

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM



DATE: July 1, 2021
TO: TAB Regional Solicitation Policy Work Group – Unique Projects
FROM: Cole Hiniker, Metropolitan Council
SUBJECT: Regional Solicitation Unique Projects – Technical Input

Regional Solicitation Unique Projects: Metric Framework

Metropolitan Council staff convened a group of technical advisors to provide input how the Policy Work Group's Unique Projects evaluation framework could be evaluated with specific metrics. The group included staff from MnDOT, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), transit providers, counties, cities, and Met Council. The group was provided background on the Policy Work Group recommendations and asked to provide open-ended feedback on what factors or metrics they believe could be used to evaluate these six criteria that the Policy Work Group identified. Subsequently, the group reacted to a proposal that considered the input and provided additional ideas and comments.

The proposed evaluation framework below includes a few elements for each of the six evaluation criteria:

- Qualitative feedback from technical staff on things the Policy Work Group should consider or feedback they should bring to TAB.
- The first level of bullets would essentially be the topics or questions (once fully written out) that applicants respond to for their project.
- The second level of bullets would be the basis for supporting text or guidance that help applicants understand what some of the primary considerations for each metric will be. These considerations are not an exhaustive list, however, as applicants can certainly address considerations not listed.

The technical staff also recommended that applicants be encouraged to provide quantifiable data for these metrics in a way that makes sense for their project but still addresses the intent of the criteria. Quantifiable data will be considered more strongly than strictly qualitative responses. Applicants could also be encouraged to discuss how they will self-evaluate their projects as they are implemented.

Finally, it is proposed that these metrics would be provided equal weight within each criteria (e.g., air quality would be evaluated equally compared to noise and light pollution). If some metrics are to be lesser weighted, the Policy Work Group should consider combining some metrics.

The following sections address the technical feedback for each criteria (numbered order does not imply importance, at this point).

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1. How would you measure or evaluate “reduce adverse environmental impacts of transportation?”

Technical feedback: While in general, reducing single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips is a positive contributor, how would electric vehicles be considered? How does this impact freight trips, medical trips, etc.? Also, consider the potential impact on lower-income residents if SOV trips are not encouraged, thus creating a disincentive for shorter trips (i.e., a transit trip may take longer than driving, creating an economic hardship for the traveler).

- Improve air quality
 - Reduce single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips
 - Access to charging stations
 - Reduce peak hour trips
- Contribution to climate change improvement
 - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduce noise or light pollution
- Improve surface or ground water quality
 - Reduction in stormwater runoff; onsite stormwater management
- Other environmental improvements
 - Wildlife
 - Natural vegetation

2. How would you measure or evaluate “improve racial equity?”

Technical feedback: TAB should consider other elements of equity that are not currently part of any of the Regional Solicitation funding categories, specifically gender and non-binary. TAB should consider a presentation on the inequitable gender-based outcomes and considerations in transportation. While it is understood that the group is focused on racial equity at this time, the application materials should state TAB’s intention to revisit the equity focus in future solicitations and encourage applicants to discuss other equity populations as they respond to all the questions in the Unique Projects evaluation.

- Improve connectivity and access for BIPOC communities
 - Connecting people to places, but also demonstrating an understanding of the places they want to go
 - Connecting communities where known gaps exist (document why connection is needed and source of info)
 - Outreach to, and involvement from (i.e., how were members’ contributions used and how were barriers related to technology, etc. addressed), these communities in project selection, development, or delivery. Consider providing specific examples of empowering engagement strategies, for example: IAP2 - Int'l Assoc. of Public Participation
- Removing barriers
 - Physical barriers being addressed (directly or indirectly)
 - Cultural barriers being addressed (language, etc.)
 - Engagement barrier being addressed (improving systemic outreach issues)
- Contributions to quality-of-life improvements
 - Placemaking
 - Safety
 - Job creation, economic development
 - Access to green space
 - Public health

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3. How would you measure or evaluate “Support multimodal communities?”

Technical feedback: Understanding the Policy Workgroup focus on transit, biking, and walking, make sure that applicants both understand the true needs of the community being served and relate their project directly to those needs. Projects that propose improvements that are not immersed in what the community needs should not receive high scores even if they are proposing these types of improvements.

- Improve multiple non-SOV modes within the system (e.g., transit, biking, walking)
 - Creating interconnectivity between modes
 - Creating “bridges” that serve all modes
 - Multimodal trip planning
- Land use and development strategies that are conducive to multimodal transportation
 - Supporting growth of dense, mixed-use communities or neighborhoods
 - Reducing demand or need for parking
- Support first and last mile solutions for people connecting to places they need to go
 - Mobility hubs and centralized connections for multiple modes
 - Increasing shared trips/shared mobility

4. How would you measure or evaluate “Innovation?”

- New approach to existing and/or emerging challenge(s)
 - Solving problems that have been a long-term challenge
 - New idea that hasn’t been piloted or deployed in Minnesota/Twin Cities/State/Upper Midwest or uses new technology
 - Leveraging connected and automated (CAV) vehicle technology
 - Integrating new technologies or practices into existing infrastructure
 - Risk assessment, mitigation strategy to management innovation/risks (and identify who mitigates)

5. How would you measure or evaluate “Regional Impact/Scalability?”

- Regional impact
 - How many people does the project impact?
 - Percent of people (in a given community/area) impacted?
 - Project’s geographic reach
- Expandability
 - How can the idea be used regionwide?
 - Is it a replicable project (i.e., could it be adapted elsewhere?)?
 - (Full credit if it already covers the whole region)

6. How would you measure or evaluate “Partnerships/collaboration?”

Technical feedback: There is risk in rewarding projects that have a high match contribution because it discourages ideas with limited budgets to propose, particularly non-profits. A higher match contribution also encourages larger projects and may disincentivize small projects that would allow for spreading the money around to more applicants.

- Number of stakeholder groups that helped develop the project
 - How many involved in the project? (The more partners, the more points awarded)
 - Public/private (or 4P; Public, Private, Philanthropic, and People)
 - Percent or number of partners that are small/minority-owned business (DBE/TGB/MCUB).
- Match contribution

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- More points for high amount or percentage (e.g., % of partnership contributions compared to total dollar amount)