and community.
- Educate attendees on the next steps of the RTP and how the project list will be used to secure federal funding for the region over the next 10 years.

## Engagement format

In-person project forum sessions were held on Saturday, April 15, 2023. All four forums happened at the same place, PKS International's office space on SE Main and SE 12<sup>th</sup> Ave in Portland, OR. Each forum session was an hour and a half long. Participants showed up and were handed a one-page factsheet on the RTP, translated into the four respective languages, as well as a list of the different investment categories being considered in the RTP project list. Metro staff gave a presentation on Metro, the role of the RTP in the region, and information on the different investment categories in the RTP, as well as some of the funding and cost considerations for each investment category. There was an interpreter present for each of the project forums.

After the presentation, attendees were able to ask Metro staff questions on the RTP and the future of transportation in the region. Each participant received 6 sticker dots and asked to place them on two large print outs, one with the proposed plan goals and the other with the investment categories. They were asked to place three stickers on each sheet, representing their three main priorities for

each list. Finally, participants were also asked to write their thoughts on a post it note to the prompt, “One thing that would make getting around better for me and my community...”

### Key Themes overview

Each group of participants shared their main thoughts and issues around short-term and long-term transportation needs. During the question-and-answer section of the presentation, many participants took the opportunity to share their current experiences while traveling on the transportation network. Some major themes that arose during the conversations are below.

#### Safety concerns regarding active and public transportation

Safety is the top priority for community participants at the project forums. Safety concerns were the prominent theme that emerged from community members’ discussions about transportation priorities. 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 and sometimes violent behavior on transit and at transit stops.

Many participants shared stories about their own experience riding transit and how unsafe they felt taking their children on the MAX. They cited cleanliness issues at bus stops, observations about the decrease of families using public transit, and concerns about long wait times for buses on weekends.

***“People are taking transit less because they don’t feel safe. I spend nearly two hours on MAX each day and the whole time I keep my head down. Things are dirty and [it smells].” - Spanish forum participant***

Table 1. Which goals are most important for the next 5-10 years? Rank these goals from one to five, with one being most important.

	Equitable Transportation	Climate Action and Resilience	Thriving Economy	Safe System	Mobility Options
Spanish	4	0	0	13	0
Vietnamese	14	7	15	21	2
Chinese	4	4	9	16	10
Russian	6	4	6	19	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>24</b>

#### Investment in maintenance throughout the system

Across each of the project forum communities, people prioritized investment in maintenance. Comments about maintenance spanned transit, roadways, and sidewalks. Although people prioritized taking care of the existing system, it was not a focus of conversation. Participants talked about the lack of sidewalk infrastructure in certain locations and concerns about how this maintenance gets paid for once electric cars become more popular and the gas tax no longer provides as much funding for improvements.

Table 2. Projects fall into different investment categories. Pick your top three priorities.

	Walking & biking	Transit capital	Roads & bridges	Through ways	Freight access	Information & technology	Transit service & operations	Transit maintenance	Road & bridge maintenance
Spanish	4	0	2	0	0	1	5	4	2
Vietnamese	5	6	12	7	1	3	6	6	13
Chinese	5	3	14	9	0	2	7	4	15
Russian	11	5	11	1	2	4	2	2	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>47</b>

### Investments in roads and bridges, biking and walking and transit

Forum participants included improved transit, sidewalks and crosswalks, lighting, bike lanes and generally needing improved roads as investments they would like to see. Community participants also cited concerns about congestion and the time it takes to get where they want to go. Participants also identified a need for both investment in transit capital and operations. Improvements in frequency and reliability were reoccurring themes. There were comments throughout the focus groups about the need for improvements to transit stops, such as lighting, shelters and bathrooms, as priority investments.

***“Waiting time for bus on weekend takes too long. Can frequency be as good as weekday? People work on weekends too. They have to wake up so early to make time to take transit.”*** – Vietnamese forum participant.

Sidewalks and lighting were the most frequently mentioned types of investment related to walking and biking. Community members also discussed not feeling safe on bike facilities where they were close to vehicle traffic. There were also comments that people feel bike facilities take space away from drivers and driving on narrow streets doesn’t feel safe.

***“Where there are no sidewalks, people are forced to drive.”*** - Russian forum participant.

Attachment 1: Translated participant comments from post-it notes

Post it number	Language	English Translation
1	Vietnamese	<p>1. why do some roads narrow the number of lanes and slow down</p> <p>2. the road is damaged a lot</p> <p>3. The signaling boards on the highway need to take advantage of electronic technology</p> <p>4. Does the 7-year plan take into account future technology?</p>
2	Vietnamese	<p>-The traffic barrier between two roadways is too big which makes the road smaller, it is dangerous</p> <p>- Safety while waiting for the bus, max</p> <p>- Bus time, max (scheduled) on screen</p> <p>- In the future, the road should be widened to make it easier for traffic</p>
3	Vietnamese	<p>* Reduce bike lanes</p> <p>* create more routes to make buses faster and other roads to build like Division</p>
4	Vietnamese	<p>- There is no need to build a lot of pedestrian and bicycle paths because it makes the road more crowded</p> <p>- I see there is a bus that always runs until late at night without customers and still allows the bus to run. I feel like a waste of fuel and waste of the driver's time which makes him/her tired.</p>
5	Vietnamese	<p>Ask Metro to make bus routes for families far away so that their children can go to school, adults who are busy at work do not take their children to school.</p> <p>Abandoned walking paths and carpooling bicycles.</p> <p>Walking and cycling paths in the park for safer exercise</p>
6	Vietnamese	<p>- No need for bike path</p> <p>- Make a place for the bus to stop so as not to cause traffic jams</p>
7	Vietnamese	<p>1- Install cameras at each intersection to limit traffic violations and help people choose the right path when there is a traffic jam in some places!</p> <p>2- Provide shelter and band at each bus stop -- keep people safe and comfortable in bad weather while waiting for the bus.</p> <p>3- Shorten waiting time between buses</p> <p>4- There are only 4-6 months of summer and autumn in a year, there are not many pedestrians and bicycles--- Avoid building too many pedestrian and bicycle paths (!) because the road for cars will be limited.</p>
8	Vietnamese	<p>* Seeing so much pedestrian and bicycle traffic that traffic is congested and Sunday and Saturday buses cost enough state budget</p>

9	Vietnamese	The bus station on a one-way street should make a lane for the pick-up bus to obstruct the vehicle behind.  Ask for more buses to serve the Multnomah County community.
10	Chinese	The traffic from Holgate leading to I-99 is extremely congested during the peak hours, especially from Holgate going left towards Milwaukie Ave direction.
11	Russian	Fast and affordable and accessible transportation from Happy Valley to Beaverton.
12	Russian	Add more lanes for light rail
13	Russian	Add more lanes
14	Russian	Add more crosswalks