



## Board Report

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**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE  
NOVEMBER 15, 2023**
**SUBJECT: METRO ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE****ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS****RECOMMENDATION**

CONSIDER:

- A. ADOPTING the Active Transportation Strategic Plan Update;
- B. AUTHORIZING the CEO to release the solicitation for Cycle 2 of the Metro Active Transport, Transit, and First/Last Mile Grant Program; and
- C. APPROVING Metro's policies for Cycle 7 of the State Active Transportation Program.

**ISSUE**

The [Active Transportation Strategic Plan \(ATSP\) Update](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/md1lj8rjkqy62s5/AAA6a0_IAFBki1C2jAjqDChWa/2023%20Active%20Transportation%20Strategic%20Plan%20(ATSP)?dl=0&subfolder_nav_tracking=1) ([https://www.dropbox.com/sh/md1lj8rjkqy62s5/AAA6a0\\_IAFBki1C2jAjqDChWa/2023%20Active%20Transportation%20Strategic%20Plan%20\(ATSP\)?dl=0&subfolder\\_nav\\_tracking=1](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/md1lj8rjkqy62s5/AAA6a0_IAFBki1C2jAjqDChWa/2023%20Active%20Transportation%20Strategic%20Plan%20(ATSP)?dl=0&subfolder_nav_tracking=1)) (see Attachment A for Executive Summary) will serve as Metro's overall strategy for planning and funding active transportation infrastructure and programs in Los Angeles County. The ATSP Update demonstrates Metro's ongoing commitment to improving mobility in the region for people who walk, bike, roll, and take transit and creating safer streets that benefit all roadway users. This ATSP Update reflects new agencywide policies, programs, and plans adopted since the 2016 plan and is an opportunity to better address challenges and barriers for the most vulnerable roadway users.

**BACKGROUND**

Metro's first ATSP was adopted in 2016. The ATSP is aligned to the 5-year funding cycle of the Metro Active Transport, Transit, and First/Last Mile (MAT) Grant Program, which is a key mechanism for the agency to fund and implement the regional active transportation network identified in the ATSP. Cycle 1 of the MAT Program funded improvements in 11 First/Last Mile (FLM) areas and 24 miles of bikeways that are consistent with the 2016 ATSP network (see Attachment B). Cycle 2 of the MAT Program will advance the implementation of projects that are consistent with the updated network identified in the ATSP Update.

In addition to renewing goals and objectives, the ATSP Update develops countywide performance measures and calculates baseline conditions for future assessment. The ATSP Update also refines the regional active transportation network identified in the 2016 ATSP, with the updated network consisting of 602 first/last mile (FLM) areas, over 1,400 miles of regional bikeways, as well as 81 newly identified pedestrian districts. Further, the ATSP Update prioritizes the regional active transportation network to identify areas that should be the focus of early implementation. In addition to the updated plan, three online tools, consisting of the [Interactive StoryMap <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cd9f96af92f84ab3920b9bdfbe3fd7d8>](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cd9f96af92f84ab3920b9bdfbe3fd7d8), [First/Last Mile Existing Conditions Dashboard <https://lametro.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=31d2b87453ee4b46bd50b66a21b3341e>](https://lametro.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=31d2b87453ee4b46bd50b66a21b3341e), and [Bikeway Benefits Dashboard <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/lametro/viz/MetroATSPDashboard/ATSPBenefits>](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/lametro/viz/MetroATSPDashboard/ATSPBenefits), were developed to support community members and agency staff on grant proposals and other implementation activities.

## **DISCUSSION**

Effective walking, bicycling, and rolling infrastructure are critical elements to facilitate first/last mile connectivity to Metro's extensive transit network. A high-quality, safe, low-stress regional active transportation network also provides more transportation options and improves mobility. However, Metro often does not own or operate key elements of the public right-of-way associated with pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The ATSP Update develops a cohesive active transportation strategy for Los Angeles County and identifies opportunities for Metro to support local jurisdictions as they build out a high-quality, safe, and well-connected network of regional bikeways, along with active transportation improvements near priority transit facilities that support safe access to the regional transit system. The ATSP Update adds a new designation of pedestrian districts across the county to support projects that will make walking safer and more comfortable for those accessing key destinations.

The ATSP Update emphasizes the efficient management of Measure M resources, which provides Metro's first dedicated, ongoing funding source for active transportation. The ATSP Update also reflects Metro's Equity Platform, which aims to address disparities in access to opportunity. Further, the updated plan improves competitiveness at the local and regional level for grant funding sources such as the state Active Transportation Program.

### **Implementation Strategy**

A significant addition to this updated ATSP is an implementation strategy intended to manage and align Metro activities and resources in support of achieving the overall ATSP vision, while continuously monitoring and adapting activities in response to lessons learned from prior and ongoing active transportation efforts. Of note, the strategy acknowledges and addresses that the 2016 plan predated Measure M, which provided for Metro's first dedicated active transportation funding stream. Key strategy points include:

- Goal setting to measure progress and course-correct, if necessary;

- Emphasis on efficiency; and
- Better alignment with partners, especially municipalities.

The strategy further describes that Metro is most effective in supporting delivery of active transportation infrastructure as a funder and in leading planning and early concept design work. Partner agencies that own and maintain the public right-of-way are better suited to lead project delivery, operations and maintenance. Finally, the strategy describes actions and next steps, including integrating project delivery and partnership models in the upcoming Cycle 2 solicitation for the Metro Active Transport, Transit, and First/Last Mile (MAT) Grant Program.

### MAT Program Cycle 2

The recommended action includes authorization for staff to develop and release a solicitation for the second cycle of the MAT Program. The solicitation seeks project proposals for consideration to receive funds from \$75 million in Measure M funds available for programming in fiscal years 2026 to 2030. Staff anticipates releasing the solicitation in mid-2024. Staff will return to the Board to approve and program projects selected for funding.

As with the first funding cycle (fiscal years 2021 to 2025), the ATSP Update guides project eligibility and priorities for Cycle 2 of the MAT Program. Prospective project leads will be invited to submit Letters of Interest based on locations identified as part of the regional network and will be evaluated based on the prioritization in the ATSP. Other factors and selection criteria, including strength of project partnerships and support and alignment with other Metro plans and policies (such as the Street Safety Policy or adopted FLM plans) will be developed in a collaborative process with stakeholders including local agencies, advocacy groups, and others.

### ATP Cycle 7 Policies

The recommended action includes approval of Metro's policies for Cycle 7 of the State Active Transportation Program (ATP) (see Attachment C). ATP is a competitive state funding program to encourage increased bicycling and walking. The State will award \$555 million over fiscal years 2026 to 2029 for ATP Cycle 7. The Board's approval of ATP policies for the past six cycles has allowed Metro to provide grant writing services to Metro project managers and local agencies to support the development of strong applications that increase the likelihood of LA County's collective success. In coordination with the Southern California Association of Governments, Metro has selected projects for funding from the Regional MPO Competition. ATP Cycle 7 represents an opportunity to update Metro's grant assistance and regional project selection policies to incentivize the delivery of projects that align with ATP criteria and priorities, as well as Metro plans and priorities adopted since the last ATP cycle, including the ATSP Update.

### Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Community engagement was an essential input to defining the active transportation network and ensuring projects were prioritized according to community needs. Community-based organizations (CBOs), elected officials, Metro committee staff and key stakeholders provided an on-the-ground perspective of needed improvements to

walking, biking, and rolling in their community. Community engagement for the development of the ATSP Update began in March 2022 and concluded in August 2023. Subregional agencies and cities were engaged through a Technical Working Group to capture their insight on the unique transportation issues and challenges facing each subregion. The Technical Working Group guided Metro's overall planning approach and reviewed draft plan components at each stage of the process. In alignment with Metro's CBO Partnering Strategy, the outreach program included a robust CBO component to supplement community engagement in regions with higher concentrations of Equity Focus Communities (EFCs) and higher rates of bicycle and pedestrian collisions. The project team developed partnerships with three CBOs, including Streets Are For Everyone, Active SGV, and Healthy Active Streets, to host events and solicit input from community members who are historically underserved and underrepresented. Streets Are For Everyone led two engagement partnerships with churches in South LA, connecting the ATSP Update to an older demographic that is often overlooked in the planning and discussion of active transportation and mobility. Active SGV led two community bike rides in the cities of El Monte and Pomona in which community members rode along the routes on the ATSP Update's regional bike network. These rides allowed community members to give first-hand accounts and feedback on what would help them feel safer at precise points of the route. Healthy Active Streets led mobility visioning workshops in the cities of Paramount and Long Beach. Workshop participants were primarily high school and college-age students who often do not have a driver's license and rely on public transit and active transportation to get to school and other activities.

More than 2,600 residents and stakeholders were engaged through 33 in-person community events across all nine county subregions and more than 10 virtual community meetings. Printed factsheets, surveys, and informational poster boards were available in English and Spanish at the in-person events to inform community members and solicit feedback. The surveys were also distributed virtually via Metro's social media, The Source blog, emailed to the project mailing list, and shared with local agency partners. Community members also identified approximately 100 locations in need of active transportation investments through a virtual mapping tool. To address potential barriers to participation, Spanish speakers were on-site at all events to assist community members and comment cards were available for community members who preferred a non-digital medium to submit comments. Each virtual meeting provided an opportunity for a break-out session organized by subregion to allow for detailed discussion of local concerns. In addition, surveys on prioritization and network development resulted in over 1,800 responses.

## **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

The ATSP will not have adverse safety impacts on employees and patrons. A key element of the ATSP is to promote a transportation network that improves safety for all travelers. Local jurisdictions are solely responsible for the design and implementation of projects.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The approval of these recommendations will have a future financial impact once the future MAT Cycle 2 solicitation and project evaluation process is complete. Following the future MAT Cycle 2 solicitation and project evaluation process, staff will bring a recommendation to the Board to program

\$75 million in Measure M funds to projects that are consistent with the 2023 ATSP.

### Impact to Budget

Adopting the ATSP Update will have no impact to the budget.

Authorizing the CEO to release the solicitation for Cycle 2 of the MAT Program will have no impact to the budget. The Cycle 2 grants and programming years will be approved by the Board at a later date.

Approving the ATP Cycle 7 policies will have no impact to the budget. Funds for grant assistance have already been budgeted in the FY 2024 budget for Cost Center 4420 under Project 405510, Task 05.05.01. Since this is a multi-year program, the Cost Center Manager and Chief Planning Officer will be responsible for budgeting in future years.

### EQUITY PLATFORM

The ATSP Update elevated equity considerations at all stages of development. The goals and objectives of the ATSP Update reflect Metro's recently adopted and relevant plans, as well as input from the Technical Working Group and community outreach. Metro's Equity Platform, adopted after the 2016 ATSP, articulates the agency's commitment to incorporate equity into all facets of its work, while Metro's equity assessment tools, including the pilot Equity Planning and Evaluation Tool (EPET), offer specific guidance on methods and considerations for evaluating impacts on equity. The ATSP Update's goals are centered on Equity, Safety and Comfort, Accessibility, Connectivity and Sustainability, with each goal being supported by two to three objectives. The purpose of the Equity goal is for low-income populations, communities of color and other vulnerable and underserved people to have equitable access to safe and convenient active transportation options. A key objective is to prioritize active transportation interventions in EFCs. As such, Equity is a key criterion for the prioritization of the regional network to target future active transportation investments towards those with the greatest needs in communities that have historically lacked investment.

Metro will advance the implementation of the regional network through discretionary funding dedicated to active transportation, including the MAT Program, and through grant writing assistance for the ATP. Cycle 2 of the MAT Program will continue to include an application process intended to reduce barriers to entry, with targeted outreach and technical assistance planned for EFC areas and small or low-resourced cities. Metro's ATP Cycle 7 policies build upon and refine the ways the existing policies prioritize equity in the selection of projects for technical assistance and ATP funds from the MPO competition. The policies explicitly prioritize projects that will improve safety for people walking, rolling, and riding transit; improve and create alternatives to driving; and support improved health outcomes in EFCs..

### IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The recommended action furthers Strategic Plan Goal #2: Outstanding trip experiences for all. Active transportation projects facilitated by the ATSP will improve customers' experiences by walking, biking, or other rolling modes.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board could decide to delay or forgo the adoption of the ATSP Update. This alternative is not recommended as it may result in the implementation of active transportation projects that are inconsistent with Metro's latest policies, programs, and plans, as well as jeopardize next steps for grant programs that reference the ATSP Update.

The Board could elect not to adopt Metro's policies for ATP Cycle 7. This alternative is not recommended as it may impact the competitiveness of projects or result in the use of Metro's Cycle 6 policies, which do not prioritize projects that overlap with EFC areas.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Upon approval, staff will seek to advance the buildout of the regional active transportation network in partnership with local jurisdictions through Metro's limited but influential roles in funding and planning. Funding sources for projects identified in the ATSP Update may include Measure M subregional or highway funds, MAT Program, or ATP. Staff will develop a solicitation for Cycle 2 of the MAT Program based on the network and prioritization in the ATSP Update. Staff will bring to the Board a recommended program of projects to be funded through MAT Cycle 2 at the conclusion of that process.

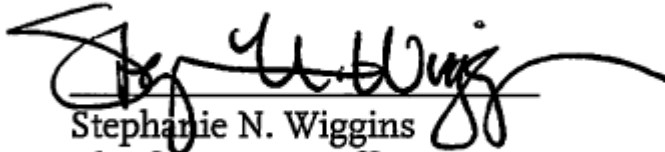
Staff will also release a solicitation for Letters of Interest for grant writing assistance for State ATP Cycle 7 funding. Metro staff will evaluate and select grant assistance recipients on a rolling basis up until February 2024. Grant writing will take place between March and June 2024.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - ATSP Update Executive Summary  
Attachment B - MAT Program Cycle 1 Project List  
Attachment C - ATP Cycle 7 Policies

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