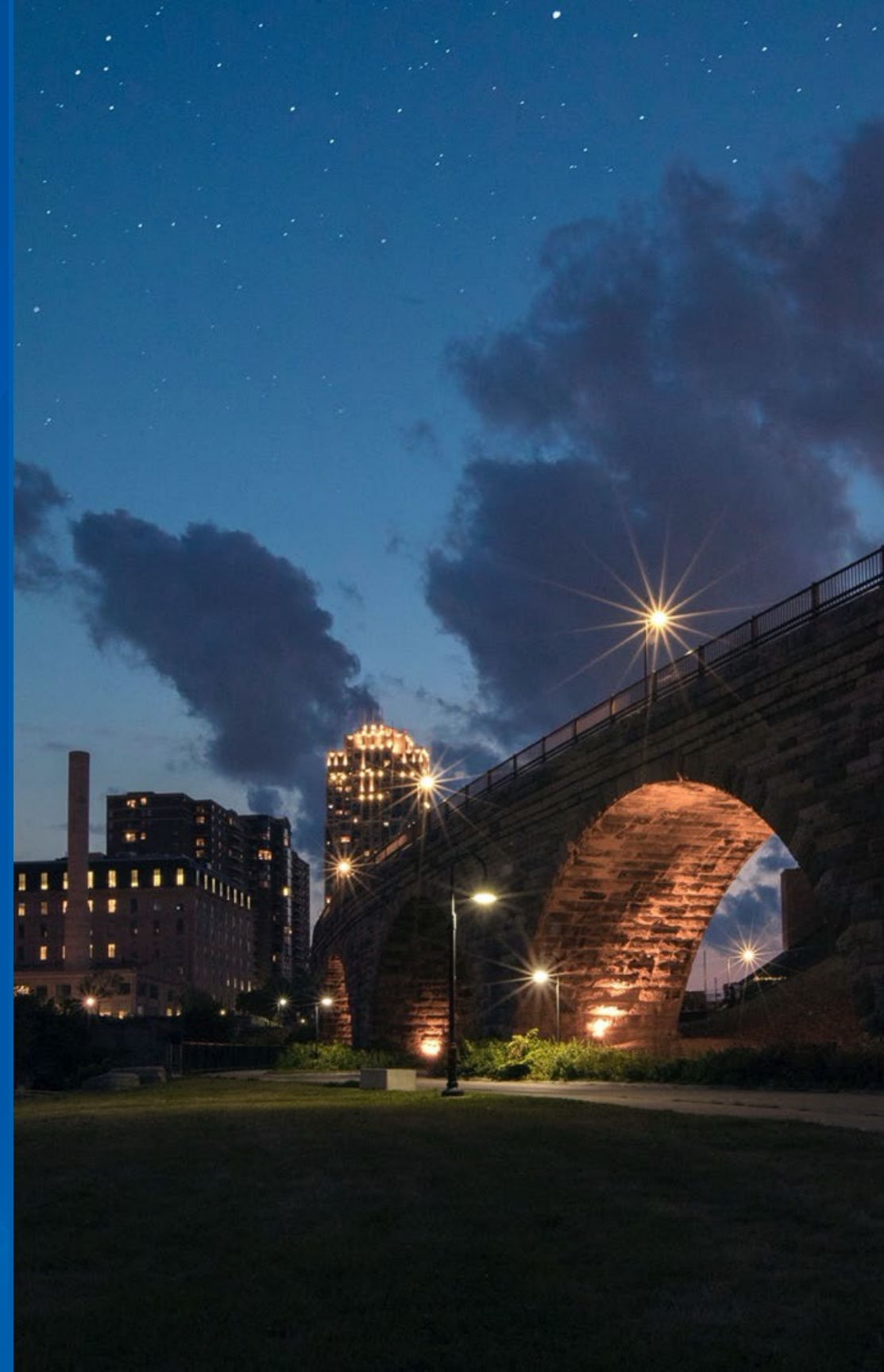




METROPOLITAN
C O U N C I L

Equity Evaluation of Regional Transportation Investment Processes Pilot Study

September 2024 metro council.org





Agenda

Metropolitan Council Commitment to Racial Equity and Purpose of this Work

The Equity Policy Group

The Draft Equity Framework & Tool

Capacity Building Pilot Training Program

Needs for an Equitable Investment Process

Future Work Planned

Core Values



Equity: Addressing disparities and fostering an equitable future.

We value the people and communities of our region. Our region is economically and culturally vibrant. We also recognize, however, the harm and disparities that injustices, including racism, have created.

We are dedicated to creating systems, policies, and programs that repair and heal past harm, foster an equitable future, and eliminate disparities. Communities that have been marginalized in the past will be at the center of this work in leadership roles.



Accountability: Measuring impact and being open to change.



Leadership: Inspiring positive change across sectors.



Stewardship: Sustaining resources for future generations.



Council's Racial Equity Framework



Contextualized

Ensure solutions address systemic inequity.

Community Centered

Work with impacted people and populations to co-create solutions.

Reparative

Seek restorative remedies commensurate with the level of negative impact.

Transportation Planning's Work Response



- Prioritize work and actions that address “actualizing” Equity and go beyond focusing on equitable engagement
- Address systemic inequities that exist in our planning, programming and project development processes
- \$3 million in competitive local funding made available to Council business units to pilot new Equity related activities
 - This project received \$400,000, 18-month timeline
 - Project grew to \$800,000, 2.5 years
- Original Proposal: *Conduct an evaluation of regional transportation investment and decision-making processes and develop prioritized strategies and actions to reduce transportation related inequities*
- Proposal included working with and paying an advisory body of community members to:
 - Identify inequities in our processes
 - Identify and prioritize actions to make the processes more equitable

Why?

This pilot study seeks to overcome and reconcile the historic and ongoing racism systematically embedded in **transportation decision-making processes**.

Who?

The pilot study was guided by an Equity Policy Group (EPG) of community members.

What?

A Transportation Equity Framework & Process Evaluation Tool provides thought provoking questions and recommendations to reduce inequities in transportation decision-making.

Evolving Purpose of the Work:

Bringing Equity into
~~Evaluation of Regional
Transportation Investment
Processes Study~~

Lessons Learned on Scoping



Equity work takes time and flexibility

- Equity work requires flexibility and ability to shift on the “what and how” of the work
 - Equity Policy Group wanted significant input on the scope of the work
- Our ideas on the project emphasis and scope did not necessarily align with EPG’s
 - Idea of having prioritized strategies and actions and differences in project types and processes did not resonate with the EPG
- Working with a community group requires time and staff dedication and frequent communication
 - Provide a budget that adequately allows the various communication methods needed and adequate time

The Equity Policy Group (EPG) & Team



The Equity Policy Group (EPG)



The Work Model



The Equity Policy Group (EPG)

The EPG's Guiding Values



Transparency

Equitable
Burdens
and
Benefits

Shared
Accountability

Genuine
Inclusion

Shared
Decision
Making

Resources

The EPG's Transportation Equity Definition

“Transportation equity means benefits and burdens of transportation systems, services, and spending are fair and just, which historically has not been the case.

Transportation equity requires acknowledging, addressing and repairing past harms, particularly impacting underserved Black, African, Latine, Asian, and Indigenous people, including Tribal Nations. It also calls for active intentional inclusion of underserved communities in shaping transportation decisions.”

- Equity Policy Group

The EPG Meetings



Meeting format

- In person w/ hybrid option
- Agency representatives in attendance
- Stipend provided
- Transit access provided
- Food and beverages provided
- Materials and homework sent prior
- Large group review/small group discussion
- After meeting surveys



The EPG Meetings



EPG Feedback

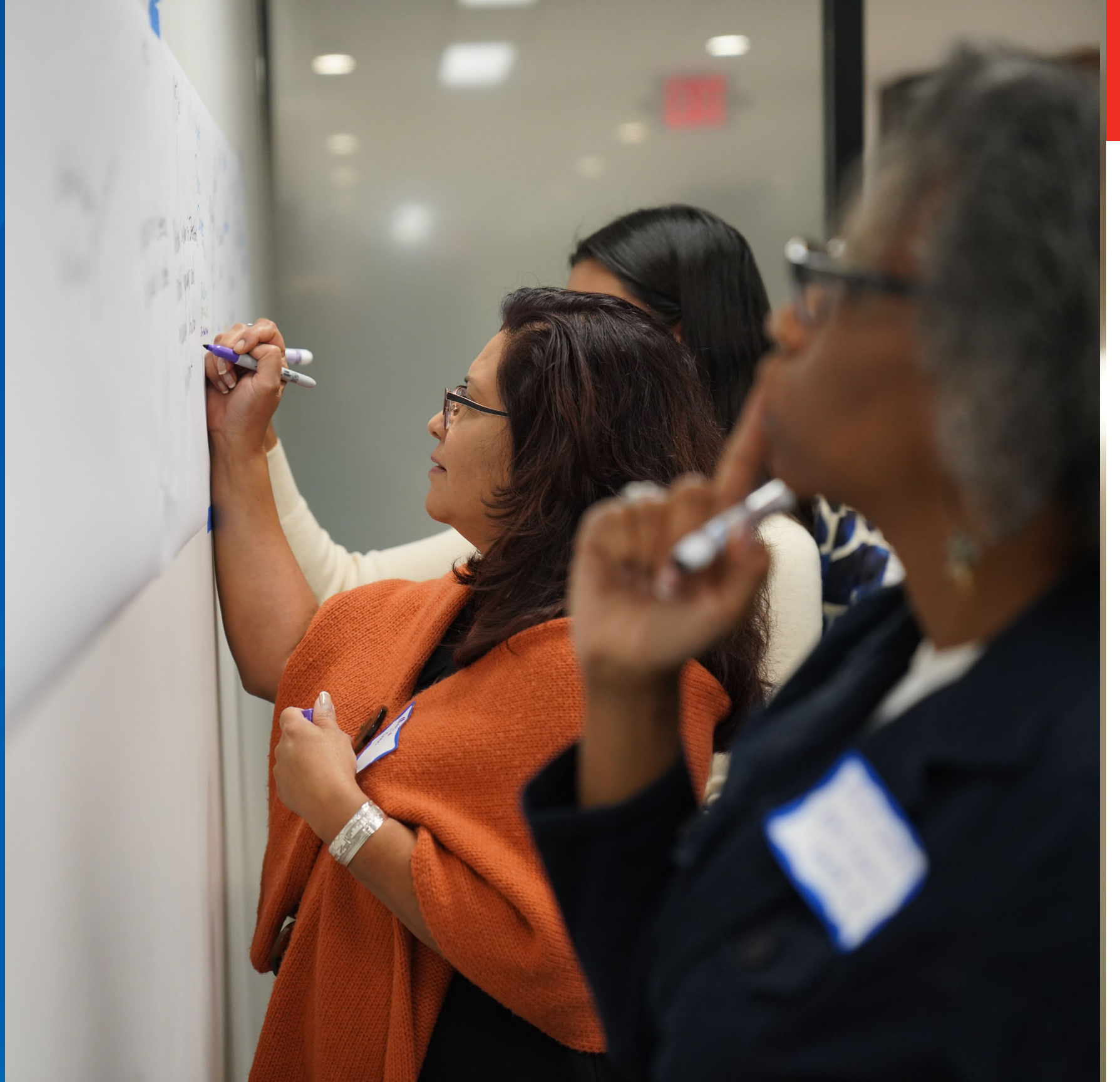
- More meaningful team building
- Frequent communications
- 1 on 1 and small group meetings desired
- Wanted to be called on for feedback
- Memorialize success

Team Approach Lessons

- Heavy effort for onboarding and education
- Budget considerations
- Scope influence by EPG
- Mid-study assessment!!!
- EPG frustrations for current projects

The Draft Equity Framework & Tool

Scan the QR code to follow along:



The Draft Equity Framework & Tool

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY FRAMEWORK & PROCESS EVALUATION TOOL

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graph TD; Title[TRANSPORTATION EQUITY FRAMEWORK & PROCESS EVALUATION TOOL] --- Box1[The Framework is the "how to guide" for use of the Process Evaluation Tool.]; Title --- Box2[The Tool is a set of questions and recommendations to guide and evaluate processes for racial equity.];
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The *Framework* is the “how to guide” for use of the Process Evaluation Tool.

The *Tool* is a set of questions and recommendations to guide and evaluate processes for racial equity.

Early Realizations

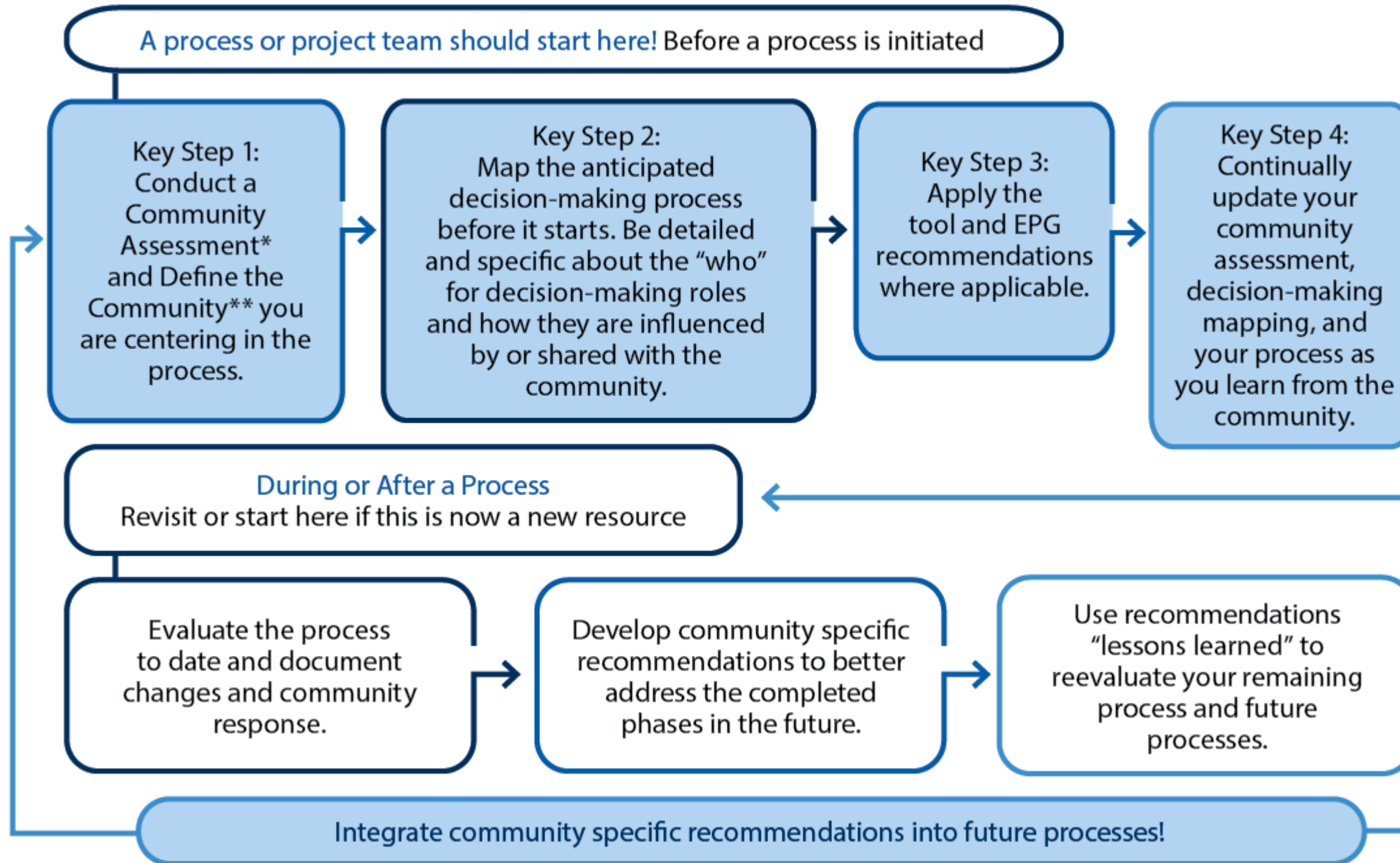
There is no one process for a project from identification through implementation



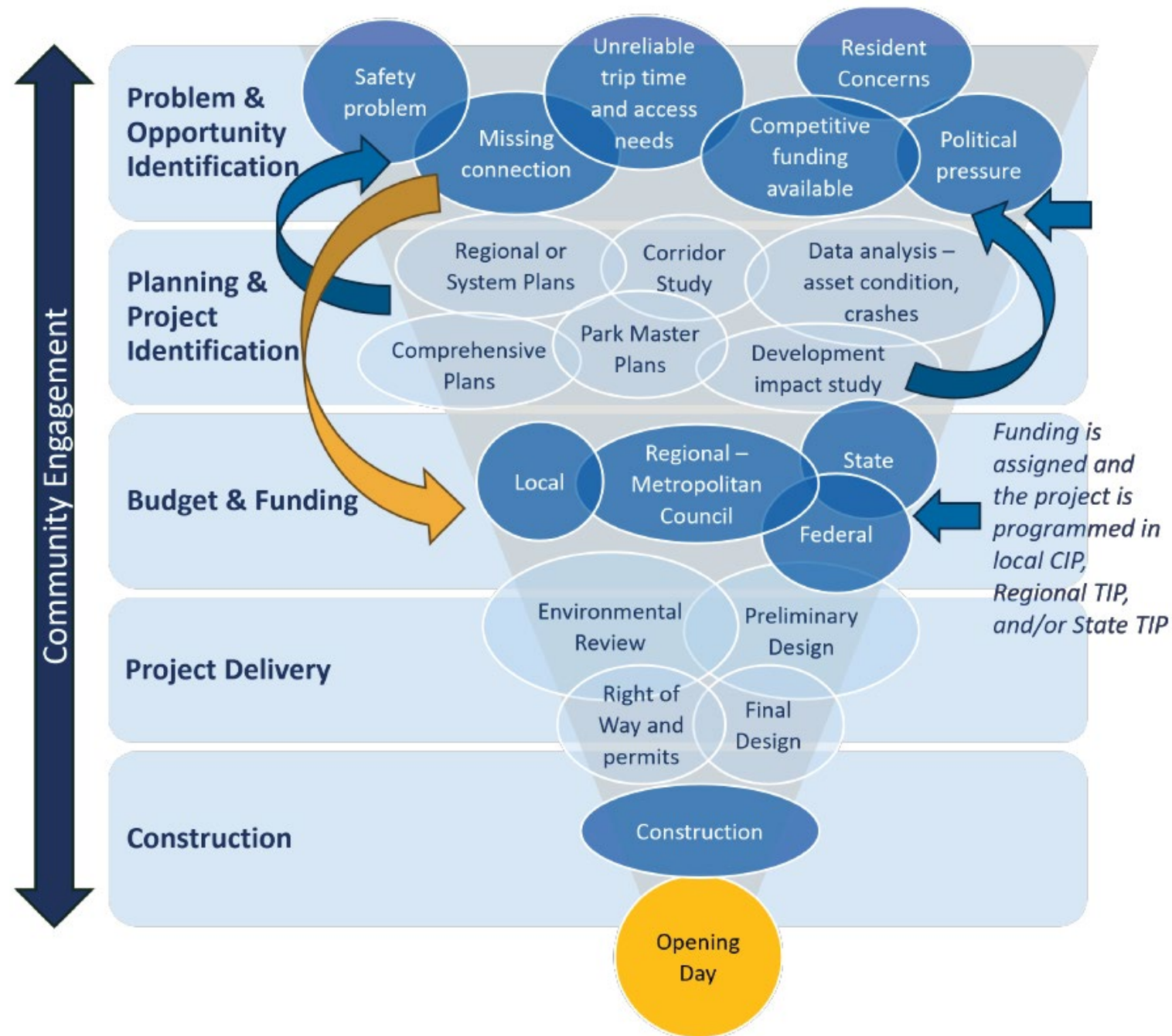
Often project teams don't even know who the decision-makers are

You cannot effectively use the framework and tool without a detailed mapping of your process and community assets

The Draft Equity Framework & Tool



The Draft Equity Framework & Tool



The Draft Equity Framework & Tool



The Draft Equity Framework & Tool



Other Example Questions

Problem & Opportunity Identification

- What is the problem or opportunity to be addressed? How does it relate to the community?
- **Who named the problem or opportunity?** Is there community agreement that this problem or opportunity needs to be addressed?
- Are the intended users and beneficiaries the community members? If not, how will the process be changed to include benefit to the community?
- Who will be burdened by the potential investment? **How and when will anti-displacement be considered?**
- After completing the questions for this phase, **did you learn anything new that should result in updates to your community assessment and/or decision-making mapping?**

On Going Work: Capacity Building & Pilot Training



On Going Work: Capacity Building & Pilot Training



Training Purpose

Develop and test a training about how to apply the EPG Framework & Tool to a transportation project they are working on.

Training Audience

- (Current phase) – Teams of City, County, MnDOT, and Met Council staff who have a role in a transportation project at every phase.
- (Future phase) – Agency staff teams + Community members and community-based organizations in the project area

Role of EPG in Training – *In development*

May include:

- Facilitation and asking the tool questions
- Evaluation of the training
- Connecting with other community partners in future

On Going Work: Capacity Building & Pilot Training



Participants of the training will:

1. Expand knowledge of what is an equitable transportation process and why it is important, centering this conversation in what we heard from the EPG
2. Know how to apply the EPG's equity recommendations and tool to their transportation planning, decision-making, and investment processes.
3. Build an action plan to implement changes to your transportation planning, decision-making, or investment processes to make it more equitable

Training Tensions

What are the roles of project staff, the EPG, and community-based organizations?

How to create a constructive space that doesn't trigger participants?

How to rise about the noise, competing priorities, and finite staff capacity?

With the tool still evolving, when and how to include community in testing the tool?



Summary of Lessons Learned



Needs for an Equitable Investment Process



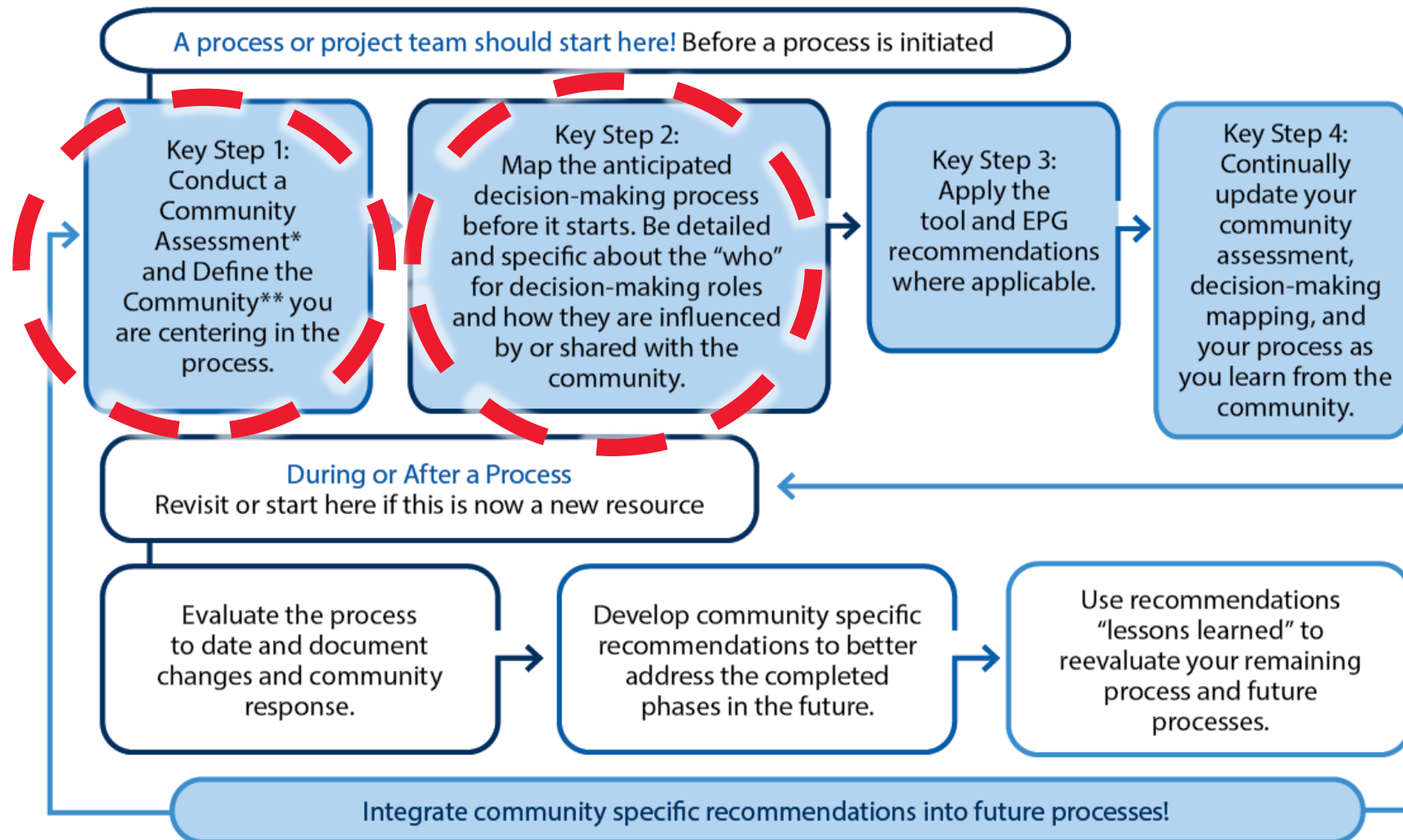
An equitable process is necessary for an equitable outcome.

1. Empowering community members throughout your process is the game-changer, even though it adds challenges.
2. Plan for adequate time and budget.
3. Have community members as boots on the ground for the process and project delivery.
4. Detailed mapping / homework on the community is very important.
5. Mapping your decision-making process for transparency is very important.

Future Work Planned



Future Follow Up Work Planned



- ❑ Create processes and guidelines and implement training for a community assessments process.
- ❑ Develop guide for engaging with communities about transportation needs and integrating findings into a project’s purpose and need, planning, development and decision-making.
- ❑ Develop an analysis methodology and environmental justice framework to evaluate how projects benefit and harm different communities and demographics.



Thank you.

For more information:

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Scan the QR codes for the:

Draft Framework and Tool

Study Website

