

**To:** Transportation Advisory Board  
Kevin Roggenbuck, Transportation Coordinator

**From:** Marie Cote, PE, Principal  
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**Subject:** Technical Memorandum #2 for the Regional Solicitation Evaluation

### Introduction

Twenty-two telephone interviews and 53 internet surveys were completed in March and April of 2013 to gather input as part of the Regional Solicitation Evaluation. The telephone interviews collected feedback from executive-level staff regarding higher-level policy questions, while the internet surveys asked more technical questions to past project applicants, project scorers, and other technical staff. The telephone interviews and surveys represent two key inputs that will help inform recommended changes to the Regional Solicitation's effectiveness and efficiency.

A summary of the telephone interviews and internet surveys is provided on the following pages. A more detailed recap of these two activities is provided in the Appendices. Another key public involvement activity, the policymaker workshop, will be discussed in Technical Memorandum 3.

### Telephone Interviews

Informational telephone interviews were conducted with 22 executive-level individuals along with fellow staff, between March 5 and April 2, to discuss current and future regional funding policies and how the solicitation process might need to be modified to better reflect regional and local transportation policies and priorities. Interviewees were asked 17 policy-level questions about the Regional Solicitation process, and were provided an opportunity at the end of the interview to make any additional comments.

The respondents included:

- *Steering Committee:* Five individuals from three organizations participated
- *County Agencies:* 15 individuals from seven county agencies participated
- *City Agencies:* 11 individuals from four city agencies participated
- *Transit Providers:* Five individuals from three organizations participated
- *Parks Organizations:* Five individuals from two parks organizations participated
- *Other Stakeholders:* Five individuals from three other stakeholder organizations participated

Responses to the questions are summarized below. A more detailed overview of the telephone interviews is provided in Appendix A.

**1. How well is the current solicitation process aligned with current regional policies?**

- Most said process was reasonably well aligned with current policies but some said that the policy plan was not specific enough to help in setting priorities for solicitation process.
- Many noted that the current process may not be well aligned with future regional policy direction (THRIVE MSP 2040) and MAP-21.

**2. How well does the Regional Solicitation process address local needs?**

- Most responded that the process addresses local needs well.
- Some felt funding should be focused on regional needs but that these needs are generally aligned well with local needs; some felt there should be a greater focus on local needs.

**3. Where is the Regional Solicitation process NOT well aligned with regional policies/priorities?**

- Some said the process is not well aligned regarding affordable housing and the Metropolitan Council's Livable Communities goals.
- Many mentioned preservation vs. expansion – some expressed a concern that moving toward preservation will cause local communities to ignore routine maintenance in order to get funding.
- Most noted that there are differences in needs in the inner core vs. needs in outlying areas.
- Some stated there is a need for greater flexibility in use of funding programs (especially for transit and non-motorized projects).
- Some noted underfunding of non-freeway principal arterials even though these facilities are a high regional priority.
- Some stated that regional policy encourages projects that include a variety of low cost improvements but the funding criteria do not support these types of projects.
- Some stated that regional policy encourages sustainable projects but capital transit projects are often funded without the ability to sustain long-term service to the funded facilities

#### **4. What is good or bad (works or does not work) about the Regional Solicitation process?**

##### **Positives**

- Most said that the process is open to a wide variety of applicants.
- Most said the data-driven, thorough, technical scoring process is widely respected as fair and competitive.
- Some thought the rigor of the process helps weed out projects that would not be good candidates.
- Most thought the funding was awarded in relatively balanced way (especially over time) – both geographically and among project types.
- Some stated that the fact that the criteria for categories are measurable makes it easy to compare projects.

##### **Negatives**

- Most said the application process requires a lot of resources – very expensive and time-intensive to apply.
- Most said the process is complicated and confusing for those who have not been heavily involved in the past.
- Some said smaller governments often cannot compete due to match requirements and resources required to complete applications.
- Some said a weakness of the process is that the ranking and reviews are done in ‘silos’ rather than comparing overall projects.
- Some noted that the lack of flexibility regarding scope and sunset dates after funding is awarded is a problem for some projects.
- Some noted that there is no back-up process in place to allocate funding if projects fall through.
- Some stated that the capped funding limits ability to fund larger projects (especially trail projects and large interchanges).
- Some stated that the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) restriction of one project/corridor is too limiting.
- Many noted that the Development Framework Implementation category requires significant effort but results in minimal distinction among applications - needs to be updated.

#### **5. What goals should the region try to accomplish with federal funds allocated through the Regional Solicitation process?**

- Many stated that multi-modal solutions that maximize the investment should be encouraged although some noted that they feel this is already done well with current program criteria.
- Some stated that low-cost, high-benefit projects should be emphasized.
- Some noted that land use and transportation goals should be better integrated.
- Some noted that there should be consistency with other regional priorities related to housing, land use, economic development, growth, etc.

- Some stated that equity between inner and outer cities was important.
- Some thought that congestion management/mitigation was important.
- Some mentioned that mobility of people rather than vehicles was important.
- Some said we should focus on access and capacity.
- Some said we should focus on safety for all modes.
- Some said we should focus more on preservation and near-term needs; others said focus more on expansion and future long-term needs.
- Some said focus on larger projects – less fragmented/piecemeal projects.
- Some said focus more on “A” minor system and non-freeway principal arterials.
- Some said focus on building the regional trail system.
- Some said focus on building the regional transit system; some said balance this with other transit needs.

**6. Do you have a concern about reduced funding for trails and enhancement projects (related to MAP-21's change to the Transportation Alternatives (TA) program)?**

- Most said they have general concerns about reduced funding because funding is already limited.
- Some said they are concerned but do not want funds to be shifted from other programs.
- Some said this is not a significant concern because non-motorized facilities are included in most of their roadway projects already.

**7. How should TA funds be allocated?**

- Many said focus should be on regional trail system or projects that serve a regional purpose – filling gaps should be a priority.
- Some said focus should be on projects that serve a transportation/commuter purpose rather than recreational.
- Some said focus should be on building “complete streets” projects.
- Some said that “safe routes to school” projects should be eligible for funding but others thought these programs were too small and/or too local in nature.
- Some said that emphasis should be on retrofitting cities with sidewalks and ADA-compliant bus stops rather than on trails.

**8. Should there be funding for bridges and, if so, how should it be allocated?**

- Most said that there are other funding sources for bridges so having separate funding for bridges in the Regional Solicitation process was not needed but many also noted that bridges should not be excluded from competing for STP funds.
- Many said that bridge preservation should be priority, but some said there should be an emphasis on new bridge construction/replacement or a balanced approach.
- Some noted that river crossings were of particular importance in regard to receiving federal funding because of the size and multi-jurisdictional nature of these facilities.

- Some mentioned that funding for pedestrian/bicycle bridges was a specific need.

**9. How should the Regional Solicitation process address requests for urban design elements such as landscaping, streetscaping, public art, etc.?**

- Most indicated that some “base” level of urban design was a reasonable part of all projects and those projects should fit aesthetically with the local environment.
- Some indicated that urban design elements should not be a factor in scoring to insure that applicants did not add these elements unnecessarily to get more points in the evaluation process.
- Most said that the local agency should provide a clear commitment to operation and maintenance of urban design elements as a prerequisite for funding these elements.

**10. Does the current process give adequate priority to transit funding and how might the process be modified?**

- Some said transit funding needs to be increased and others said it was adequate or should be decreased.
- Some said there is a need to reevaluate how criteria/benefits from transit are measured.
- Some noted that recent investment has been in outlying suburbs, but we need to look at reinvesting in core/urban areas.
- Some noted that some transit projects that are funded with CMAQ funds cannot be sustained once CMAQ funding runs out and these types of projects should not be funded with federal funds. Some noted that there is a need for a better balance between transit funding and funding for other congestion management projects.
- Some stated that funding should be focused on regional system improvements rather than local facilities and/or services.

**11. Should federal funds be used to add lane capacity to the “A” Minor Arterial system or to preserve/rehabilitate it?**

- Some said there should be an emphasis on preservation/rehabilitation; others said there should be an emphasis on expansion; others said there should be a balance.
- Most said that routine maintenance should be the responsibility of the local jurisdiction.
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- Some said that definitions/categorizations of “A” minor arterials have improved recently but need further improvement, particularly for developed communities (especially those that have changed from “developing” to “developed” areas).

**12. How should differing jurisdictional goals be considered when evaluating “A” Minor Arterial projects?**

- Most indicated that conflicts between justifications get worked out during the solicitation process.

**13. How should recommendations of the “A” Minor Arterial System Evaluation influence the Regional Solicitation process?**

- Most stated that the study provided good information and reinforced the need for the “A” Minor Arterial system.
- Most stated that the evaluation should have an influence on the Transportation Policy Plan, but there needs to be balance between the TPP, MAP-21, and the Regional Solicitation process.

**14. Should projects that demonstrate jurisdictional coordination and/or public/private partnerships be given additional weight in the evaluation process?**

- Most said that a commitment to jurisdictional coordination was important. Some said more weight should be given; others thought the existing process was adequate.
- Most did not want additional weight given to projects with public/private partnerships – most thought it was more important that regional goals are advanced than that there is private money contributed to a project.

**15. Should project readiness be given more emphasis in the Regional Solicitation process?**

- Most recognized the need to demonstrate readiness but some thought it should be given more weight in the technical evaluation process and some thought it should be given less weight because some projects are more difficult than others.
- Most indicated that readiness, while important, should not drive the process and there should be some flexibility recognizing that some projects are more difficult to deliver than others.
- Many identified specific issues that make project delivery more difficult including working with railroads, property acquisitions, environmental clearance, public involvement, and the federal process.
- Many stated that it is difficult for communities to spend resources on a project before funding has been identified and this makes it problematic to add more limits related to readiness.

**16. Is a geographically balanced distribution of funds important?**

- Many indicated that funding should go to the “best” projects, but acknowledged that geographic distribution was politically important and should be a factor, but not a primary goal.
- Many stated that it was more important to look at balance over time than in a single solicitation.
- Some stated that regional balance should be based on demand or population rather than geography or land area; some stated that all residents/businesses contribute taxes and need to see some return on that investment.
- Most thought that geographic balance was handled well by the TAC/TAB and should not be a part of the technical criteria.

**17. Should prioritizing criteria be modified to encourage a more multi-modal or “complete streets” approach to projects?**

- Some said that multi-modal projects should be encouraged more and receive more points; others said there is not a need to award more points because most projects are already multi-modal.
- Some stated that staff should follow up with projects after construction to make sure that the proposed multi-modal facilities are actually built as proposed.
- Many noted that multi-modal components of projects should be evaluated based on need, not just given points because they are included – if the component does not make sense for the project, the project should not be penalized.
- Some stated that projects that are replacing existing multi-modal facilities (for example, sidewalks) should not be penalized because the non-motorized facilities are not added facilities.
- Some stated that the process should ensure that funded projects do not create gaps, barriers or unsafe conditions for non-motorized users or should require that these issues to be resolved before funding the project.
- Some noted that they would like to be able to bundle small similar projects together (trail crossings, for example) that might be in multiple locations along a single corridor or area.

## Internet Surveys

A 71-question on-line survey was conducted between March 29, 2013 and April 11, 2013. This survey focused on detailed questions about the Regional Solicitation process, the evaluation criteria, and the points system. Approximately 120 public agency and consultant staff with experience in the Regional Solicitation process (either by completing an application or acting as a scorer) were invited to participate in the survey. Some survey questions had a low response rate, especially questions about redistributing the points among the prioritizing criteria.

Fifty-three individuals responded to the survey including:

- 30 city staff
- 10 county staff
- 5 MnDOT staff
- 2 transit provider staff
- 2 parks staff
- 4 “others”

A summary of the internet surveys is given below, while a more detailed overview is provided in Appendix B.

### 1. Application Process

- Most of the respondents had submitted applications. Many had submitted applications for the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program and the Surface Transportation Program (STP). A

few had submitted applications for the Bridge Improvement/Replacement (BIR) or CMAQ programs.

- The main reasons given for not submitting an application were: (1) the project did not fit the criteria well, (2) the federal process is too difficult and time-consuming, and (3) the required quantitative analysis for the application is too difficult or time-consuming.
- Most respondents said the scoring process was fair and transparent.
- Two-thirds of respondents indicated that a competitive, data-driven process is the best way to allocate federal funds to local agencies.
- Most respondents indicated they need two to three months to complete the current Regional Solicitation application.
- About two-thirds of respondents indicated that limiting the number of words would help streamline the process. Other suggestions included providing worksheets/guides (37 percent), reducing the number of questions (28 percent), and reducing the number of required computations (9 percent).
- One-half of the respondents indicated that “development framework implementation” was the most difficult and time-consuming part of the application. One-third of respondents said that “potential use” was also difficult and time-consuming.

#### **18. Regional Policies and Priorities**

- While about one-half of respondents thought the process was well aligned with regional policies, many respondents were “unsure.”
- Respondents were evenly split on whether to change funding categories to separate funding by mode or separate funding by project type.
- Respondents were fairly evenly split on whether projects should be weighted differently in the urban core than in developing/rural areas.
- A majority of respondents (55 percent) said funding maximums should not be increased, while 41 percent said they should be increased.
- Approximately one-third of respondents said that “A” Minor Arterials should receive first priority in federal funding; approximately one-third said that public transit (buses and LRT) should receive first priority.
- Respondents were fairly evenly split on whether projects should be given greater weight if a higher local match was provided and whether projects should receive additional points for being ready for construction.
- About 75 percent of respondents said jurisdictional coordination and/or public/private partnerships should be given additional weight in the evaluation process.
- Almost two-thirds of respondents indicated that some measure of geographic equity in the distribution of funds is important.



### **19. Surface Transportation Program (STP)**

- Respondents were fairly evenly split on whether the maximum amount of funding per project should be increased, but three-quarters of respondents felt the minimum funding request should stay the same.
- One-half of the respondents were “unsure” that the current method of measuring reduction in congestion was an effective measure. The other one-half were equally split on whether it was, or was not, an effective measure.
- One-half of the respondents were “unsure” that the current method of measuring reduction in crashes was an effective measure. The other one-half felt that this was an effective measure.

### **20. Transportation Enhancement Program (TE)**

- All respondents stated that bicycle and pedestrian projects should continue to be funded in the future and three-quarters of respondents said that streetscape and pedestrian enhancement projects should continue. Only one-quarter of respondents thought that scenic and environmental or historic and archaeological projects should continue to be funded.
- About one-half of respondents thought that both funding maximums and minimums should stay the same. About one-half of respondents thought that both funding maximums and minimums should be increased.
- Two-thirds of respondents thought that safe routes to school projects should not receive funding through the Regional Solicitation process.

### **21. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)**

- Over 85 percent of respondents indicated that both traffic management projects and transit projects should be part of the next Regional Solicitation. About one-half thought that travel demand management projects and non-recreational bicycle/pedestrian projects should be included; and about one-third thought that alternative fuel projects and traffic management facilities should be included.
- Over two-thirds of respondents thought both maximum and minimum funding limits should stay the same.

# Appendix A: Telephone Interview Recap

## Telephone Interview Recap

The Metropolitan Council is in the process of evaluating the Regional Solicitation process for awarding federal transportation dollars to counties, local communities, transit providers and other stakeholders. The purpose of the evaluation is to make sure that the process is properly aligned with current regional policies and priorities, current local needs, and new federal directives related to MAP-21. As part of the process, informational telephone interviews were conducted with 22 executive-level individuals along with fellow staff between March 5 and April 2, 2013, to discuss current and future regional funding policies and how the solicitation process might need to be modified to better reflect regional and local transportation policies and priorities.

Interviewees were asked 17 policy-level questions about the Regional Solicitation process, and provided an opportunity at the end to make any additional comments.

The respondents for each question below are broken down into the six stakeholder groups below:

- *Steering Committee*: Five individuals from three organizations participated
- *County Agencies*: 15 individuals from seven county agencies participated
- *City Agencies*: 11 individuals from four city agencies participated
- *Transit Providers*: Five individuals from three organizations participated
- *Parks Organizations*: Five individuals from two parks organizations participated
- *Other Stakeholders*: Five individuals from three other stakeholder organizations participated

Responses to the topic of each question are summarized below, divided by category of respondents.

### 1. Alignment with regional policies

#### Steering Committee Comments

- Most said process was reasonably well aligned with current policies
- Policy plan is not specific enough to help in setting priorities for solicitation process
- Work to do to make sure aligned with future TPP and MAP-21
- Areas of concern:
  - Non-motorized funding
  - Flexibility on how money spent
  - Transit
  - Preservation vs. expansion
  - Unintended consequences of a shift toward preservation and away from expansion

#### County Agencies Comments

- Most said fairly well aligned with current policies
- Provides much needed funds for projects, especially STP for “A” minors and CMAQ for transit

- Areas of concern:
  - Funding for “A” minor arterial system and non-freeway principal arterials
  - Changes in MAP-21
  - Expansion vs. preservation/replacement
  - Funding for interchanges/intersections
  - Core city needs are different than growing/developing city needs – differences should be recognized
  - Funding less, larger projects vs. funding more, smaller projects

### City Agencies Comments

- Most said fairly well aligned with current policies
- Several noted a need to continue to make adjustments as the times/needs change.
- Areas of concern:
  - Preservation vs. expansion
  - Alignment/connection between regional and local policies and needs
  - Alignment with new MAP-21 guidelines

### Transit Providers Comments

- A few said the policies are aligned fairly well
- The staff applying/reviewing seem to make a conscious effort to keep the process objective
- Areas of concern:
  - Need for exercising flexibility with locals and for projects that are different
  - Conflicts between urban and suburban communities vying for funding
  - How the policies themselves are created
  - Preservation vs. expansion
  - Urban vs. suburban transit needs
  - Roadway vs. other projects (transit, trail etc.)
  - Factoring in whether or not certain types of projects may have more additional funding sources/options than others that are applying
  - Lack of follow-up after projects are completed; need for more data

### Parks Organizations Comments

- Policies align well for regional trail projects
- Difficult to know how well everything aligns, as there is not a lot of detail and data regarding the projects selected after they are completed
- Areas of concern:
  - Ability of larger agencies to get a larger amount of appropriation funding
  - Supporting projects for motorized vs. non-motorized transportation
  - Need to review/tweak current regional policies

### Other Stakeholders Comments

- A few said policies align fairly well, previously selected projects have reflected policies
- Areas of concern:
  - Regional plan too general, need more specific policies to remain consistent
  - Geographically balanced funding seems to take priority over
  - Expansion vs. preservation
  - Limiting transit projects to CMAQ, not opening STP to transit

## 2. Local needs

### Steering Committee Comments

- A few said local needs are addressed fairly well
- Areas of concern:
  - Need to rethink definition/categorizations of “A” minor arterials
  - Project delivery ability
  - Lack of data regarding solicitation process accomplishments, lack of performance-based planning
  - Lack of consistency/coordination between agencies
  - Need for Met Council to incorporate local comprehensive transportation plans into solicitation process

### County Agencies Comments

- Several said that local needs are addressed fairly well
- Solicitation process lets local agencies determine their needs and submit their own projects accordingly
- Areas of concern:
  - Underinvestment in “A” minor arterial system
  - Underrepresentation of connector category and rural roads
  - Misalignment between state and county priorities
  - Scoring favors reactive over proactive projects

### City Agencies Comments

- A few said that local needs are addressed fairly well
- Areas of concern:
  - Competition unequal within certain categories; need to reevaluate categories
  - Expansion vs. preservation
  - Urban/inner core vs. suburban/rural/outer core
  - Disconnect between federal guidelines and resources available to meet guidelines
  - Need to look at redefining “A” minor system purposes/categories
  - Over-focused on principal arterial system

### Transit Providers Comments

- Several said local needs are not addressed well; room for improvement
- Areas of concern:
  - Smaller local projects being overshadowed by larger projects
  - Lack of consideration for whether or not submitted projects have alternate funding options

### Parks Organizations Comments

- Most said there is room for improvement in addressing local needs
- Desire to emphasize projects that address gaps, significant safety concerns and serve greatest number of users
- Areas of concern:
  - Lack of recognition of trails as part of transit system
  - Local vs. regional trail projects
  - Lack of consideration of how local trail projects can improve overall system
  - Expansion vs. preservation
  - Roadway vs. trails (or non-motorized transportation) projects

### Other Stakeholders Comments

- Solicitation process addresses local needs the best it can with limited funding
- Area of concern: Process favors spreading out funding over funding large projects; TAB needs to intervene to get large projects funded which is strongly criticized

### **3. Process not aligned well with regional policies/priorities**

### Steering Committee Comments

- Areas of concern:
  - Most of the solicitation categories award points for affordable housing, but the scoring is different than other Metro housing programs, resulting in few points being awarded to anyone.
  - Process puts a lot of administrative burden on MnDOT

### County Agencies Comments

- A few said that the process does well at leaving out politics
- Areas of concern:
  - Doesn't deal well with freeway issues
  - Preservation vs. expansion
  - Large commitment of resources required to apply
  - Inner core vs. outer core
  - Underfunding of non-freeway principal arterials
  - Lack of geographic balance

- Scoring encouraging lack of local maintenance in order to get funding

### City Agencies Comments

- Areas of concern:
  - MAP-21 guidelines increasing project delivery difficulty
  - Lack of timeframe/scope flexibility
  - Misalignment of regional and local priorities

### Transit Providers Comments

- Areas of concern:
  - Lack of ability to look at individual local needs
  - Applications take a lot of resources
  - Geographic balance vs. project merit
  - Disconnect between promoting projects that include a variety of improvements and the funding available for such projects (which typically cost more)

### Parks Organizations Comments

- Areas of concern:
  - Smaller governments often can't compete due to match requirements
  - Funding caps leading to piecemeal projects

### Other Stakeholders Comments

- Areas of concern:
  - Preservation vs. expansion
  - Disconnect between local policies and regional policies
  - Lack of operations funding after projects are completed
  - Misalignment of transportation funding and Met Council's Livable Communities goals

## 4. Overall assessment of the process

### Steering Committee Comments

- Areas of content:
  - Process open to a wide variety of applicants
  - Technical scoring process widely respected
  - Process removes issues of politics
  - TAC and TAB keep integrity in process
- Areas of concern:
  - Near-term needs vs. long-term needs
  - CMAQ restrictions of one project/corridor
  - Funding caps leading to piecemeal projects and longer disruption to public

- Application process requires a lot of resources
- TAC weighing in too much at end of process on how to allocate funds
- Complicated process
- Apparent shift toward more/smaller projects over less/larger projects

### County Agencies Comments

- Areas of content:
  - Rigor of process helps weed out projects that would not be good candidates
  - Funding awarded in a relatively balanced way
- Areas of concern:
  - Complicated process, lengthy application, lack of efficiency
  - Scoring appears to be overseen by non-engineer staff at Met Council rather than engineers
  - Too expensive
  - Confusing for those who have not been heavily involved in the past
  - Encouraging more, smaller-scale projects drains administrative resources
  - Lack of flexibility after funding is awarded
  - Scoring favors reactive projects
  - Urban-oriented vs. rural-oriented scoring
  - Focusing on immediately adjoining property vs. overall area regarding planned land use

### City Agencies Comments

- Areas of content:
  - Thorough process
  - Does well spreading funding geographically as well as amongst various project types
  - Individuals who rank projects do so appropriately and impartially
  - Clear direction given to applicants
  - Process is more technical than political
- Areas of concern:
  - Very expensive to apply; time-intensive
  - Expansion/new construction vs. preservation
  - Application asks for a lot of data that may not be available
  - Lack of flexibility regarding scope and sunset dates after funding is awarded
  - Disconnect between federal requirements for projects and solicitation process requirements
  - No back-up process in place to allocate funding if projects fall through
  - Difficult for smaller local agencies to devote resources to applications

### Transit Providers Comments

- Areas of content:
  - Fair and competitive process
  - Criteria for categories is measureable, easier to compare projects
  - Readiness has been a good addition to criteria
- Areas of concern:
  - Pits urban core and suburban areas against one another



- Potential conflict of interest for those both scoring and applying
- Arduous process, complicated
- Development Framework Implementation category may need to be updated
- Delivery can be a challenge
- Readiness doesn't apply to all types of projects in an equal way
- Overwhelming, need more outreach for those unfamiliar with process

### **Parks Organizations Comments**

- Areas of concern:
  - Capped funding
  - Those reviewing applications only look at one piece each and can't get sense of overall project
  - Too many redundancies

### **Other Stakeholders Comments**

- Areas of content:
  - Process has reputation of being fair due to TAC utilization
- Areas of concern:
  - Extremely complex, confusing
  - Scoring not holistic
  - Minimal public involvement due to complexity
  - Preservation vs. expansion/new construction
  - Pits urban areas against rural areas
  - Funding caps limit ability to promote large projects
  - Geographic balance vs. funding projects with merit
  - Ranking in 'silos' rather than comparing projects in different categories
  - Difficult to plan projects before knowing whether they'll receive federal funding

## **5. Regional Goals**

### **Steering Committee Comments**

- Multi-modal solutions that maximize the investment
- Low-cost, high-benefit projects
- Land use and transportation integration
- Address near-term needs over long-term needs
- Consistency with regional priorities in not only transportation but also related to housing, economic development, etc.
- Performance-based planning
- Congestion management/mitigation
- Mobility of people
- Allocate funds in accordance with the compilation of local transportation plans

- Some said focus more on preservation, some said expansion

### County Agencies Comments

- Several said there should be a continued focus on expansion/new construction
- A few said focus on larger projects
- A few said allow for more proactive projects rather than just fixing existing issues
- A few said geographic balance
- Safety improvements
- More focus on “A” minor system
- Better emphasis on the planning document
- Continue to be technically-based
- Recognition of land use
- Regional Framework should be perpetuated.
- Roadway maintenance
- More focus on non-freeway principal arterials
- Build regional trail system

### City Agencies Comments

- Several said preservation should be a goal
- Efficient/economical management of congestion rather than expansion
- Multi-modal transportation/connections
- Economic development
- Development equity between inner and outer cities
- More consideration/forecasting of future development
- Build regional transit system
- Movement of goods
- Safety

### Transit Providers Comments

- Balance within areas of transit
- Focus on access and capacity with federal funds
- A few said preservation should not be a main goal of federal funding
- Parks Organizations Comments
- Equitable distribution of funding
- Less fragmented/piecemeal projects
- Include trails in CMAQ funding and other transit funding sources

### Other Stakeholders Comments

- Several said multi-modal projects
- Safety for all modes
- More flexibility in allowing local agencies to determine their own local needs
- Geographic distribution
- Conformity to the Met Council's growth policies
- Focus on transit and roadway preservation

### 6. Funding shifts for trails and enhancements

#### Steering Committee Comments

- Areas of concern:
  - Lack of funding not only for trails but non-motorized modes in general
  - Funding is stretched already
- A few said it is not a large concern or seems to be more of a local rather than regional concern

#### County Agencies Comments

- Several mentioned concerns regarding reduced funding but also don't want to take money away from other projects
- Reasons for lack of concern about reduced funding:
  - Funding is meant for transportation projects; many trail projects seem to be recreational
  - Many roadway projects already include trails as part of the project
  - There is already enough investment in trail system
  - Seems to be a local concern rather than regional
- Areas of concern:
  - Many TE projects have been proposed; they have low-cost, high-benefit

#### City Agencies Comments

- Areas of concern:
  - Enhancement projects for local trails often fulfill multi-modal needs and fill in gaps/make connections that serve a regional purpose
  - Already difficult to get funding
  - Efforts such as 'Safe Routes to School' projects could compete with trails projects, making it more difficult to service more multi-modal options
  - Language in MAP-21 seems dictated by those with conservative approach, making allocation process more difficult
  - Should consider different categories for different types of trail projects

### Transit Providers Comments

- A few mentioned that trails can serve transportation purpose but shouldn't necessarily be the focus of federal funding
- Reasons for lack of concern about reduced funding:
  - Funding is meant for transportation projects; many trail projects seem to be recreational
  - Many roadway projects already include trails as part of the project
  - Have seen many trails not well maintained which defeats transportation purpose

### Parks Organizations Comments

- Areas of concern:
  - More competition due to lack of funding
  - Potential reduction of funding caps
  - Difficulty for agencies to meet current criteria if funding caps are reduced

### Other Stakeholders Comments

- Areas of concern:
  - There has been increased demand for bike/pedestrian facilities
  - Lack of focus on other modes encourages more driving
- Not necessarily concerned; seems to be extensive trail system established
- Can highway money be transferred to transportation alternatives if needed?
- Need clarification on whether reduced funding would be a decision at federal or regional level

## 7. Allocation of TA funds

### Steering Committee Comments

- Several said focus should be on regional trail system
- Focus on projects that serve a transportation purpose rather than recreational
- Focus on building complete projects in general—Complete Streets
- Incorporate local preferences if there is local contribution

### County Agencies Comments

- Several said focus should be on projects that serve regional purpose and transportation function
- Legacy dollars should be used for recreational trails/parks
- Safe Routes to School:
  - A few said this is a good program to fund
  - A few mentioned that schools need to look at new potential locations from a transportation perspective rather than be given funding to fix issues afterward
- Need to clarify what is eligible for TA funds, such as drainage or other infrastructure projects
- Funded projects should provide access to housing and employment

### City Agencies Comments

- Most said funding should be balanced; a few said regional trail system should be priority
- Filling gaps in system should be a priority
- Concerned about smaller projects having to compete against larger projects

### Transit Providers Comments

- Funds should be focused on projects that serve as commuter routes
- Should fund projects that benefit multiple modes
- Local projects should be funded mainly from local sources

### Parks Organizations Comments

- Most said focus should be on regional trails
- A few said there should be a larger local match requirement for local projects

### Other Stakeholders Comments

- Met Council should develop regional pedestrian plan to identify missing links in system
- Need follow-up after projects, need some sort of measurement/monitoring
- A few said there should be a balance of funding
- Bigger need than trails is to retrofit cities with sidewalks and ADA-compliant bus stops

## 8. Funding of Bridge projects

### Steering Committee Comments

- A few said preservation should be priority, a few said there should be a balanced approach
- A few said they have concerns about reduced funding, a few said other sources are available such as Chapter 152 funding

### County Agencies Comments

- Several said funding for bridges should continue, a few said they are not concerned funding not being continued through solicitation process
- Several said the emphasis of funding should be on preservation/replacement, a few said the emphasis should be on new construction
- Not as concerned with bridge funding but would like to see a category specifically for interchanges
- Need to look at misalignment of federal/state bridge deficiency ratings
- Would be difficult to compare bridge projects with roadway projects if they end up being in same category

- River crossings were noted as being of particular importance in regards to receiving federal funding

### City Agencies Comments

- Most said bridge funding should continue, a few said a separate category for bridges isn't needed
- Several said emphasis should be on preservation, several said the local agencies should maintain bridges and the focus of federal money should be on expansion

### Transit Providers Comments

- A few said they didn't have concerns with losing the bridge category, and a few also pointed out that the state has its own programs to fund bridges
- Most said focus should be on preservation

### Parks Organizations Comments

- Several suggested adding a category specifically for pedestrian bridges

### Other Stakeholders Comments

- A few said bridge funding should continue
- Several said focus should be on preservation

## 9. Embellishments

### Steering Committee Comments

- Several said that some level of embellishments should be included, but locals should contribute funds if there is a local desire to increase embellishments
- Several said some level of embellishments is reasonable, but want to ensure that projects don't add embellishments in order to get more points
- A few mentioned the need to consider the local environment and make sure project fits in with local aesthetics and functions
- A few said applying agency should commit to operation/maintenance; a few said TAB should have some responsibility

### County Agencies Comments

- Several said main focus should be on moving people, but a base level of landscaping etc. was reasonable. Further embellishments beyond the base should be locally funded
- Several said the agency applying for funding should be required to commit to maintenance after the project

- Several said embellishments shouldn't be included as a scoring factor
- Level of embellishments that should be included depends on current policies and the type of mode

### City Agencies Comments

- Several said the agency applying for funding should be required to commit to maintenance after the project
- Several said a base level of landscaping etc. was reasonable and should be included. Further embellishments beyond the base should be locally funded
- A few said embellishments shouldn't be discounted; let TAC/TAB rate projects appropriately
- A few said embellishments shouldn't be included as a scoring factor
- Need to define what is considered a base level of landscaping/embellishments
- Need to determine how to enforce maintenance requirement
- Need to consider why agencies ask for local public participation if the input is not going to be incorporated

### Transit Providers Comments

- Several said the agency applying for funding should be required to commit to maintenance after the project
- A few said non-operating agencies applying for funding should be required to work with operating agencies in determining maintenance plan
- Several said urban design elements are an important part of a project and the ability for local input is important; also should consider future benefits of including attractive design features in current projects
- There are different needs depending on the type of project
- Misconception that making something look attractive means it will be expensive

### Parks Organizations Comments

- Several said a base level of landscaping etc. was reasonable and should be included. Further embellishments beyond the base should be locally funded
- A few said the agency applying for funding should be required to commit to maintenance after the project

### Other Stakeholders Comments

- Several said a base level of landscaping etc. was reasonable and should be included. Further embellishments beyond the base should be locally funded
- A few said the agency applying for funding should be required to commit to maintenance after the project, a few said they shouldn't be required to do so
- Need to have a thorough discussion of the pros and cons of embellishments

- MnDOT and Met Council should have guidelines on quality and longevity for materials
- Complete Streets should be the norm from now on, not considered an embellishment

## 10. Transit Funding

### Steering Committee Comments

- Several mentioned a need to reevaluate how criteria/benefits from transit are measured
- Recent investment has been in outlying suburbs; need to look at reinvesting in core/urban areas
- Several said there's a need to figure out how to fund operation once CMAQ funding runs out
- Should give extra weight to transit projects that will help develop an area

### County Agencies Comments

- Reasons funding seems sufficient (or too high):
  - Based on ridership they are overfunded
  - State has need for highway funding
  - Can use FTP money for transit; have chosen not to use it and use CMAQ
  - Our roads are very multi-modal
- Several said transit funding should remain consistent or increase as it is an important part of creating lasting infrastructure and a balanced system
- Majority of transit funding goes to Metro Transit; should be emphasis on other mobility options to promote congestion relief
- Funding level needs depend on the current policies

### City Agencies Comments

- Several mentioned a need for balance between transit funding and funding other modes/projects
- Several mentioned regional funds should potentially be used for transit funding (through new taxes, etc.)
- Concerned about potential streetcar addition—adding another system could further stretch resources
- Funding should be focused on regional system improvements rather than local services

### Transit Providers Comments

- Reasons to increase funding:
  - Transit projects use funding quickly
  - Smaller projects such as Metro Mobility and Dial a ride are important
  - May need to look at upgrading technology for longevity (spend more now for future benefits)
  - A lot of state funding is dependent on what happens in the legislative session
  - Increased demand for transit



- A few said that typically critical transit projects haven't been excluded due to lack of funding, but there are maintenance needs
- Should look at the current balance of solicitation funds being used to add facilities vs. for operations/maintenance
- Pairing funding sources (like STP and CMAQ) for projects that provide a variety of benefits/functions could be helpful

### **Parks Organizations Comments**

- Credit should be given to multi-modal projects, but transit should not always be the main priority
- Include non-motorized modes as a definition of transit and make eligible for CMAQ funds

### **Other Stakeholders Comments**

- A few said there seems to be an appropriate amount of funding; a few said there is not enough
- In current TAB policy, any remaining money is given to MnDOT; some of that should go towards transit
- The criteria should be revised to prioritize the maintenance over service expansion
- May need to give more weight to number of transit-dependent residents in a given area, not number of car-miles "saved" by providing express buses

## **11. "A" Minor Capacity vs. Preservation**

### **Steering Committee Comments**

- A few said emphasis should be on preservation
- A few said there should be balance, with an ability to fund expansion projects
- If funding is awarded to an expansion project the local agency should be able to commit to maintenance

### **County Agencies Comments**

- Several said that federal funds should be used for expansion/new construction/reconstruction rather than preservation, and that maintenance should be the responsibility of the local jurisdiction
- Several said there should be a balance of preservation and expansion
- A few mentioned that different geographic areas have different needs
- MnDOT moving away from expansion; we'll likely need to come up with more creative solutions that cost less

### City Agencies Comments

- Several said there needs to be a balance of expansion and preservation.
- Reasons for preservation:
  - Tough to justify expansion projects based on current economy
  - Need to consider increased future maintenance costs of expanding current system
  - Would like TPP to look at a maintenance program
- Reasons for expansion:
  - Federal funds should be used for capacity, not preservation
  - Criteria should foster proactive projects for future needs rather than fixing current problems
  - Concerned that agencies will stop taking care of their roadways in order to score higher in solicitation process
- Need to consider how a focus on preservation or expansion will foster projects in particular geographic areas

### Transit Providers Comments

- A few said funds should be used for capacity and safety improvements, a few said they should be used for preservation
- Need more money in the system overall

### Parks Organizations Comments

- Would like to see consideration given to the removal of gaps/barriers for non-motorized modes and the reduction of conflicts between traffic and trail users

### Other Stakeholders Comments

- A few said funds should be focused on preservation
- A few said there should be a preservation/expansion balance
- Comments regarding “A” minor arterials categories:
  - “A” minors are important, but each type doesn’t deserve its own funding category
  - Categorizing “A” minors by purpose would be better

### 12. “A” minor evaluation based on differing jurisdictional goals

#### Steering Committee Comments

- Conflicts between justifications seem to get worked out as solicitation criteria is discussed
- Should recognize “A” minor system by different purposes; there has been issues with urban vs. suburban settings
- Look at how differing jurisdictional goals comply with the overall regional policies/plans
- Need to consider local needs

### County Agencies Comments

- Comments regarding “A” minor arterials categories:
  - A few said categories need to be redefined, a few said they don’t
  - Different counties do better in different categories depending on their system
  - Should allow for new/different categories
- Need to look at projects that do rehabilitation, safety and capacity improvements
- Need to be evaluated based on cost benefit
- By time you can submit a project it’s already imbedded with local agencies
- One problem is that different jurisdictions place different level of importance on certain roadways

### City Agencies Comments

- Should award extra points in solicitation process for jurisdictions that work together
- More than differing goals is the issue that the region in general isn’t anticipating what will be needed for a viable system in the future and taking action up front
- Projects that anticipate future needs and not just current problems should get credit
- Difficult to compare/appropriately score different “A” minor arterials in different areas

### Transit Providers Comments

- Solicitation process should be to enhance and complete transportation network in Metro area
- Should look at roadways individually and future of each roadway
- Transit elements should be part of the criteria for “A” minor arterial projects
- Seems like the cities and counties have found a way to balance priorities for the system; don’t see why this can’t be done at a regional level.

### Parks Organizations Comments

- No comments

### Other Stakeholders Comments

- A few said the focus should be on local needs
- Should have ability to judge “A” minor projects against each other rather than against other projects
- By funding backlog of needed pedestrian, trail and transit improvements in the suburbs, along with road preservation projects, all will receive fair share of funding

### **13. “A” Minor System Evaluation**

#### **Steering Committee Comments**

- Study collected good information but unfortunately reflected desire to maintain status quo
- Should make sure Regional Solicitation lines up with the strategies from this evaluation in terms of awarding points to projects

#### **County Agencies Comments**

- Several said the study shows the Regional Solicitation’s successes
- Reevaluate how gas tax is dispersed
- Look at shifting local funds back to regional system
- MnDOT was noted as not making investments in their “A” minors
- Study recommendations were good, but didn’t address where the roadways are geographically and look at equity across the board

#### **City Agencies Comments**

- The evaluation should be used and have an influence on the Transportation Policy Plan, but there needs to be balance between this, MAP-21, and the Regional Solicitation process

#### **Transit Providers Comments**

- Need to redefine and adjust definition of “A” minor arterials

#### **Parks Organizations Comments**

- No comments

#### **Other Stakeholders Comments**

- The evaluation was helpful, showed the importance of “A” minor system
- “A” minor system gets high volumes of traffic, needs more attention

### **14. Additional weight for partnerships and jurisdictional coordination**

#### **Steering Committee Comments**

- A few said more weight should be given for jurisdictional and public/private partnerships, a few said that such partnerships are important but no extra weight in scoring should be given
- Private/public partnerships:
  - Don’t want to give more weight to a project of less priority just because there is private money

- Only application for this approach would be if regional goals are being advanced (that wouldn't otherwise be advanced) as a result
- Such partnerships may mean there is money from a local match and that the project is more likely to get done

### County Agencies Comments

- Several said more weight should be given for jurisdictional and public/private partnerships
- Need to define what consists of coordination/partnership (a letter, money etc.); may be difficult to score
- Importance of coordination depends on where the project development is at during the time of the application
- Public/private partnerships:
  - Need to be careful about mixing federal/private funds
  - Need to determine how such partnerships would fit regional priorities
  - Concerned that applicant could include a very small private partnership aspect to get more points

### City Agencies Comments

- A few said jurisdictional coordination should receive more weight; a few noted that some projects involve one jurisdiction to begin with and shouldn't be penalized
- A few said public/private partnerships are important and should be encouraged; a few said that it's difficult to see real benefits from such partnerships

### Transit Providers Comments

- A few said no additional weight should be given for coordination
- A few said additional weight should be given for jurisdictional coordination
- Need to define what a public/private partnership would/could consist of
- Public/private partnerships could create project control issues; hesitant to promote this until more is known

### Parks Organizations Comments

- A few said projects that more weight should be given to projects that demonstrate partnerships
- Collaboration criteria should be financially-based

### Other Stakeholders Comments

- A few said partnerships should be given more weight, a few said they should not
- Need to show advantages of private/public partnership
- Need to define what partnership consists of
- Giving more weight for partnerships could give certain jurisdictions more of an advantage

## 15. Project readiness and delivery time frames

### Steering Committee Comments

- Support for giving more weight to readiness:
  - Funds are tighter, it's increasingly important to deploy them in a timely manner
  - Don't want to send federal money back due to lack of readiness
  - Don't think should be given further emphasis.
- A few said readiness should not be given more weight, that shovel-ready projects shouldn't have an advantage over projects with more merit
- Applicant should lose money if they don't deliver within established timeframe

### County Agencies Comments

- Support for giving more weight for readiness:
  - Projects that are awarded funds and can't deliver put region's funding into disarray
  - Sunset dates have been tightened, readiness is increasingly important
  - More points for readiness will help with delivery time constraints
  - Send message that if a project isn't ready agency will lose project funding
  - It is costly to the region to reschedule and realign projects
- Reasons for not giving more weight for readiness:
  - Giving more weight could lead to projects that are ready but have less merit receiving more points
  - Most projects applying already are planned and have a level of readiness
- A few said the current weight given is appropriate
- Need to define readiness; doesn't necessarily have to mean a project is shovel-ready
- Consider incorporating track record of applying agency into point system
- Many agencies don't start delivery until project is moved into STP; should move projects into STP more quickly

### City Agencies Comments

- A few said the current weight given is appropriate
- Reasons to not give additional weight for readiness:
  - MAP-21 leads to more difficulty in moving around projects, makes delivery difficult
  - Don't have the resources to put in effort until funds are committed to project
  - Certain issues can make specific delivery difficult (working with railroads, property acquisitions etc.)
  - Too much emphasis on readiness will negate the need/purpose of solicitation process (may as well be done in same way as state bridge bond allocation)
- Sometimes local agency may realize they don't have resources to deliver; maybe transfer jurisdiction to an agency with more resources at that time
- Need to define readiness

### Transit Providers Comments

- A few said the current weight given is appropriate
- Maybe track record of applicant should be looked at
- Difficult to use resources for delivery before funding is awarded

### Parks Organizations Comments

- Difficult to justify spending money on design for a project that may be five years away, particularly since trail designs can be turned around quickly
- Don't want to put resources into a project before funding is awarded
- Sometimes extensions are warranted but readiness is very important and more points should be awarded

### Other Stakeholders Comments

- A few said the current weight given is appropriate
- A few said more weight should be given
- It would be helpful for smaller communities if the Met Council had a staff person to help with facilitating the project (for example, to help deal with railroads)
- Reasons to not give additional weight for readiness:
  - It can be difficult for smaller local governments to have shovel-ready projects
  - Would not want to see project with more merit lose out to project that is shovel-ready

## 16. Geographically balanced distribution

### Steering Committee Comments

- Geographic balance has had far too much weight
- Geographic balance doesn't relate to useful balance
- Need to look at demand
- Seems like inner-ring suburbs haven't been getting as much funding as of late
- Important long term to have balance (not necessarily every year but over a five to 10 year period) which I think we currently do
- Need to have a balance between the core/urban area and rural areas

### County Agencies Comments

- Several said funding needs to be balanced between urban/rural areas
- Several said funding should go to the best projects, wherever they happen to be, while also trying to incorporate some level of balance
- Current approach works well
- Need to define geographic balance

- All of the residents/businesses are contributing taxes and need to see some return
- Equalization and need is how state aid funds are distributed and we may want to look at that for the solicitation process
- Having separate categories for urban and suburban projects could be helpful but it would be tough to work out the details for such a method

### City Agencies Comments

- Several said there is a need to have some level balance, but not sure how best to accomplish it
- Shouldn't pit rural projects against urban projects by scoring them differently; instead they should be scored based on the proactive aspects of the project
- Should recognize that the needs of the region are constantly changing. I don't think projects should be weighted differently based on area but rather a measurement for the overall benefits should be developed and applied

### Transit Providers Comments

- Several said it should be a factor, but not a primary goal
- Balance could be done over multiple funding cycles rather than one cycle
- Should come up with carefully planned process on how to do this
- Projects should be awarded funding based on merit
- If funding isn't distributed in a geographically balanced way legislators may get involved and further complicate funding process
- Everyone should feel that they have an equal chance of getting funding

### Parks Organizations Comments

- Dollar amount may not be equal but could look at making, for example, the amount of project miles equal in urban/rural areas
- Balance could be done over multiple funding cycles rather than one cycle
- Rural projects have difficulty competing. A better approach would be to have a stronger emphasis on planned regional development – like a ten-year CIP for the region – with the intent to use the federal funding program to implement that program/those regional priorities.

### Other Stakeholders Comments

- Balance is important but we should look at distribution of population rather than a certain physical location.
- There needs to be a fair geographic balance; everyone pays taxes and should feel that they are benefitting to some extent
- Maybe have different scoring/criteria for Metro-area projects versus rural area projects (not sure how to do this)



- If we put the enforce the Council's policies of preservation first, contained growth, more transit and more non-motorized transportation, separate geographic criteria won't be needed

## **17. Multi-Modal Scoring**

### **Steering Committee Comments**

- Several said multi-modal projects should be encouraged and receive more points
- Need to follow up with projects after construction to make sure that the proposed multi-modal facilities were actually built
- Would like to see more emphasis on access as opposed to mobility
- Need to look at the impact we're having overall on economic development rather than just how many vehicles we move

### **County Agencies Comments**

- Several said there is not a need to award more points for multi-modal project aspects
- A few said multi-modal facilities should be encouraged and awarded more points
- A few said that projects shouldn't receive fewer (or more) points for not incorporating facilities that don't make sense for the particular environment
- Should evaluate a project on complete streets as a whole rather than looking separately at different components

### **City Agencies Comments**

- Most said projects shouldn't receive fewer (or more) points for not incorporating facilities that don't make sense for the particular environment
- Need to consider when the facilities are already there; shouldn't award more points for one project for adding certain facilities over another project that already has those facilities
- Need to look at how 'complete streets' is defined

### **Transit Providers Comments**

- A few said that projects shouldn't receive fewer (or more) points for not incorporating facilities that don't make sense for the particular environment
- A few said it's important but doesn't necessarily have to be weighted more heavily
- Want to see measured effectiveness of multi-modal projects

### **Parks Organizations Comments**

- A few said multi-modal aspects should be made a higher priority/given more weight
- Should recognize the multi-modal nature of arterial road projects – safe crossings for non-motorized modes in the project should warrant a higher score

### Other Stakeholders Comments

- Several said projects should have a complete streets is important and complete streets projects should possibly be given more weight
- A few said there shouldn't necessarily be more weight given for complete streets
- A few said that projects shouldn't receive fewer (or more) points for not incorporating facilities that don't make sense for the particular environment

### 18. Other Comments

#### Steering Committee Comments

- We should use a portion of CMAQ funds for transit transportation and maintenance preservation
- TAB should help sustain the projects; if they helped to expand system with federal money than they should help maintain it
- Regarding Park & Ride investments—we've been missing an opportunity to design them in such a way that they can be better integrated into their communities and leveraged for development purposes or used for dual purposes (such as parking for commuters and for nearby apartment residents)
- This really is a long-standing, balanced process with good integrity and a lot of hard work. Really need to monitor the results of this and analysis and document in a better way.

#### County Agencies Comments

- The system is very good. Committee structure works well. TAB process is excellent.
- May need to reevaluate goals/priorities
- It's an extremely important process because it supplies significant amount of capital
- do well with connector projects that have safety problems—don't want to change this, connector category is good
- Increasing participation of smaller partners—providing allocation for larger partners and another for smaller partners
- Like to see some form of preservation category even if it crosses arterial sub categories
- Eliminate/cut down on project submittals by utilizing adopted comprehensive plans that document regional needs – connects state, regional, county and city systems
- If MnDOT took all the money and distributed it so that federal requirements weren't always included it could make things easier and more attractive to apply for funding.

#### City Agencies Comments

- Money for safety projects wasn't discussed. Traditionally MnDOT has routed safety money through the solicitation process; will this continue?

- It's important for us (as a city) to be able to address safety needs at intersections. We've been using money from safety programs to get intersections updated. Such programs are important tools for the city
- I think in a broad sense the system in this region has worked
- Citizen participation is very important in developing a great project no matter where the funding comes from; the region needs to be aware that such participation means that a project may go in a certain direction (reflecting the local environment) and cause the process to be longer

#### **Transit Providers Comments**

- A lot of people spend a lot of time and commitment to this process; hope we don't lose the spirit of the process and the efforts of those who have been involved

#### **Parks Organizations Comments**

- Don't support projects that create gaps or negative impacts to non-motorized modes or require that those issues be resolved before funding the project. Projects might lose points if they create barriers or negative impacts for non-motorized modes
- Would like to be able to bundle small similar projects together (trail crossings) that might be in multiple locations. Many of these only require simple street safety modifications but have benefits to the network – goes back to gaps and safety goals

#### **Other Stakeholders Comments**

- Someone should think about more ways to make the process transparent and accessible
- Maybe consider more detailed explanations of the process, access online, etc. so people have a better understanding of how the funding is distributed

## Appendix B: Internet Survey Recap

## Internet Survey Recap

### 1. Survey Format

As part of the Metropolitan Council Regional Solicitation Evaluation, an online survey was provided to collect feedback about the Regional Solicitation Process for awarding federal transportation dollars to counties, local communities, transit providers, and other stakeholders. The purpose of the evaluation is to make sure that the process is properly aligned with current regional policies and priorities, current local needs, and new federal directives related to MAP-21. The survey was sent to approximately 120 project applicants, project scorers, and technical staff and was estimated to take approximately one-half hour to complete.

Below is a summary of the online survey results. Complete results are available upon request.

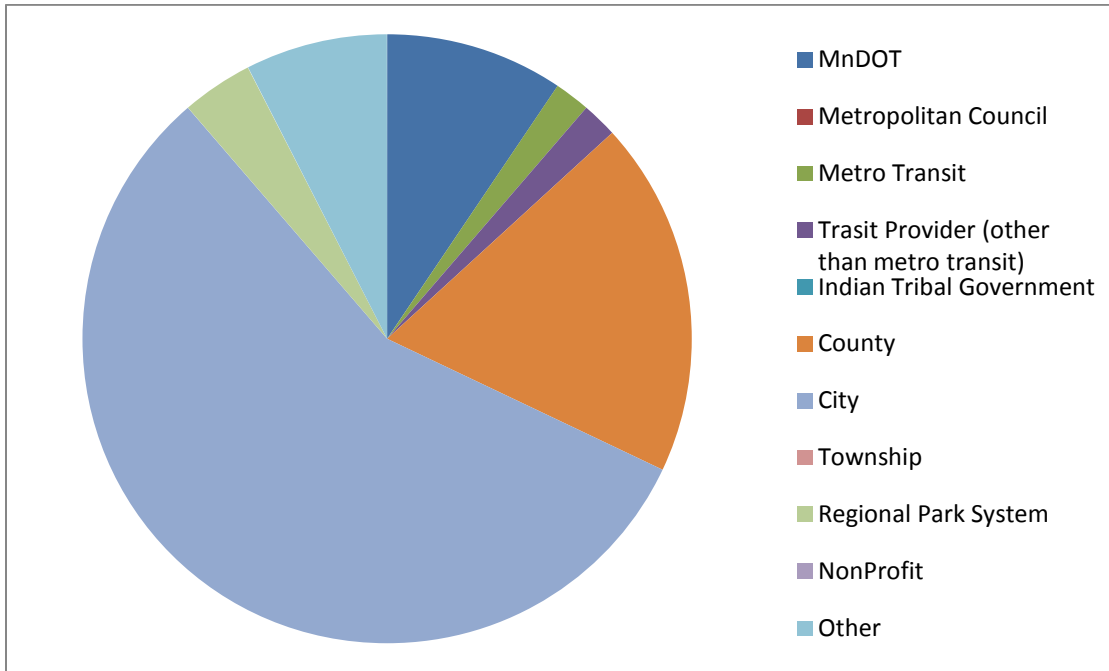
### 2. Survey Results

The Regional Solicitation Evaluation online survey was available from March 29 through April 11, 2013. In total, there were 53 who viewed the survey; however, only 42 participants fully completed the survey (79.2 percent). The survey consisted of 71 total questions all regarding different aspects of the Regional Solicitation Process.

#### Introduction Questions

Participants were asked questions about their job and basic submissions in the past. Of the 53 who viewed the survey, 53 (100 percent) participants provided responses to this section.

1. *Place of employment (53 Respondents)*

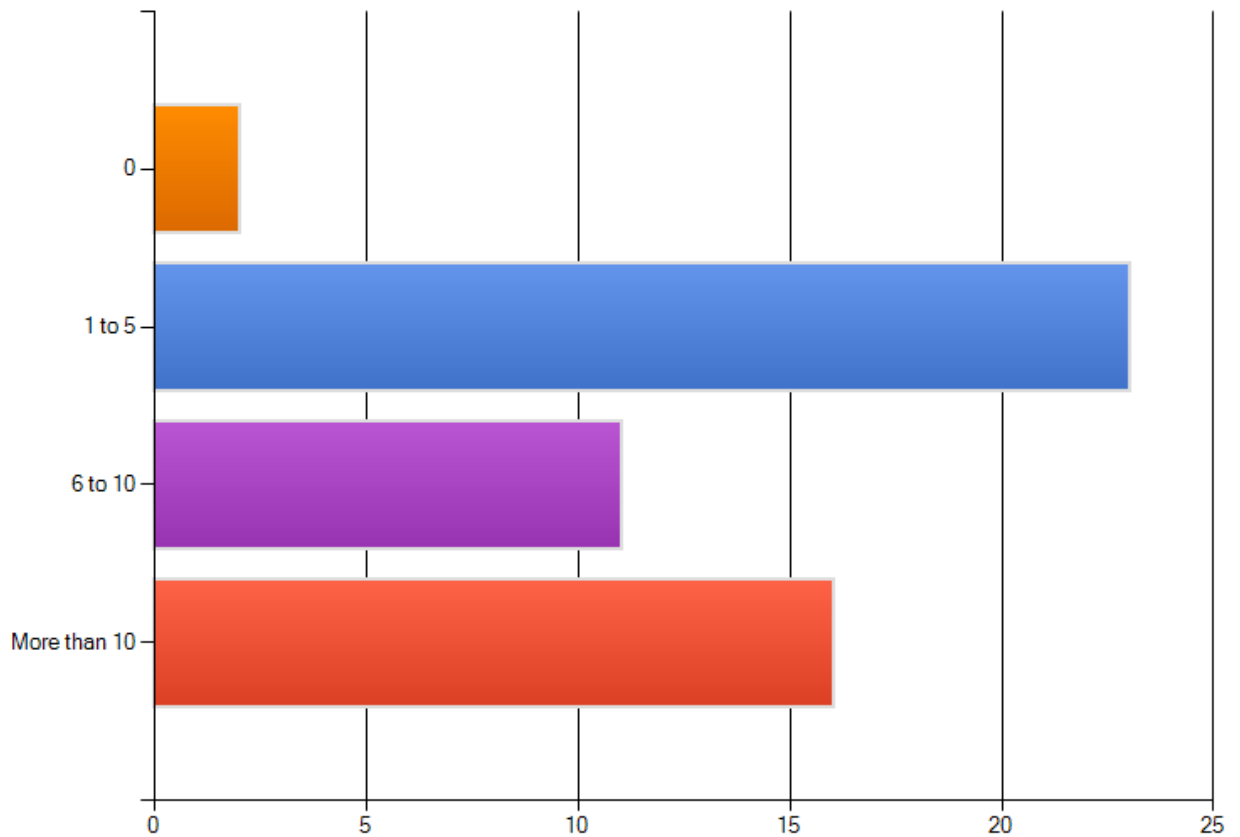


*Other Responses Included: (2) Consulting Firm, (1) Educational Institution, (1) State*

2. *Applications submitted in the past five Regional Solicitation cycles (52 Respondents)*

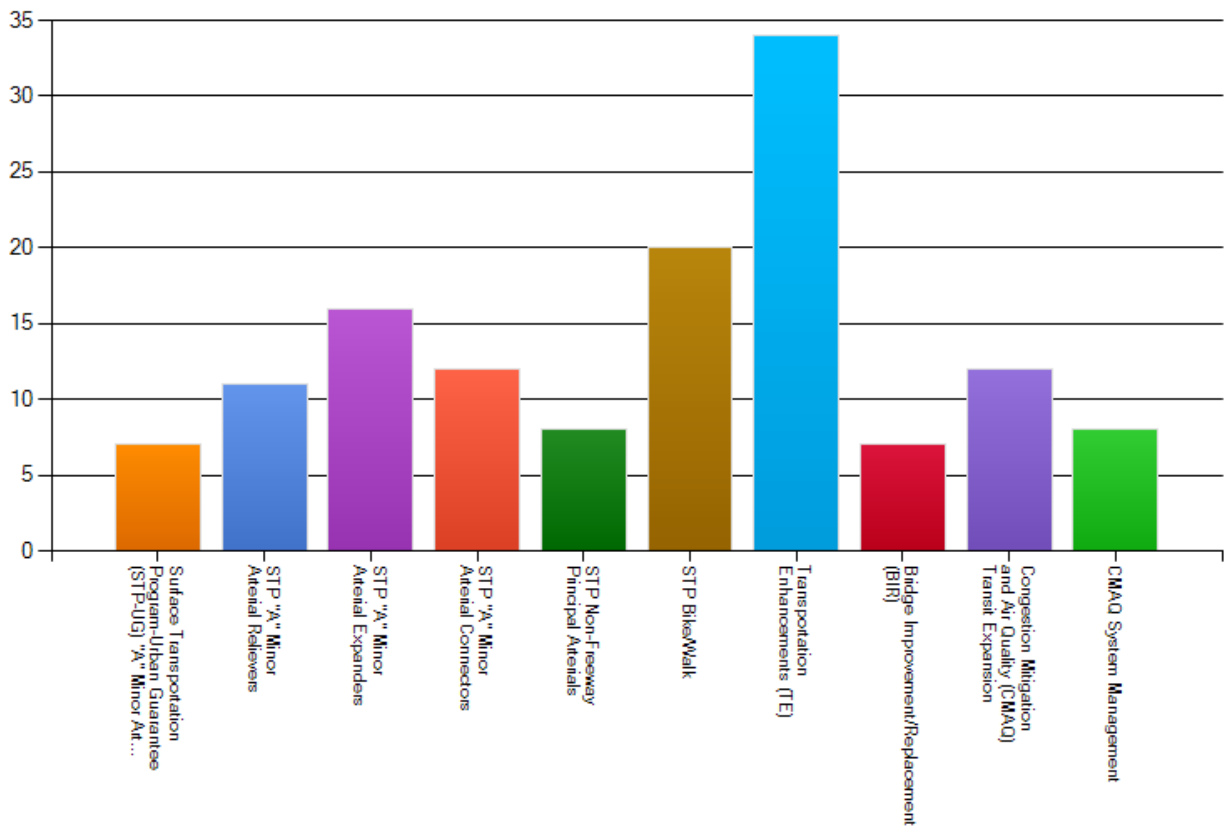
If participants responded with 0, they were automatically transferred to questions about not submitting any applications.

**How many applications has your agency submitted in the past five Regional Solicitation cycles (i.e., 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, or 2011)?**



3. Under Which funding categories have you submitted applications (46 Respondents)

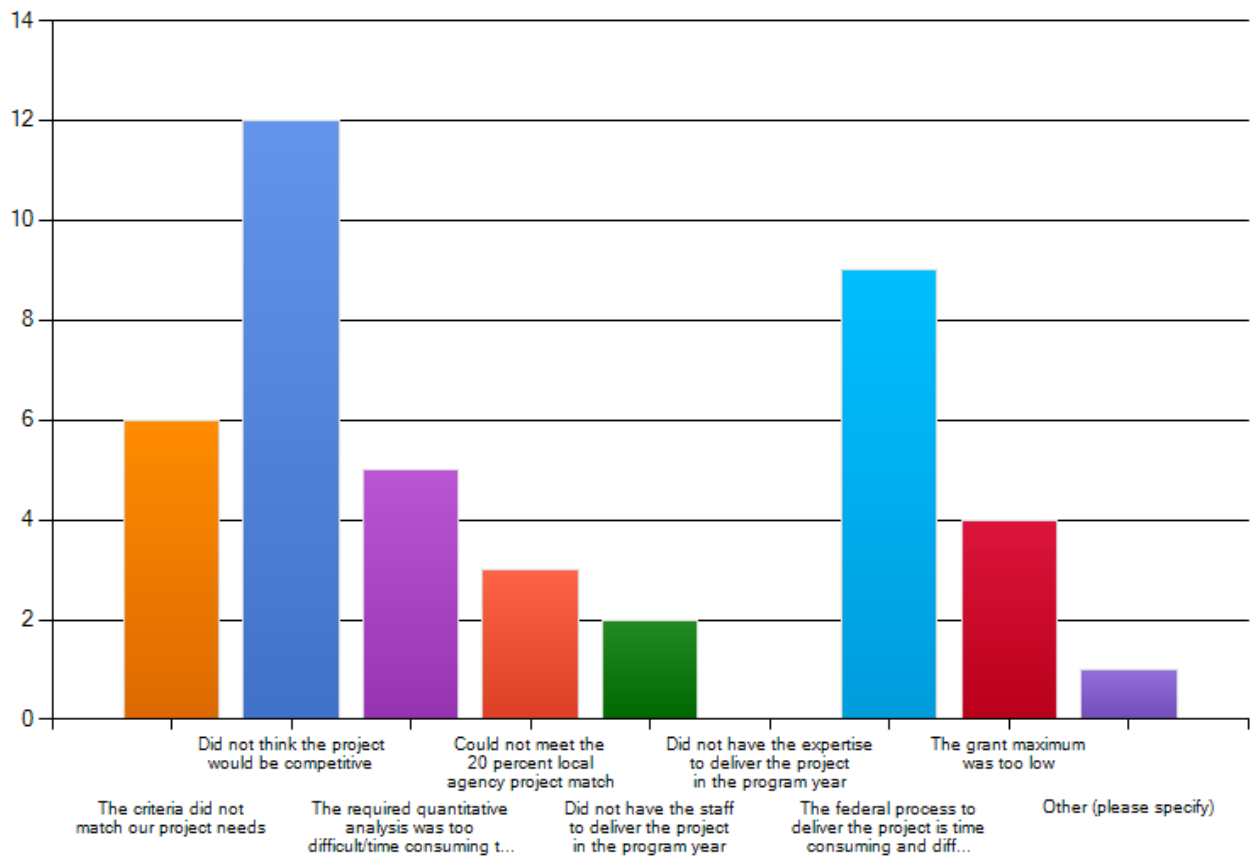
If you have submitted an application, under which funding categories have you submitted applications? Select all that apply.





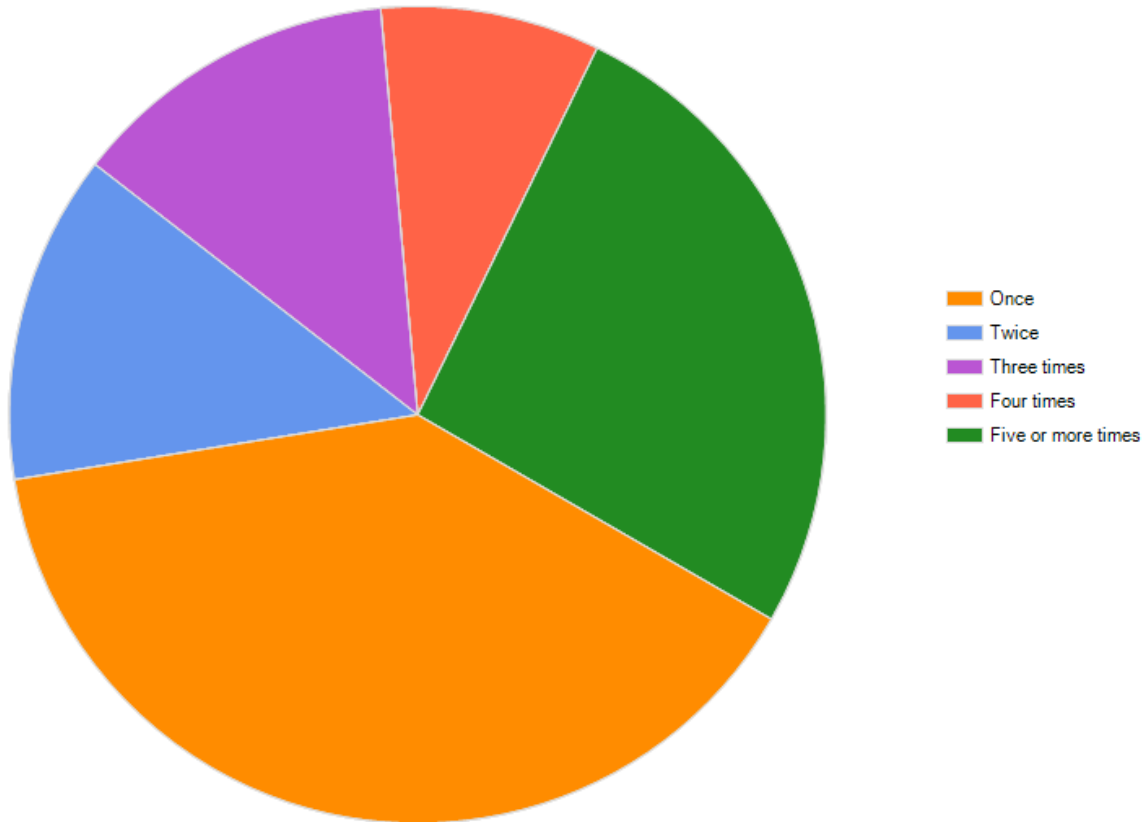
4. *Reasons why you have not submitted an application (18 Respondents)*

**If you have not submitted an application, what are some reasons why you did not submit an application? Select all that apply.**



5. *How often participants decided against submitting an application (23 Respondents)*

**How often have you decided against submitting an application in the last five solicitations for the reasons cited in your previous response?**



6. *Comments related to what changes could be made to the Regional Solicitation to encourage agencies to apply for funding in the future (18 Respondents)*

- Provide ways to access technical assistance for complicated matters like CMAQ
- The system has been working well for my agency.
- I would like to see trails eligible under the CMAQ funding Stream
- Several people would like to see the process streamlined and simplified
  - More check boxes, less narrative and attachments
- Minimize data driven questions
- Increase grant maximum
- Federal requirements for some projects would make it too onerous to construct the project
- The process of tying project eligibility and financial awards to the Council's plans (2030 or Park and Ride) sounds good, but since they ultimately control what's in these documents they control where the money goes. Seeing that they apply for this funding, and being they are the parent organization to Metro Transit, this gives them a distinct advantage over the rest of us. Some

consideration has to be allowed for those projects that can make a compelling case related to demand yet the Council has failed to recognize.

- Also, the modeling used to determine priority is not an exact science. In fact, some would say the methodology used is flawed with incorrect assumptions. Garbage in equals garbage out. As long as modeling follows generally accepted principles, modeling done outside of the Metropolitan Council's should be allowed to be used in determining demand/impact.
- The whole idea of only allowing one project per corridor needs to be refined. As an example, just because a project is selected along 169 say in Edina, there is no reason another project should be considered in Shakopee. The project needs to be evaluated on the merits of impact, not on what corridor it is adjacent to.
- I would like to see some type of analysis done on the projects that have received funding in the past. Were they constructed? Were they within the specified budget? Did they construct what they said they were going to construct? Have they reached the performance targets stated in their grant application? If there is an organization who cannot answer yes to the previous questions, than that organization should be penalized at least for a period of time for their inability to perform.
- I would like to see both the scoring committee as well as the TAB's advisory committee (TAC) change up membership form time to time. Both bodies have incredible influence on what is finally recommended, and neither has changed much in the way of makeup. I'm not talking about the organizations like MPCA who have a seat at the table and there is only a handful of staff able to be on the Committee. What I'm referring to are the individuals who regularly compete for these grants yet have a seat for life on one or both of the advisory/recommending committees.
- If this document is going to be used in the evaluation for federal funding, it MUST be updated on a biennial basis and completed prior to the solicitation process to have any relevant meaning.
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- With the emphasis the FTA has put on safety and security, and now asset management planning, having these plans in place should be used as grading or qualifying criteria.
- Funding alternatives should be included in the analysis and scoring of a project. If other sources of funding exist, this should be taken into consideration when evaluating the proposals. They claim this happens but it must be when the door is closed because I see a lot of funding duplication going on.
- Federal design and construction requirements often make it not worth applying for certain projects
- Less bias in project location (i.e. Projects outside of 494/694 loop not being favorably received
- Have application not be as expensive so not getting selected would not be a detriment to the future
- Too small to compete for funds when matched with other cities and their applications through the STP process. Our projects are too big for a single co-op application and LRIP to make the project go.
- Revamp so you can do one large project rather than so many smaller ones
- Make design and engineering eligible for funding
- More equitable distribution of funding throughout region



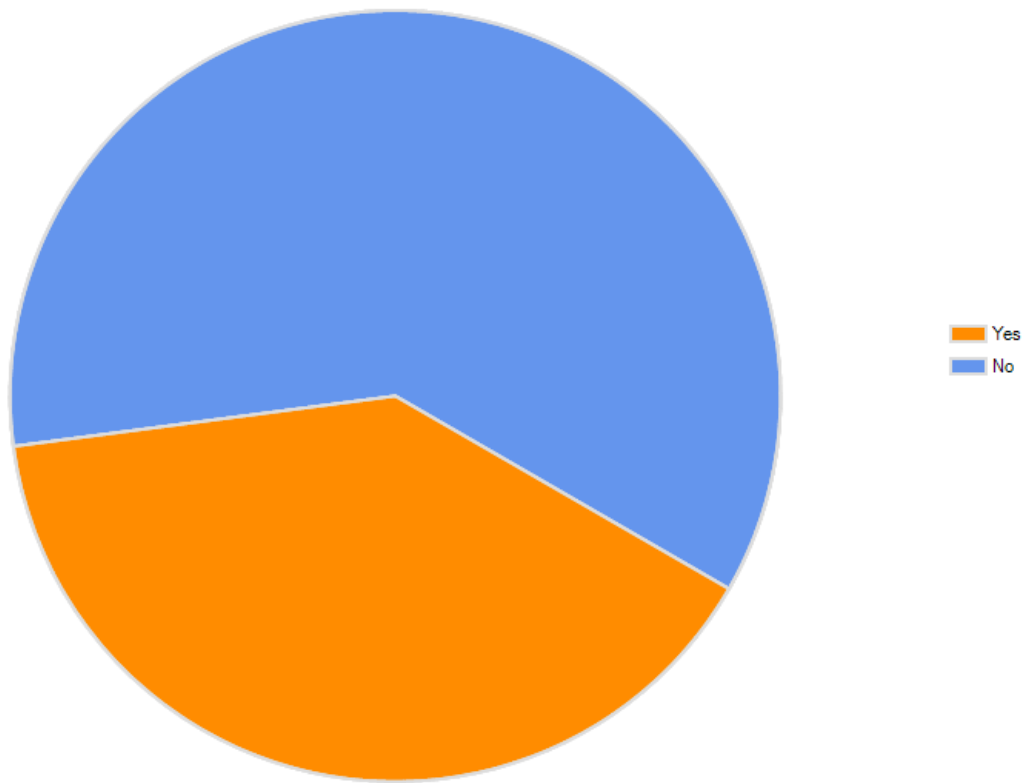
### Regional Solicitation Scorers Questions

Participants were asked questions about scoring Regional Solicitation applications in the past. If they had not scored any applications in the past they were automatically transferred to the next section of the survey. Of the 53 participants, 19 (35.8 percent) responded to this section.

7. *Have you participated in scoring applications (48 Respondents)*

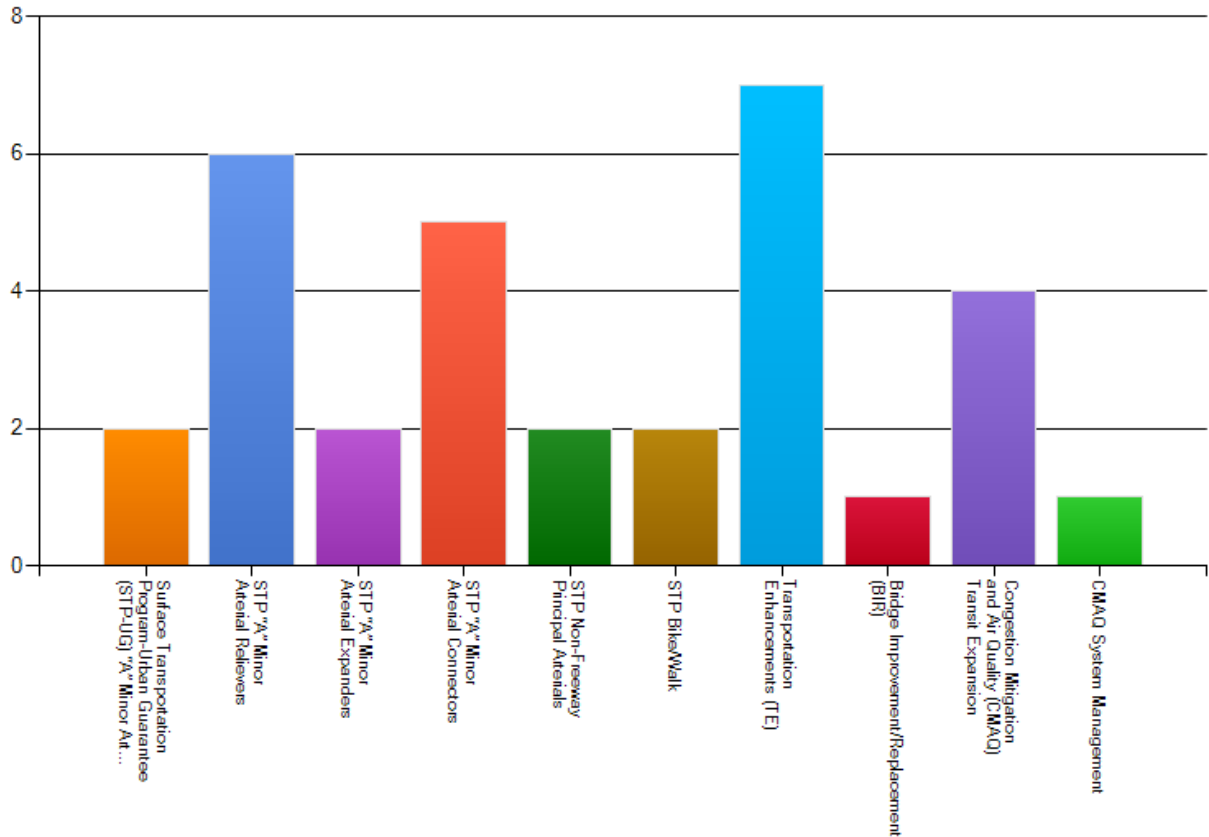
If participants responded with NO, they were automatically transferred to the next section about regional policy alignment.

**Have you participated in scoring Regional Solicitation Applications in the past five solicitations (i.e. 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, or 2011)?**



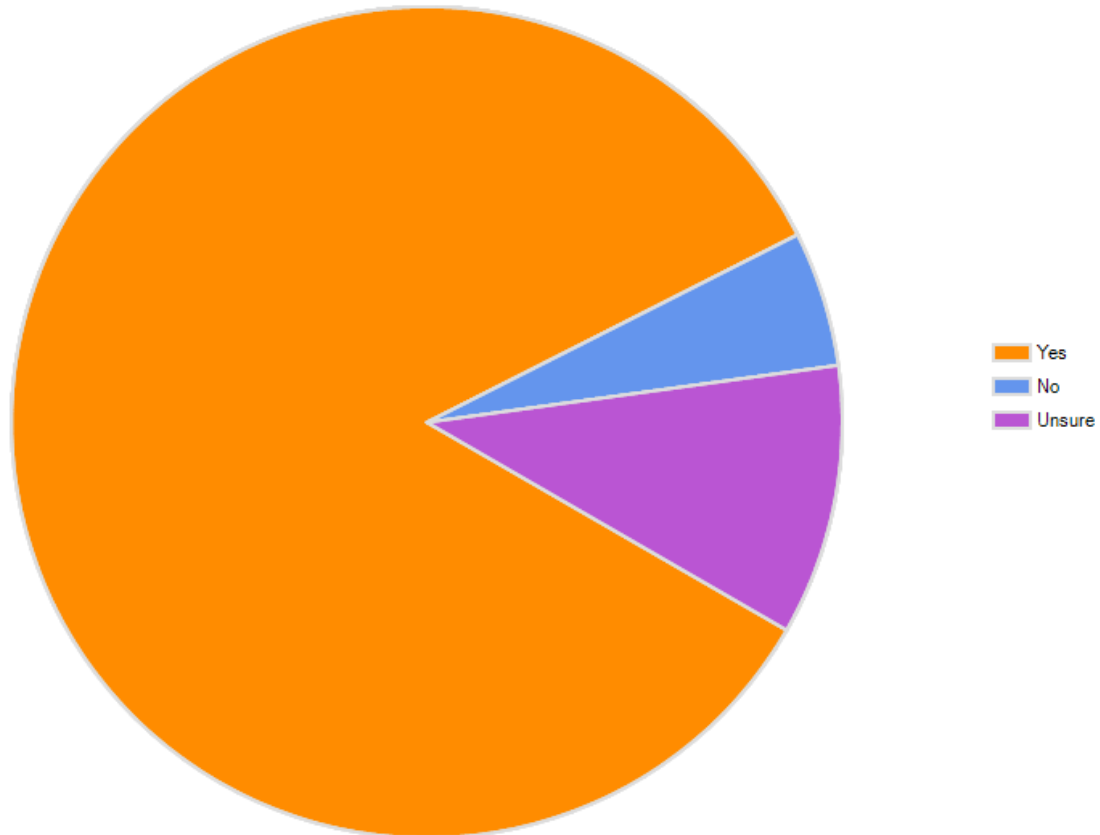
8. Which sections participants scored (19 Respondents)

Which sections of the Regional Solicitation did you score? Select all that apply.



9. *Is scoring process fair (19 Respondents)*

**Do you believe that the scoring process you were involved in was fair?**



Other Comments:

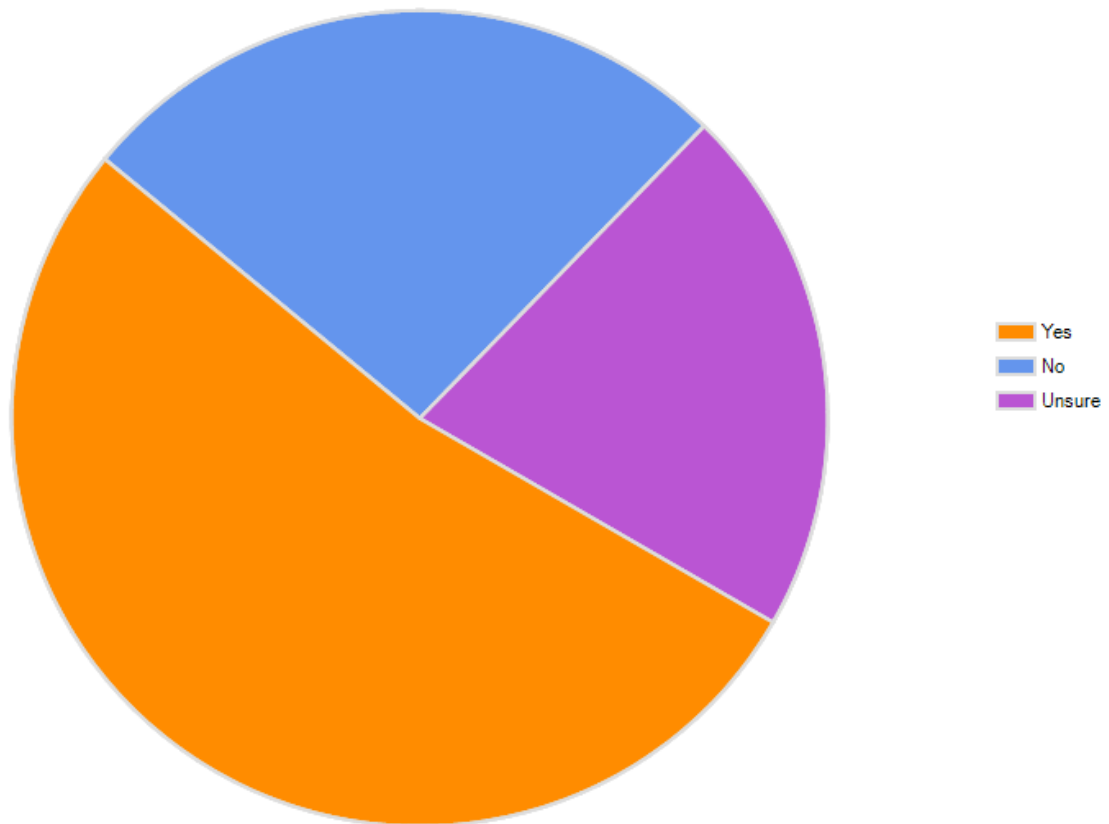
- Individual questions were scored by two individuals each and then compiled by the group – resulting in "tunnel vision" if important information is available in other parts of the application but not within that specific question. More holistic approach may be needed
- Everyone has an idea of what is important - it is a matter of translating that to a fair evaluation. What is interesting and creates some problems is that some of the roadway categories have the same question, but the answer gets scored differently depending upon the reviewer. It would be helpful to have some consistent methodologies so that applicants know how something is going to be scored. I do think the people involved try to be fair and develop a logical methodology
- Shouldn't be entirely – Historic projects don't compete well – as a committee we made adjustments to increase competitiveness of historic projects – not sure I agree with this approach



- Since each scorer typically only reviewed a question or two within the application, I think that created a more balanced scoring application where a person's potential bias could not greatly influence whether a project is selected or not
- Process of scoring varies by year. Last one seemed to have strong group views of what should and should not be funded. Difficult to determine if that resulted in a process that was as fair as previous years

10. *Is scoring process transparent (19 Respondents)*

**Was the scoring process you were involved in transparent to the applicants and general public?**



Other Comments:

- I've seen both sides of TE Scoring process – The metrics within the questions/categories have not been transparent
- Development framework category can be murky

- Transparent but confusing – not sure if people would know where to get information if they had questions. Also don't think the public has a lot of questions about the process and applicants do know where to find info
- Scorers need to document their methodology and they share their scores with committee members – helps to keep everyone accountable and consistent
- Documented our rationale and provided copies to Metropolitan Council staff that someone could have requested to see a copy of. But the information is not readily available and you need to know who to call to obtain it.
- Meetings were not open to applicants or public
- Help if the applicants have more knowledge on how they will be scored
- Hard to really see all the parts

*11. Comments related to what improvements could be made to improve the Regional Solicitation's scoring/selection process (9 Respondents)*

- Trail project scores related to housing and population need to reflect entire regional trail not just project site
- Make scoring more objective and less subjective
- Streamline process
- I like when one person score the same topic so they have the same basis for evaluation
- Identify method for scoring and apply that consistently if question is same across multiple categories
- The process of tying project eligibility and financial awards to the Council's plans (2030 or Park and Ride) sounds good, but since they ultimately control what's in these documents they control where the money goes. Seeing that they apply for this funding, and being they are the parent organization to Metro Transit, this gives them a distinct advantage over the rest of us. Some consideration has to be allowed for those projects that can make a compelling case related to demand yet the Council has failed to recognize.
- Also, the modeling used to determine priority is not an exact science. In fact, some would say the methodology used is flawed with incorrect assumptions. Garbage in equals garbage out. As long as modeling follows generally accepted principles, modeling done outside of the Metropolitan Council's should be allowed to be used in determining demand/impact.
- The whole idea of only allowing one project per corridor needs to be refined. As an example, just because a project is selected along 169 say in Edina, there is no reason another project should be considered in Shakopee. The project needs to be evaluated on the merits of impact, not on what corridor it is adjacent to.
- I would like to see some type of analysis done on the projects that have received funding in the past. Were they constructed? Were they within the specified budget? Did they construct what they said they were going to construct? Have they reached the performance targets stated in their grant application? If there is an organization who cannot answer yes to the previous questions, than that organization should be penalized at least for a period of time for their inability to perform.

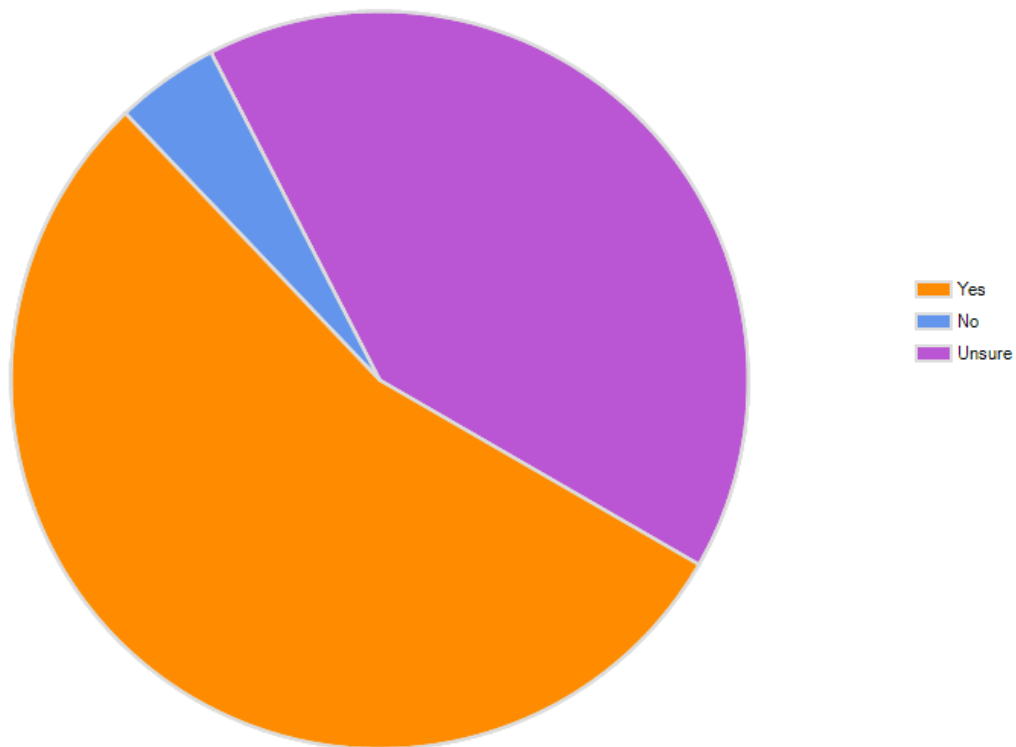
- I would like to see both the scoring committee as well as the TAB's advisory committee (TAC) change up membership from time to time. Both bodies have incredible influence on what is finally recommended, and neither has changed much in the way of makeup. I'm not talking about the organizations like MPCA who have a seat at the table and there is only a handful of staff able to be on the Committee. What I'm referring to are the individuals who regularly compete for these grants yet have a seat for life on one or both of the advisory/recommending committees.
- If this document is going to be used in the evaluation for federal funding, it MUST be updated on a biennial basis and completed prior to the solicitation process to have any relevant meaning.
- Every time the solicitation process goes out there is a debate about park and ride facilities location. The claim that P&R lots located too close to one another often compete for the market and dilute the efficiency of the transit service needs to be reexamined. Proximity isn't the issue. If the P&R serves and can be supported by a solid population and density base, there shouldn't be a magic number of miles between lots. This argument never seems to come up when LRT encroaches into an area currently operated by bus.
- Someone needs to stop the TDM Madness. For years a considerable amount of funding has been pulled of the top of the CMAQ funding for TDM activities. For most projects, the purpose of CMAQ is to provide one-time funding, yet this same TDM BS comes back year after year with CMAQ as it's only or major source of funding. It scores well because it claims responsibility for the success of every carpool, vanpool and bus ride taken in the Twin Cities region. However, it's been proven that only a very small percentage of people traveling by bus, vanpool or carpool, actually utilize or were established utilizing the services of Metro Commuter Services and/or one of the other transportation management organizations. More detail should be provided and evaluated as to the actual effect these regional TDM programs provide and how much money they really need.
- With the emphasis the FTA has put on safety and security, and now asset management planning, having these plans in place should be used as grading or qualifying criteria.
- Funding alternatives should be included in the analysis and scoring of a project. If other sources of funding exist, this should be taken into consideration when evaluating the proposals. They claim this happens but it must be when the door is closed because I see a lot of funding duplication going on.
- Identify a methodology for scoring and apply that consistently if the question is the same across multiple categories
- Document how projects will be scored and clearly identify how selection of projects could be determined – outline types of scenarios that could be considered
- Require one page summary sheet with project description, cost, map of location at regional/community scale, and map of project site from applicants
- Scoring should be based on criteria that all agencies use or grading criteria should be established for different standards
- I think process works fairly as it is

## Regional Policy Alignment Questions

Participants were asked questions about how the Regional Solicitation Process aligns with the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Policy Plan (TPP). Of the 53 participants, 45 (84.9 percent) responded to this section.

### 12. Aligns with current policy and priority (44 Respondents)

**Do you feel the current Regional Solicitation Process aligns with current regional transportation policy and investment priorities as detailed in the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP)?**



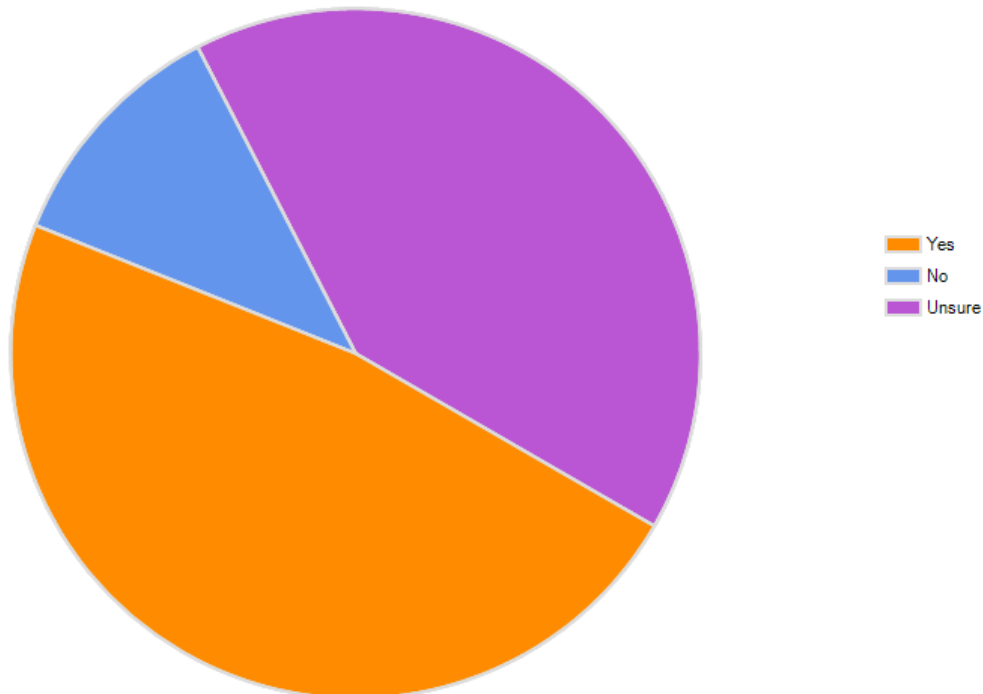
#### Other Comments:

- Yes but policy is outdated and not current
- Summary doesn't identify new road projects vs. preservation projects – My experience to see new projects ranked higher than preservation projects which contradicts #1 priority of Highway Systems – Not sure if this happens a lot without the summary indicating that
- Regional Solicitation seems disconnected to highest regional priorities
- The process of tying project eligibility and financial awards to the Council's plans (2030 or Park and Ride) sounds good, but since they ultimately control what's in these documents they control where the money goes. Seeing that they apply for this funding, and being they are the parent organization to Metro Transit, this gives them a distinct advantage over the rest of us. Some consideration has to be allowed for those projects that can make a compelling case related to demand yet the Council has failed to recognize.

- Also, the modeling used to determine priority is not an exact science. In fact, some would say the methodology used is flawed with incorrect assumptions. Garbage in equals garbage out. As long as modeling follows generally accepted principles, modeling done outside of the Metropolitan Council's should be allowed to be used in determining demand/impact. • The whole idea of only allowing one project per corridor needs to be refined. As an example, just because a project is selected along 169 say in Edina, there is no reason another project should be considered in Shakopee. If this document is going to be used in the evaluation for federal funding, it MUST be updated on a biennial basis and completed prior to the solicitation process to have any relevant meaning
- Policies put preservation and management ahead of expansion. Many of the roadway projects result in expansion of some type. While it is a third priority – it is sometimes the only option to explore when transit service is not available, management activities are limited and there are operational issues beyond intersections
- Could provide more alternative transportation/TE Funding
- Think it does – But TPP provides little guidance on “A” minor arterial roadways
- Don't agree with TPP policies on all areas
- In recent years Yes – but Map 21 criteria may dictate changes that will not align well

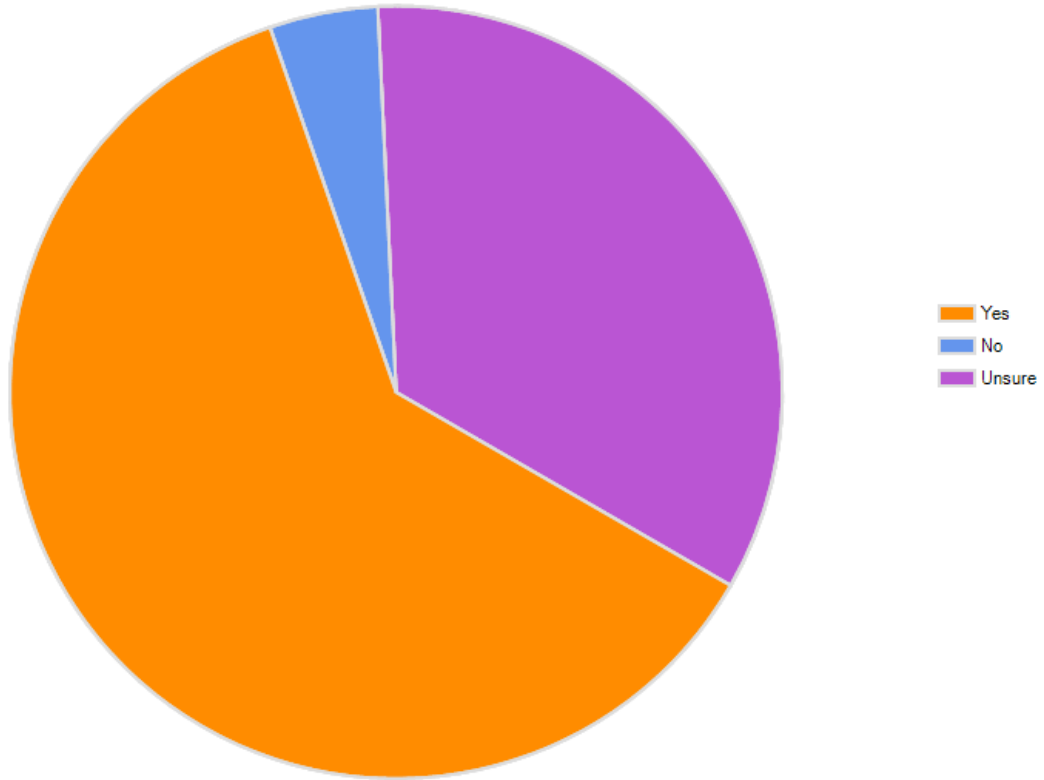
**13. Encourages congestion management and mobility tools (44 Respondents)**

**Does the current Regional Solicitation Process encourage CONGESTION MANAGEMENT AND MOBILITY TOOLS as detailed in the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), such as increasing person throughput, Active Traffic Management (ATM), Travel Demand Management (TDM), managed lanes, low-cost/high-benefit improvements, strategic capacity expansion, etc.?**



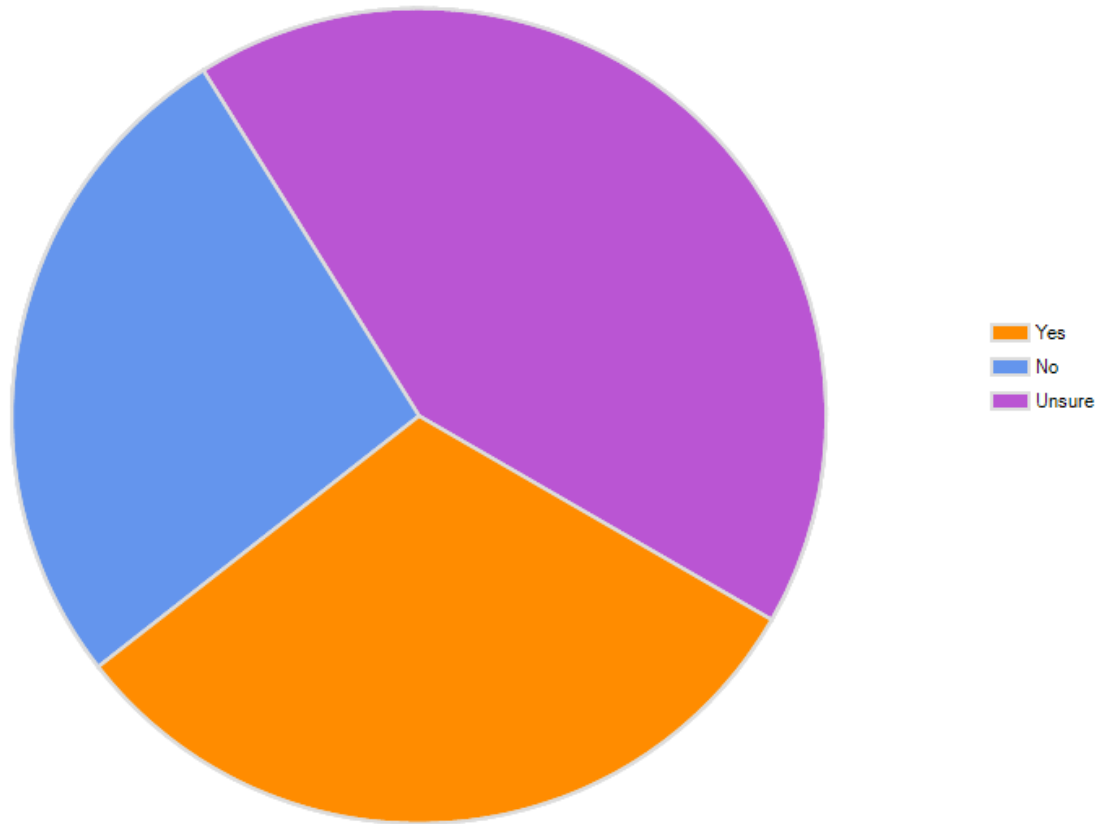
14. Encourages Transit (44 Respondents)

**Does the current Regional Solicitation Process encourage TRANSIT as detailed in the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP)?**



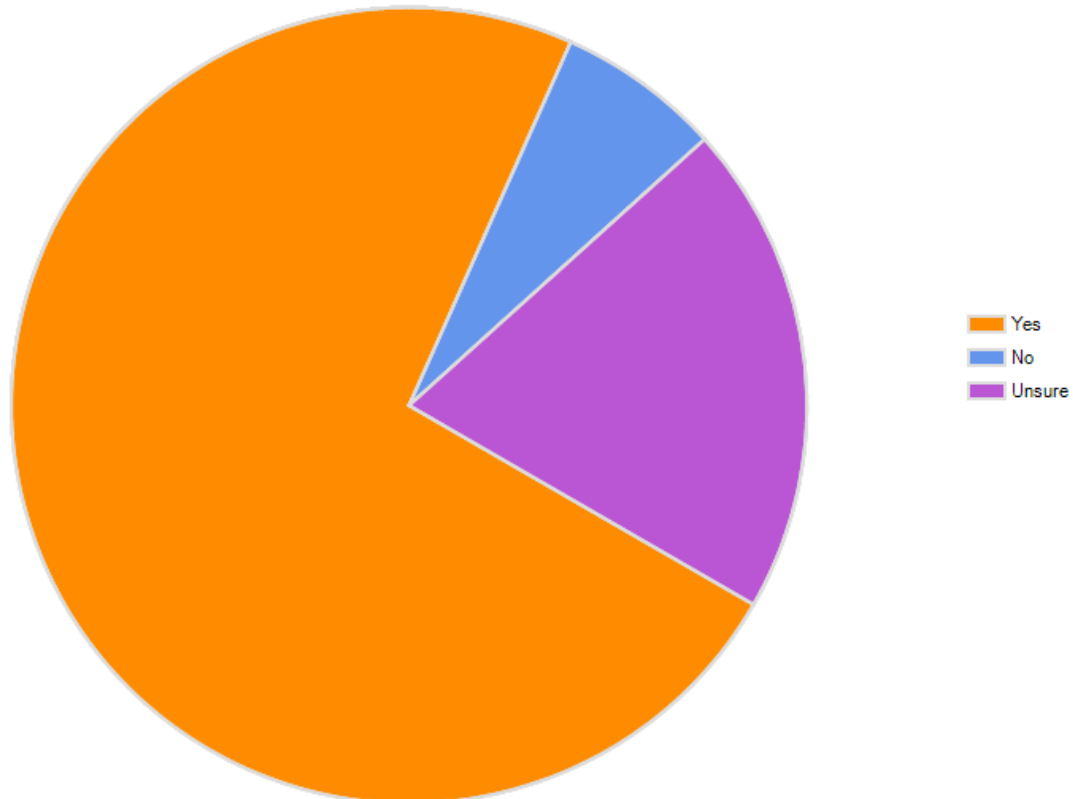
15. *Encourages Innovation (45 Respondents)*

**Does the current Regional Solicitation Process encourage INNOVATION as detailed in the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP)?**



*16. Encourages multimodal options (45 Respondents)*

**Does the current Regional Solicitation Process encourage MULTIMODAL OPTIONS as detailed in the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP)?**



*17. Comments related to what improvements could be made to better align the Regional Solicitation and Regional Transportation Policy (17 Respondents)*

- Trails and transit need to be considered together
- Innovation is limited by the process criteria
- More emphasis on multi-modal and bike/pedestrian investments in the TPP than is reflected in the solicitation scoring
- Accommodations for multiple modes is important but hard to do without “right sizing” the roadway which could mean reduction in lanes
- More points should be allocated for accommodating additional modes in a built and constrained right of way
- Better congestion management and low cost/high benefits improvements
- Evaluative criteria doesn't always address innovation because measurement is preset
- Transit projects should be separate from this solicitation process
- Some consideration has to be allowed for projects that can make a compelling case related to demand yet the council has failed to recognize



- Methodology used is flawed with incorrect assumptions
- Funding alternative should be included in the analysis and scoring of a project – if other funding sources exist it should be taken into consideration when evaluating projects
- *The process of tying project eligibility and financial awards to the Council's plans (2030 or Park and Ride) sounds good, but since they ultimately control what's in these documents they control where the money goes. Seeing that they apply for this funding, and being they are the parent organization to Metro Transit, this gives them a distinct advantage over the rest of us. Some consideration has to be allowed for those projects that can make a compelling case related to demand yet the Council has failed to recognize.*
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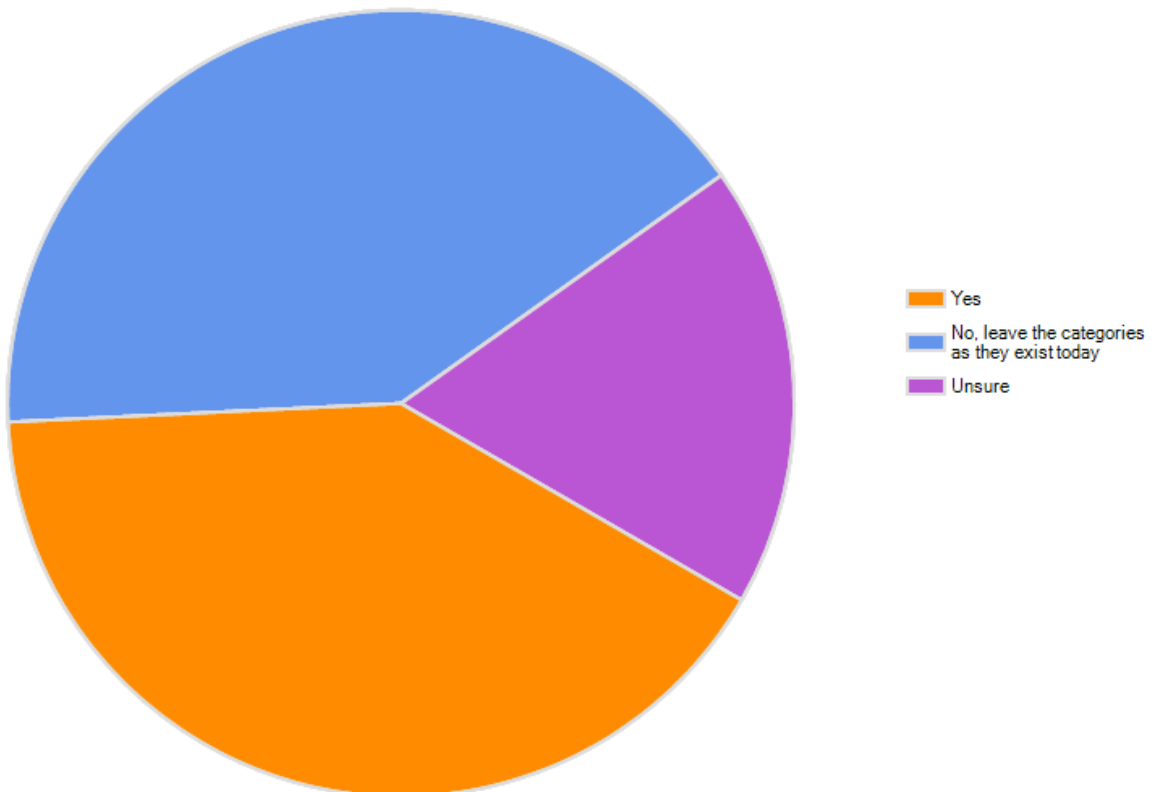
- *With the emphasis the FTA has put on safety and security, and now asset management planning, having these plans in place should be used as grading or qualifying criteria.*
- *Funding alternatives should be included in the analysis and scoring of a project. If other sources of funding exist, this should be taken into consideration when evaluating the proposals. They claim this happens but it must be when the door is closed because I see a lot of funding duplication going on.*
- Consideration should be given to using free flow speed as a performance measure in addition to or in place of through out
- Would be nice to have additional policies/attention in the TPP regarding minor arterial system
- More focus on A minor corridors
- Maintain/implement existing/approved system before adding new elements
- Too small and have no transit available to make our improvements competitive – need big improvements to our roads too but without ability to compete we are just stuck. RSE encourages all but make sure you leave room for multimodal in some communities to mean only traffic, bikes and pedestrians
- Weighted scoring of criteria provides a means to fine tune the process toward a specific plan/plan goals
- Scoring criteria don't favor preservation projects – contrary to stated goals about preservation
- For question 13, the strategies identified are primarily for principal arterial/freeway type facilities. "A" minor arterials should have a different set of strategies
- #13 and #15 go hand in hand. Hard to encourage innovation yet have a scoring criteria for something new

### General Questions

Participants were asked general questions about the Regional Solicitation Process. Of the 53 participants, 44 (83.0 percent) responded to this section.

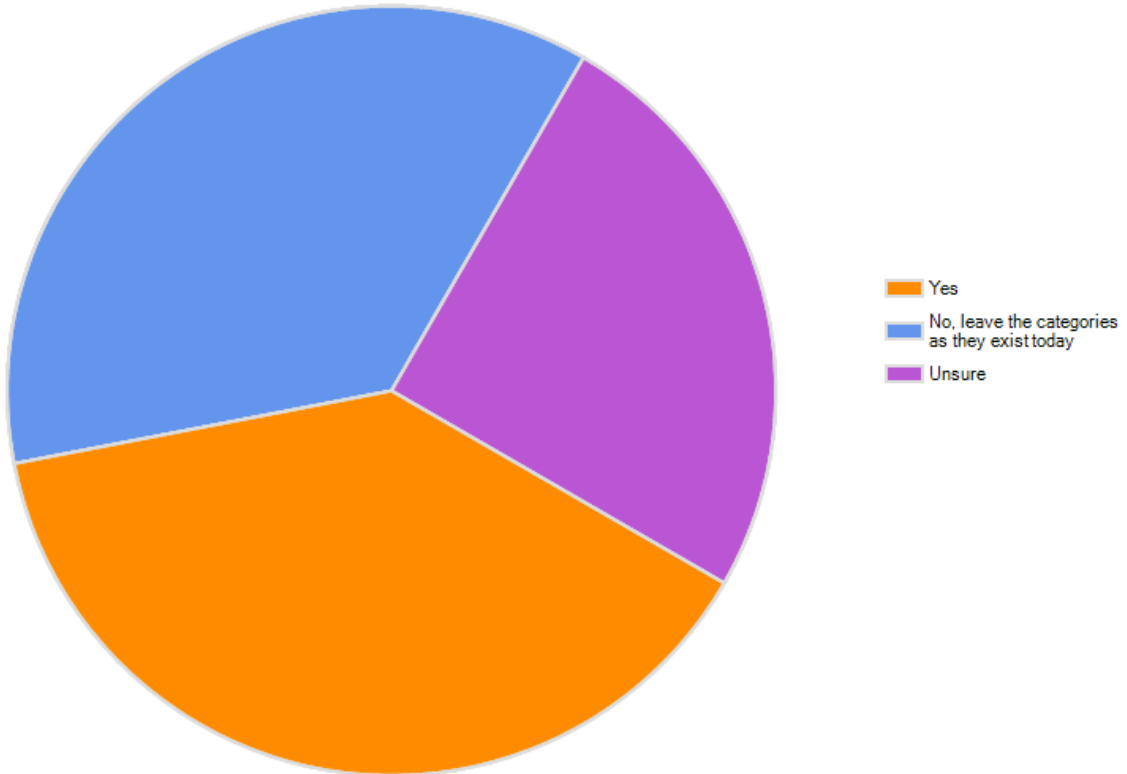
*18. Project categories should be changed for separate mode funding categories (44 Respondents)*

**Should the funding categories be changed so that there are separate funding categories for each mode (i.e., pedestrian, bicycle, transit, vehicle, freight)?**



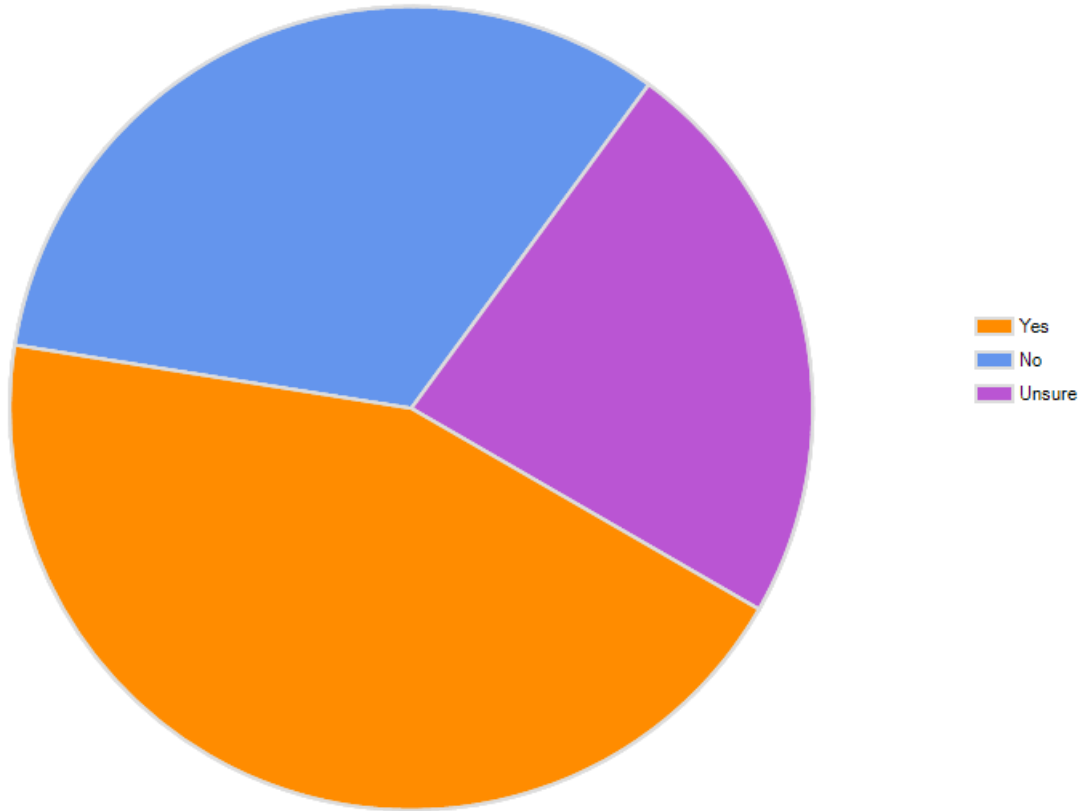
19. *Project categories should be changes to defined by project type (44 Respondents)*

**Should the funding categories be changed so that they are defined by project type (e.g. preservation, modernization, safety, management, capacity)?**



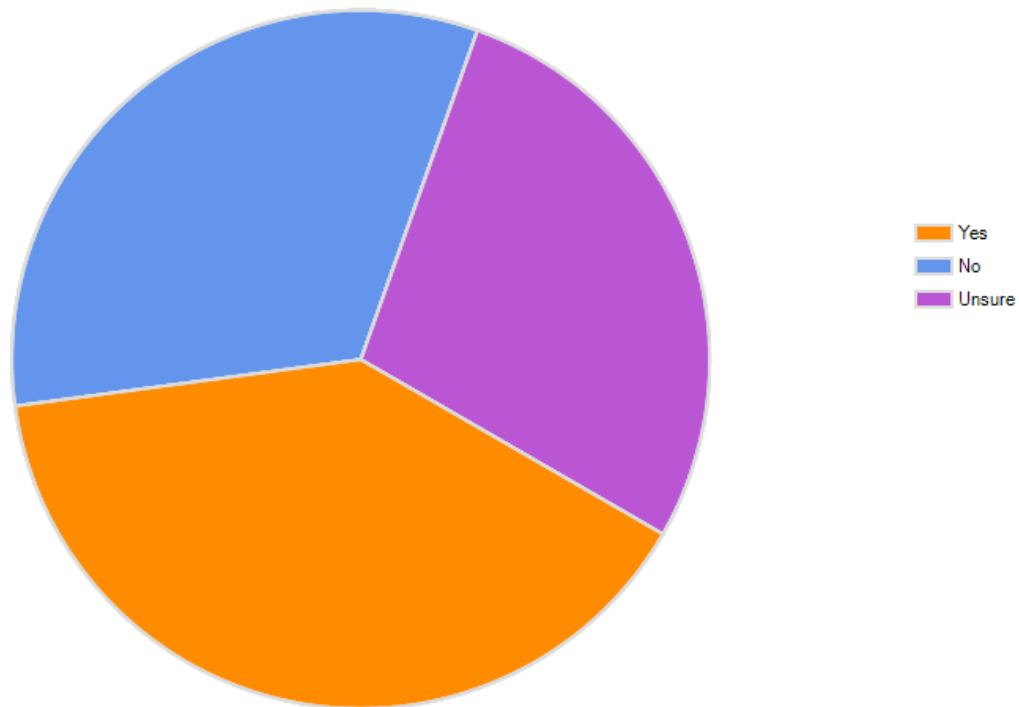
20. *Prioritizing criteria should be weighted differently for urban core vs. developing/rural areas (43 Respondents)*

**Should the future funding criteria be weighted differently for projects in the urban core vs projects in developing areas/rural areas?**



**21. Non-Freeway Principal Arterial category removed from STP-UG program (43 Respondents)**

**Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) increased the funding available for the National Highway System (NHS) and directed states to include all principal arterials in the NHS. Non-Freeway Principal Arterials have always been eligible for STP funding. Should the non-freeway Principal Arterial category be removed from the Surface Transportation Program – Urban Guarantee (STP-UG) program, providing more dollars to the “A” Minor Arterials?**

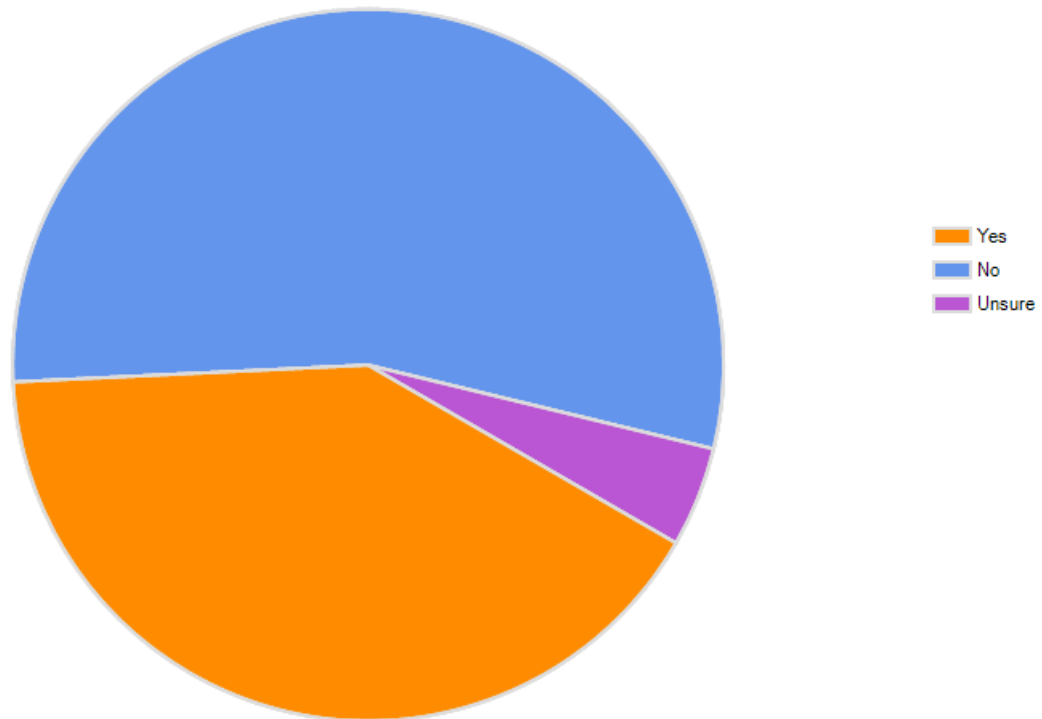


**22. Modes ranked in priority with 1 being highest priority (44 Respondents)**

Rank	Mode
1	Public Transit (buses and LRT)
2	“A” Minor Arterials
3	Non-Freeway Principal Arterials
4	Highway System Management
5	Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

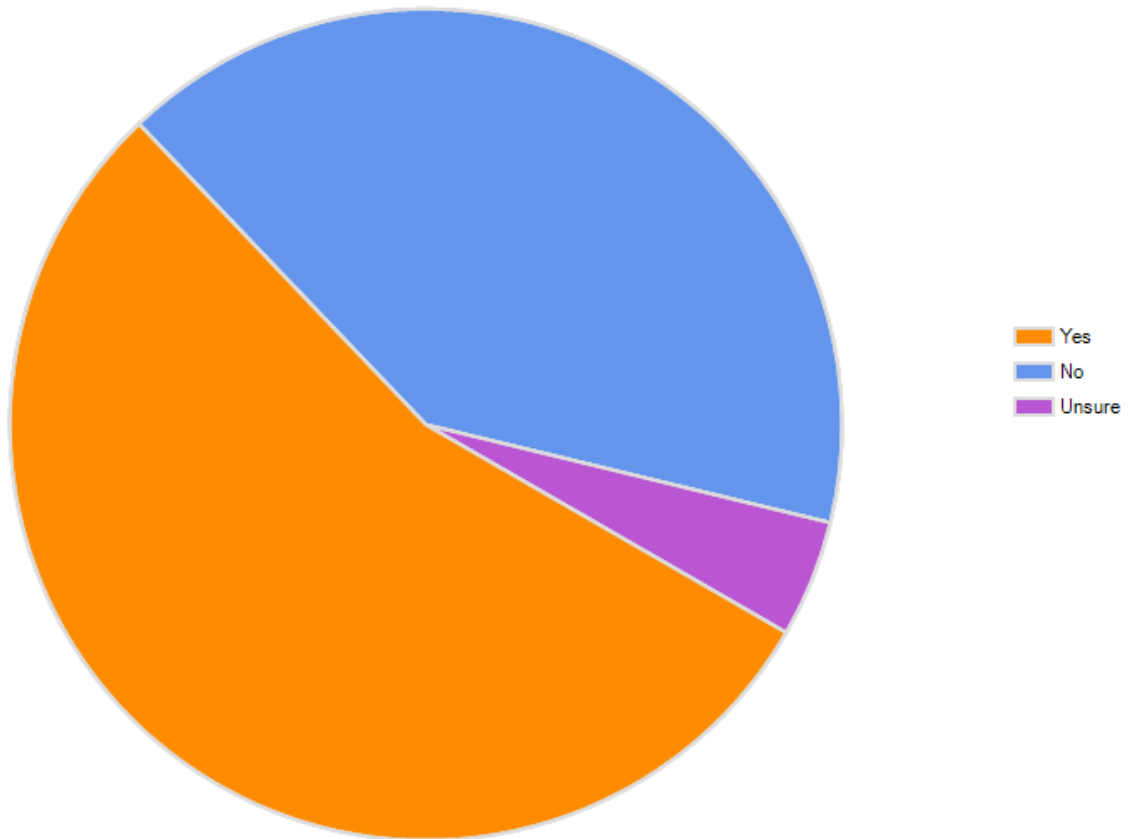
*23. Grant maximums increased (44 Respondents)*

Currently, the maximum grant awarded is \$7M for Surface Transportation Program – Urban Guarantee (STP-UG) roadway projects excluding “A” Minor Arterial Connectors; \$5.5M for STP Bike/Walk and “A” Minor Arterial Connector projects; \$7M for Congestion Management and Air Quality Projects (CMAQ), and \$1M for Transportation Enhancement (TE) projects. Overall, should the grant MAXIMUMS be increased (realizing that a fewer number of projects will be funded overall)?



24. *More points for exceeding minimum 20 percent local match (44 Respondents)*

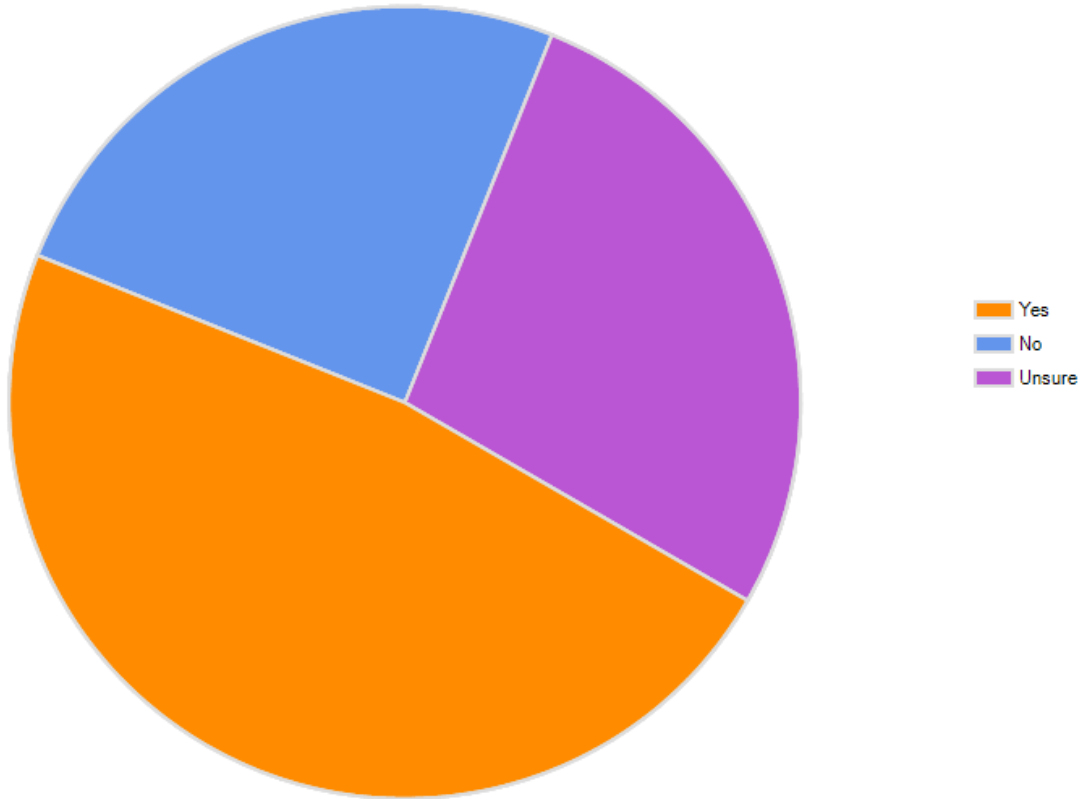
**Should applicants be awarded more points for exceeding the minimum 20 percent local match?**





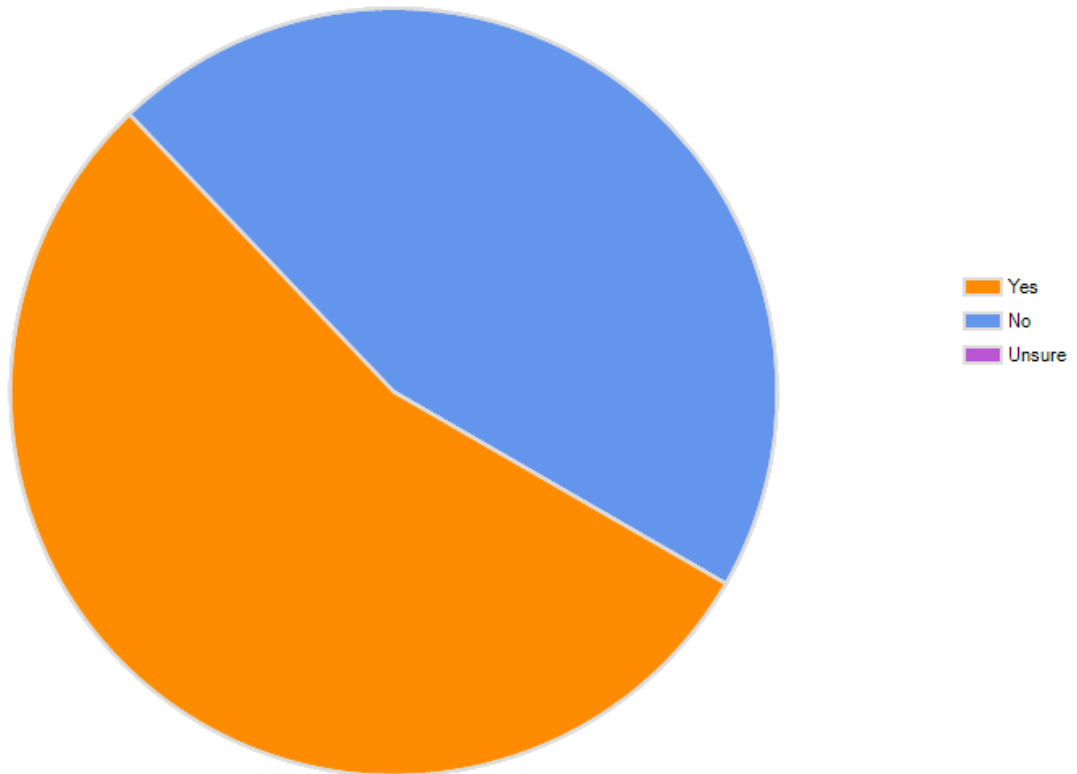
*25. Cost-effectiveness be further emphasized (44 Respondents)*

**The cost effectiveness criteria in the STP and CMAQ categories accounts for between 15 percent and 25 percent of the total points possible. Should cost-effectiveness be further emphasized by awarding more points for cost-effective projects?**



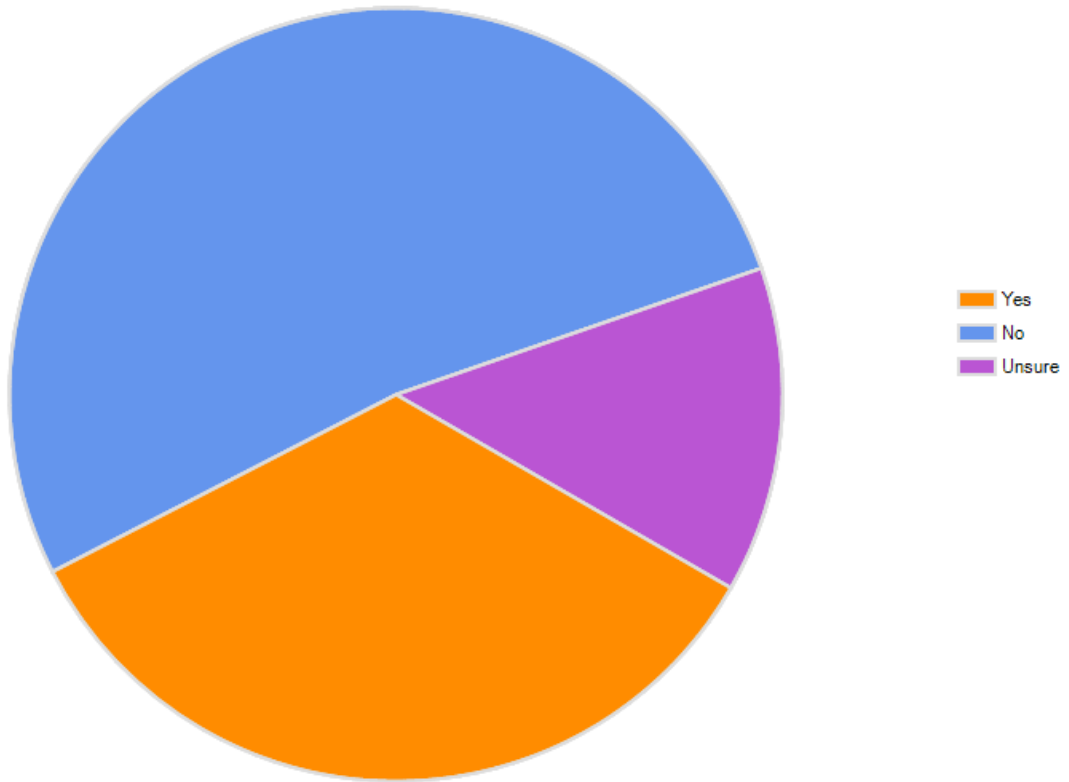
26. *Projects closed to being constructed receive additional points (44 Respondents)*

**When projects cannot be delivered on time for federal authorization, project sponsors must justify the delay and put future federal funds in jeopardy. To improve project delivery, should projects that are closer to being constructed receive additional points beyond what is already awarded?**



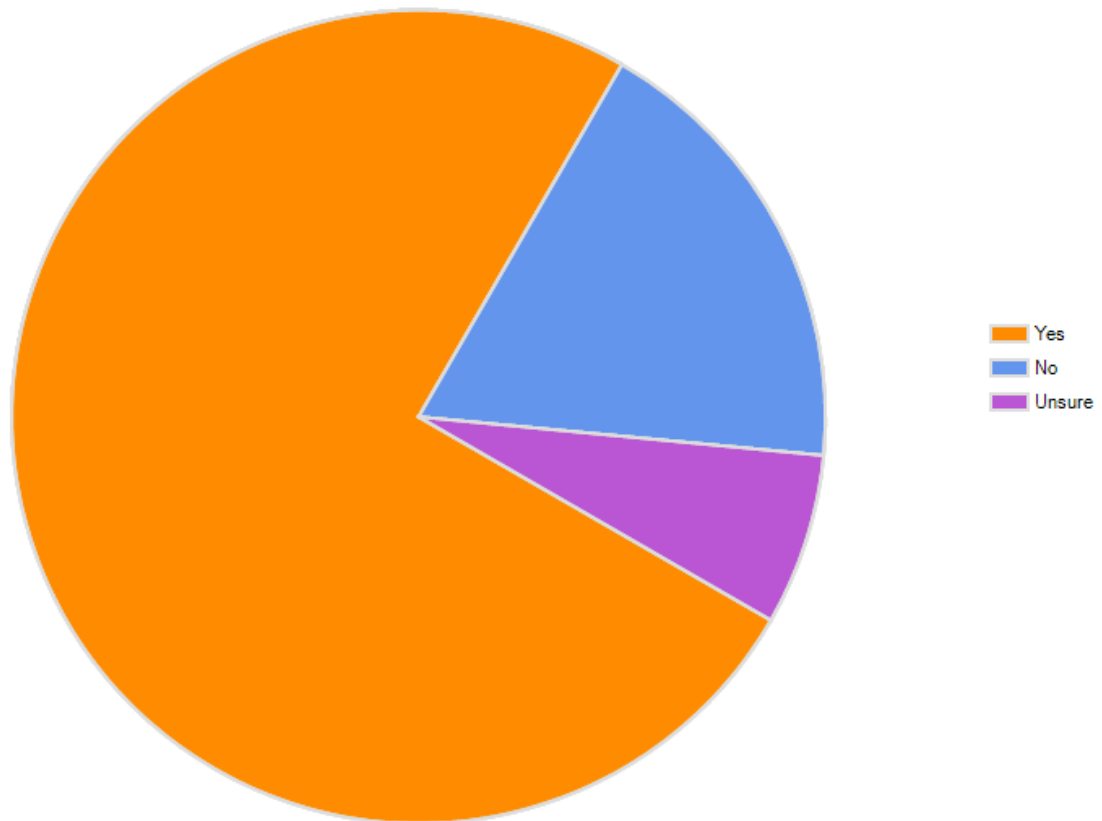
27. "But for" criteria be used (44 Respondents)

**Should the "but for" criteria (i.e., but for this grant, the project will not be constructed at all or to a less desirable level) used in other Metropolitan Council grant programs be used in the solicitation?**



*28. Projects demonstrating jurisdictional coordination and/or public/private partnerships be given additional weight (44 Respondents)*

**Should projects that demonstrate jurisdictional coordination and/or public/private partnerships be given additional weight in the evaluation process?**



*29. Comments related to what policy changes or emphasis areas could be made to improve the Regional Solicitation (16 Respondents)*

- Projects that include facilities that support multi-modal transportation should not receive more weight. Consider aligning criteria to align with new HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for sustainable communities to ensure transportation projects are not developed in a silo but in a manner that supports numerous interests
- Believe awards should consider a balance in applicant location and not award multiple awards to one area
- Trails should be eligible under the CMAQ program
- Consider a guaranteed base allocation to metro counties outside of the solicitation process
- Q15 – Project type should be a strong criteria within all 3 categories
- Worry less about spreading the money around equally and more about which projects cost-effectively provide the most benefit to the public

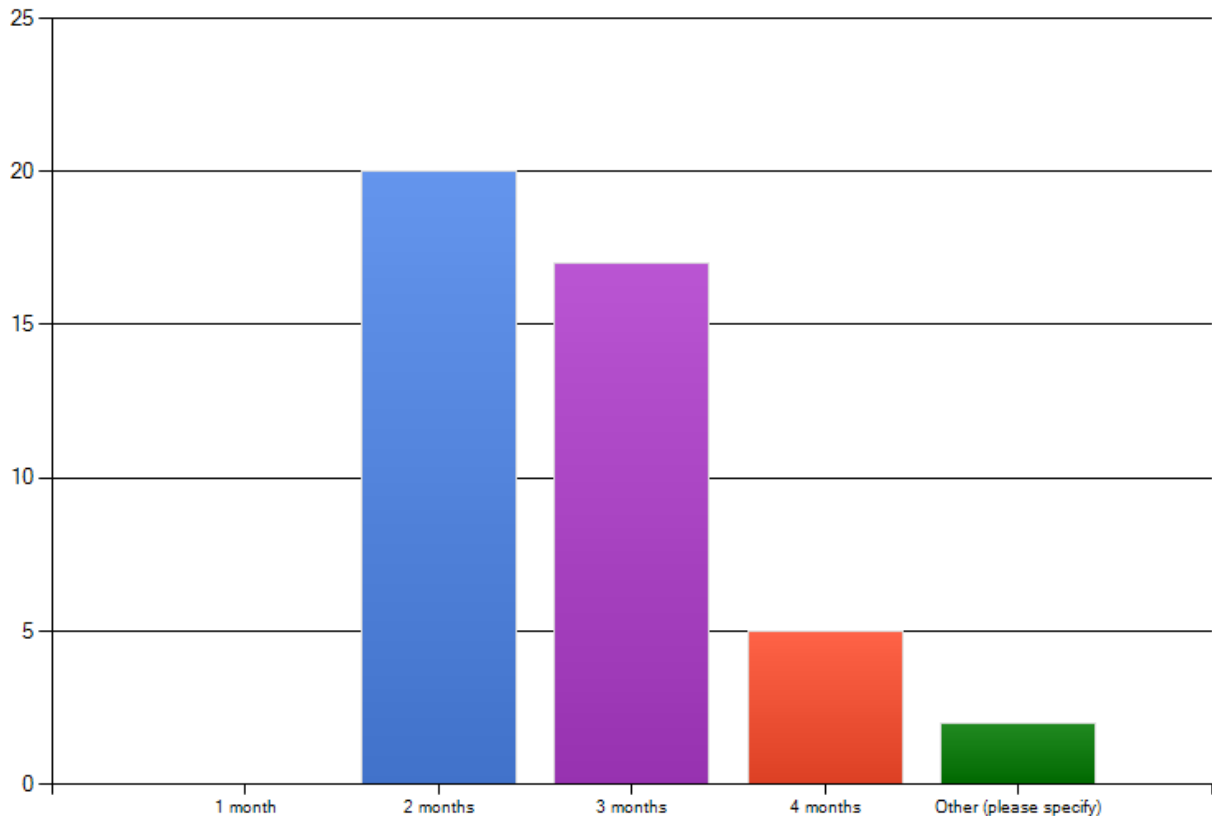
- Less emphasis on air quality in the STP category
- Ensure preservation of system before expanding – Emphasis low cost/high benefit projects
- Shorten time between solicitation, award and actual availability of funding – you can do #22 if funding is 5 years out
- While I would support some additional consideration for providing more than the 20 percent match (extra points) I don't think it should be a program requirement. Also don't think that the “but for test” is appropriate. These are often large projects that benefit the community but given their nature, the projects also benefit the surrounding communities. This has been a consistent way of funding roadway projects. To show the projects wouldn't happen without the money is incorrect; as some point the projects would happen, there would just be less of them if the locals had to pay the whole cost. The prioritization of projects through the selection process ensures that there aren't frivolous projects and they benefit the regional system
- Reduce the amount of funds available in TE category
- Population served, minority and disadvantages populations served , population density
- I've answered unsure to a series of questions because I am leery about removing categories. When categories are removed, then small communities have to compete in a big pool and simply will struggle to qualify. Further, no criteria should receive more weight than another criterion. This only further stretches the ability for small communities to compete. Grant maximums should be reviewed to match increases in project costs.
- People who don't deliver on time should lose the money and loose points in future solicitations and they should never be given additional funds like a couple projects did this year
- #20 not specific enough – it does not indicate which types of projects should be weighted differently
- #20 – if number of categories increased, or if scoring adjusted to more favor projects, no urban/suburban/rural adjustment would be necessary.
- #24 – an examination of projects over the past several solicitations would likely reveal that the correlation between original estimate and final cost of projects would make this criteria inaccurate

### Submittal Process Questions

Participants were asked about the application submittal process. Of the 53 participants, 44 (83.0 percent) responded to this section.

#### 30. Ideal amount of time to complete applications (44 Respondents)

**Currently, applicants are given approximately two months to complete the applications.  
The ideal amount of time is?**



Other Comments:

- Would support 1 month if application is streamlined
- Change from 2 to 4 unless the process is simplified

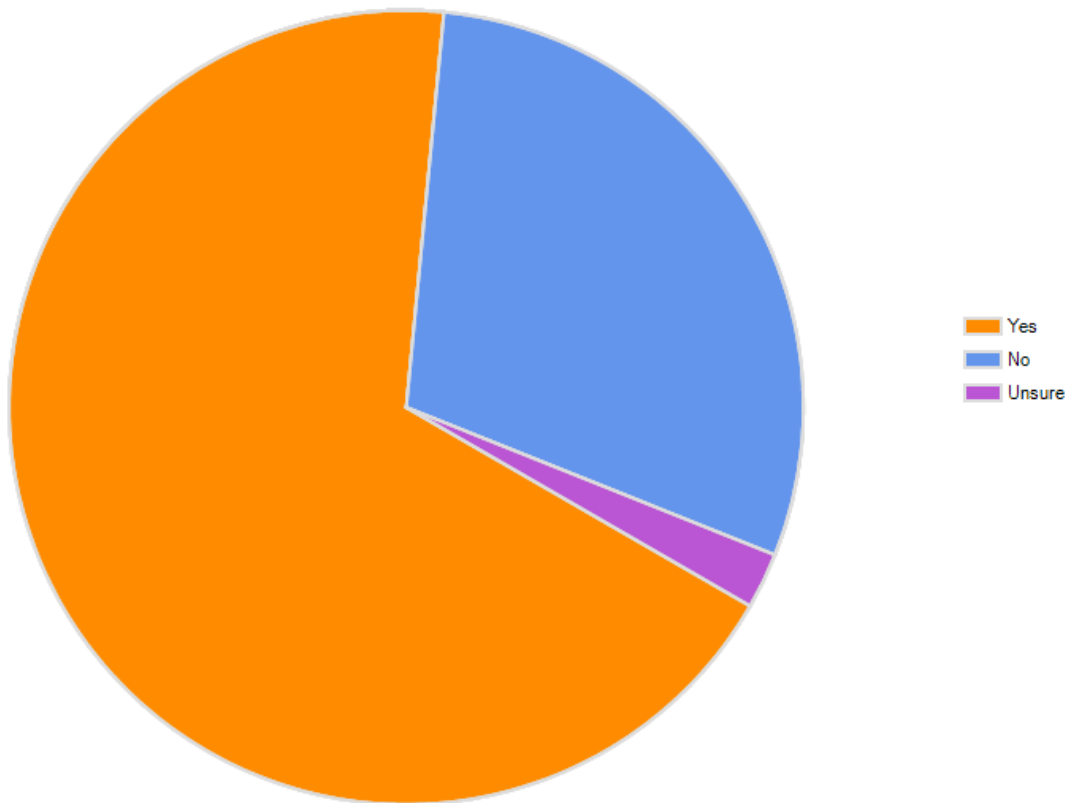
#### 31. Comments related to suggestions to improve the online application submittal process (13 Respondents)

- Many people said they would like fill in form in HTML
- Online process with application space limitations like TIGER grants
- Completely online with only attachments uploaded

- Use councils new grant management system
- On-line
- A few said they didn't experience any problems with uploading
- Allow enough flexibility to incorporate color maps, web links, KMLs, Pictures/graphics to be incorporated with text
- Going to on-line uploading of a PDF was great enhancement
- Limit number of pages in application
- Can get to be huge file – keep required information to just what is needed

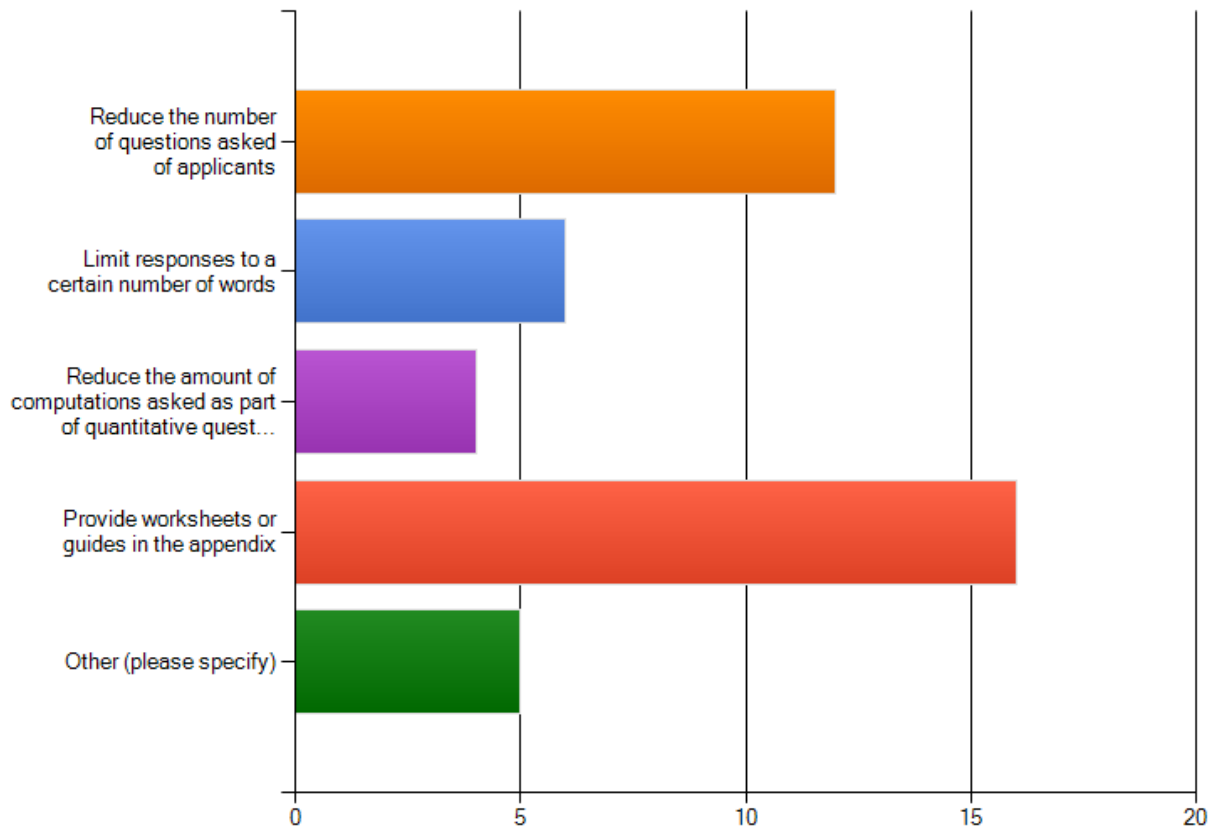
*32. Should responses be limited to certain number of words (44 Respondents)*

**To streamline the process and make it easier for scorers to compare applications, should the responses to each question be limited to a certain number of words?**



33. How can we streamline the process (42 Respondents)

**How can we streamline the process to reduce the time required to prepare a solid application?**



Other Comments:

- All of the above
- Make questions more quantitative – be clear on what answers will score best
- Have more questions where scorers of staff can calculate response
- Many of the above - the planning questions in the back essentially require rewriting portions of approved comp plans - maybe allow references to sections of plans; providing clearer information on scoring may influence how long answers are or how they answer questions; eliminate duplicate questions/topics – transit is in the first question and one of the last questions
- Require one page project background marketing/info sheet with maps that applicants can use to summarize their projects rather than repeat this information in each question. Would be helpful for scorers
- Provide tool similar to MnDOT's online project memorandum tool to simplify and speed up application process



*34. Comments related to what improvements could be made to improve the application submittal process (10 Respondents)*

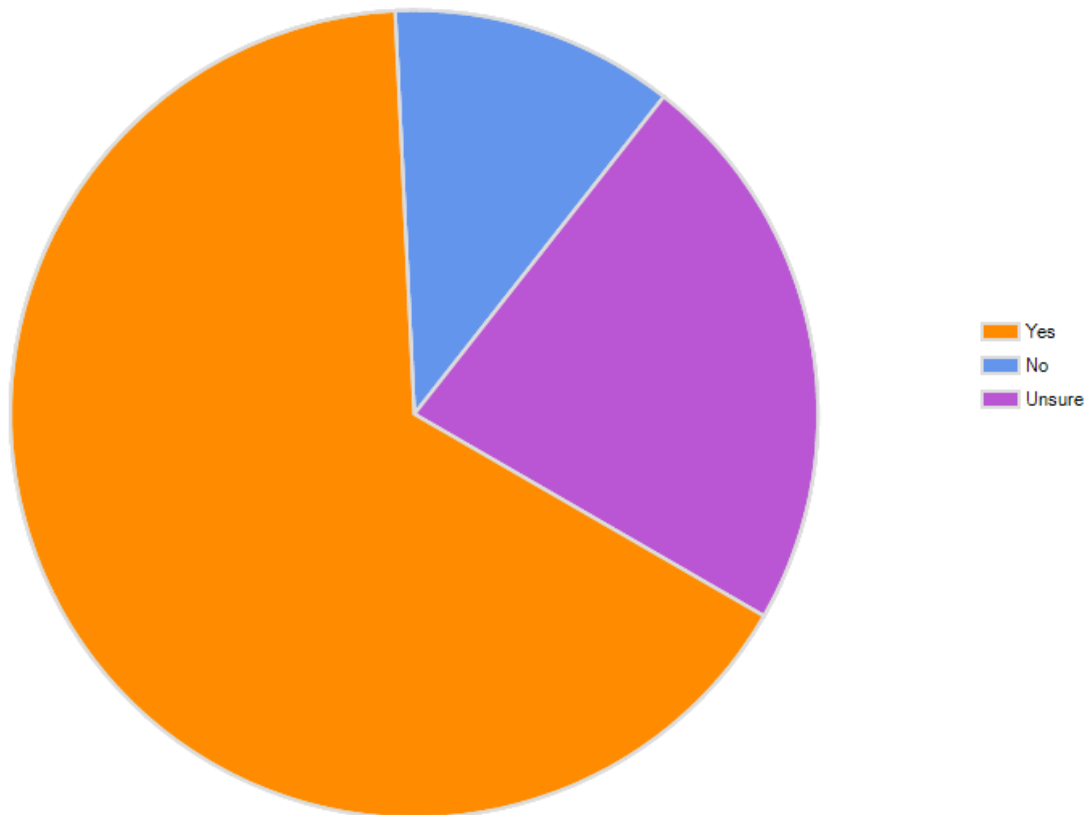
- Support electronic submittal. Believe current amount of effort to prepare a solid application is justified given the amount of funds that are being requested
- Appropriate training sessions
- All suggestions in #33 should be considered not just one
- Please do not limit the amount of words like other Met Council Applications. I have experienced problems with their applications if more explanation is needed or the answer to a questions is not always yes or no
- Provide guidance on how you want questions answered. Appreciate when council does some of the calculations – affordable housing
- Encourage bulleted lists/summary tables verses narratives - reduces application prep time and easier to scorer to find key information. Require better maps that clearly show the location, scale, and intent of the project. (north arrow, scale bar, regional/community context, etc.) If letters of support are required, they should be given some weight in the scoring process - within reason, just because you have a lot of support letters doesn't justify funding the project. It is a lot of work to obtain/compile letters - so if they aren't providing value they shouldn't be required. Reconsider having the comprehensive plan and other required attachments that are not heavily looked at by scorers. Again, a lot of work and not necessarily looked at as part of the scoring.
- The key is finding a balance between having the project applicants be very thoughtful in the projects that they will submit with the effort that will be required on their part to prepare that application. If the application is easy to fill out, you will likely get more projects that are submitted just because it is easy to fill out an application. On the other hand, if the application is too burdensome, smaller agencies typically do not have the money or personnel to prepare an application. The key is making sure the questions are going to influence the scoring. If all applicants get a score of 50 on a particular question, then the question does not add any value for the scorer.
- Use standard engineering cost estimate formats and categories. Decide in advance if a contingency will be included and how much per year compounded to construction years
- Have consultant cap for how much they charge. Consultants who submit on behalf of communities should be identified
- Give consistent criteria for what maps, charts, appendices, etc. are needed and what should NOT be included.

### Ranking and Selection Process Questions

Participants were asked about the ranking and selection process of Regional Solicitation applications. Of the 53 participants, 44 (83.0 percent) responded to this section.

35. *Current federal funding through data-driven process best way to allocate money local agencies*  
(44 Respondents)

**Currently, federal funding is distributed to applicants in a competitive, data-driven process. Is this the best way to allocate this federal money to local agencies?**

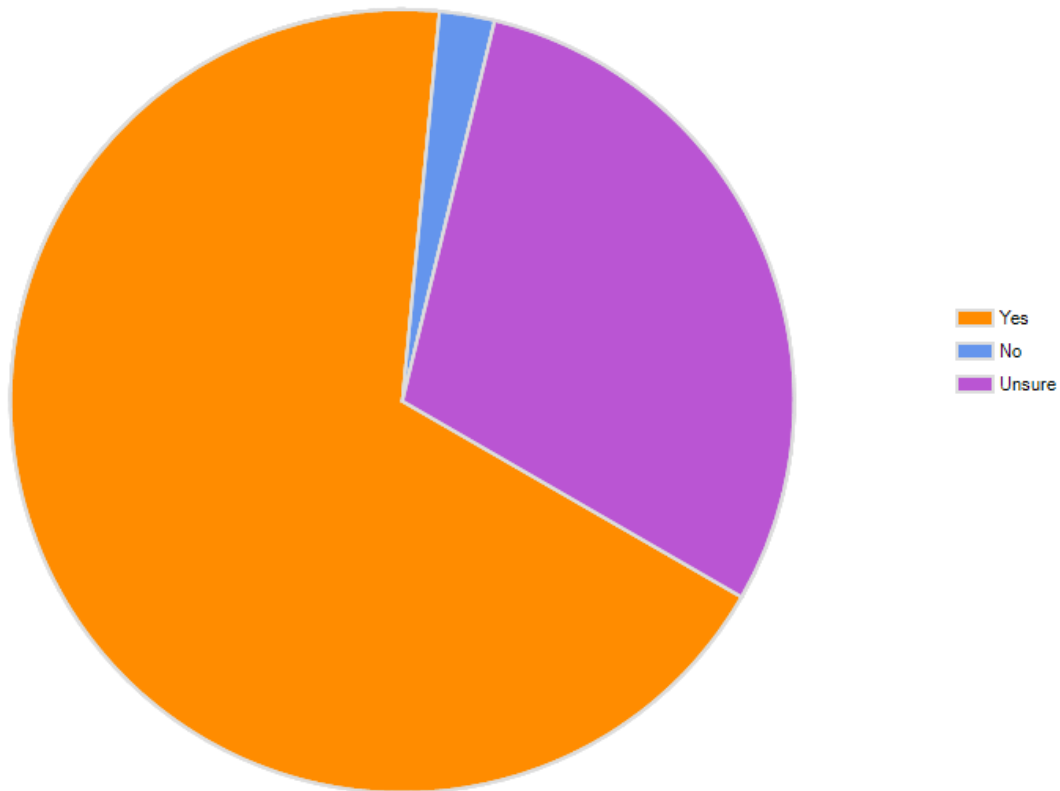


Other Comments:

- Relate it to measures of pressing need
- In depth discussion is needed – beyond a survey
- Best projects moving forward through transparent process
- Transit data can greatly change by the time a project is actually funded
- Can be – different regional approach could be to focus on one large project in each county every so often – multiple ways it could advance different types of projects
- Some consideration should be given to forward thinking projects rather than ones that fix existing problems
- Hard to answer without thinking of community's application

36. *Ranking and selecting of projects done in fair manner (44 Respondents)*

**Do you believe that the ranking and selecting of projects is done in a fair manner?**

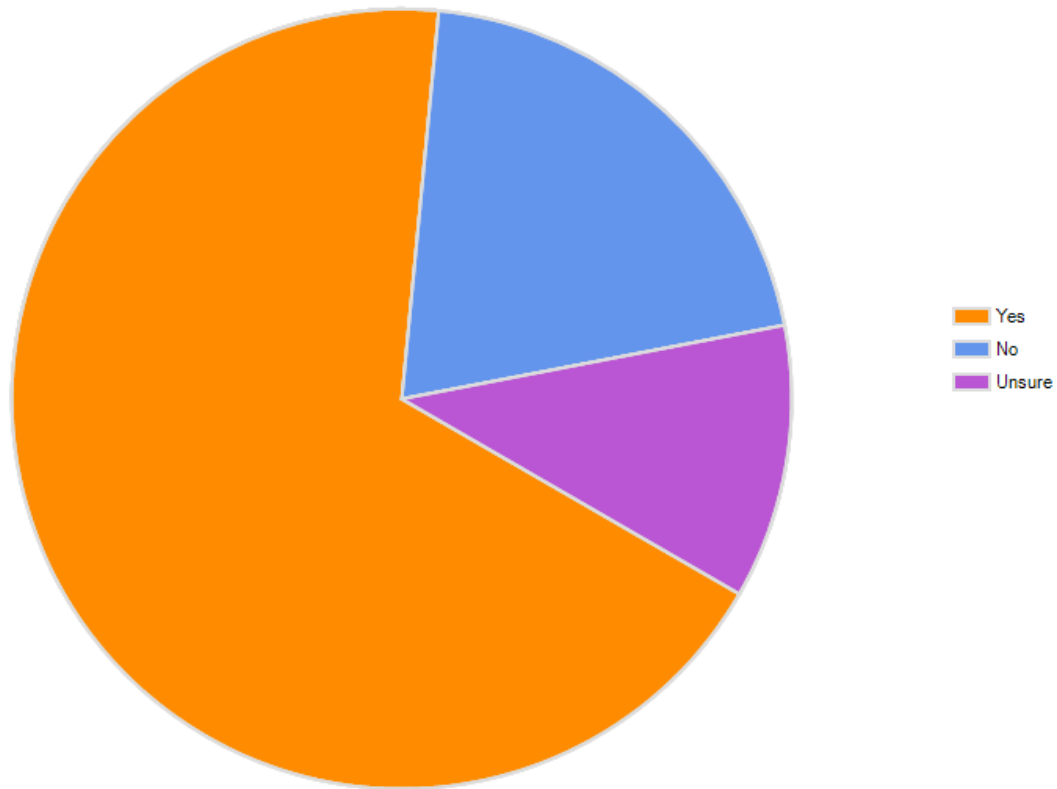


Other Comments:

- Should be balanced location wise
- Most of the time this is true – few specific scoring methods that are currently problematic – including points for livable communities being assigned to a project due to its location and not to its service area
- Fair no, consistent yes
- Weight given to some of the scoring categories is questionable
- Scoring and ranking of projects is fair and transparent – gets little bit more difficult to follow when projects are selected – understandably so in many situations
- Seen a few too many projects of members on the TAC receive funding over other projects

37. Ranking and selecting done in transparent way (44 Respondents)

**Is the ranking and selecting of projects done in a transparent way for both the applicants and the general public?**

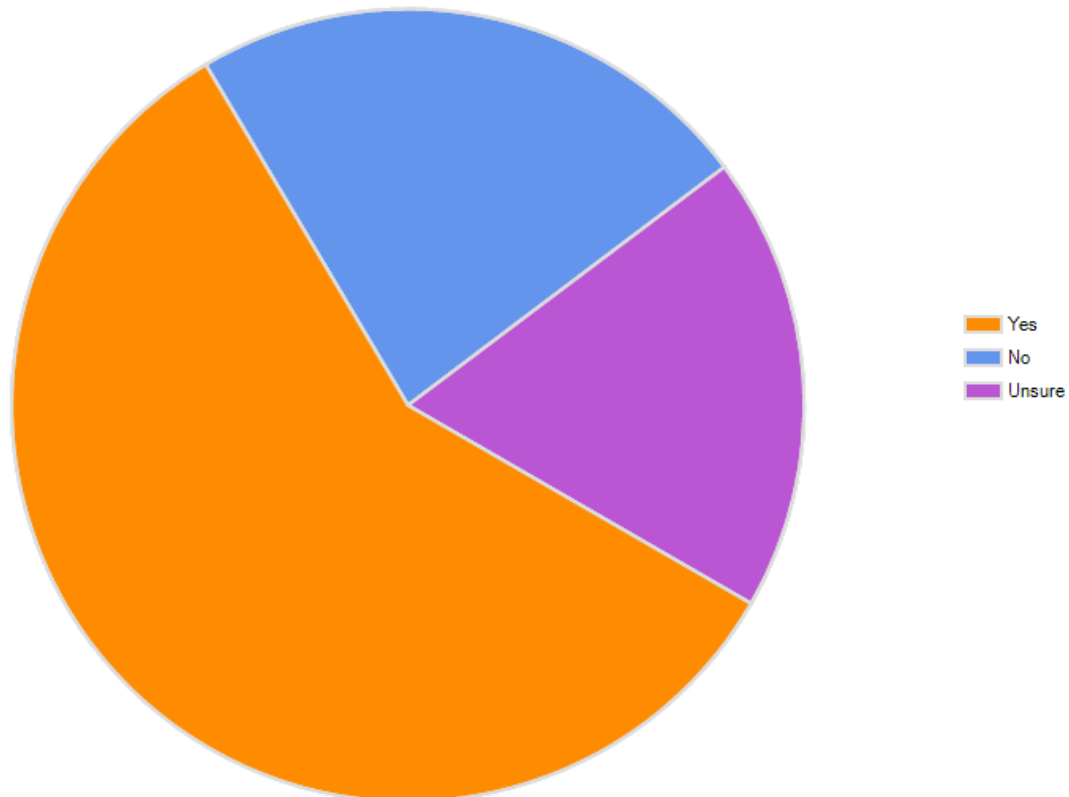


Other Comments:

- Final ranks and selection are transparent – actual ranking process is not
- Yes for applicants that understand – no otherwise. Too complicated for public to understand and follow – thus not transparent
- Development framework can be murky
- Public doesn't know how it's done but not sure they care – if you are interested it is possible to follow the trail
- I do not think that public understands most of what council does, so I do not think they would know if it was transparent or not
- Compared to other grant processes the RSE provides the more transparent scoring system
- Process this time was not as good because they delayed it and they shouldn't have.

**38. Important to have measure of geographic equity in distribution of funds (43 Respondents)**

**Is it important to have some measure of geographic equity in the distribution of funds through the solicitation process?**



**Other Comments:**

- Only insofar as geographic equity assures continuing participation from non-core entities
- It is more important to have a regional logic behind project distribution. Geography is on such approach. There may be others (e.g. synergy between several projects) that could provide greater regional benefit. This needs more discussion.
- Best project should be selected – thus geography should not be a requirement but like today can be considered when close scoring between projects
- Minimums should be set but some areas just need more funding
- Depending on how questions are written and scored – current policies are set – the application could significantly favor the urban core or the rural areas – especially if criteria are weighted differently
- The top project should be funded based on merit not location
- Should have some equity but also high marks for population density, population served, multi modal transit links etc.
- Good projects – no matter what they are should be funded

- Depends on the measure
- More relevant to utilize the served population as the criteria rather than strictly geographical distribution.

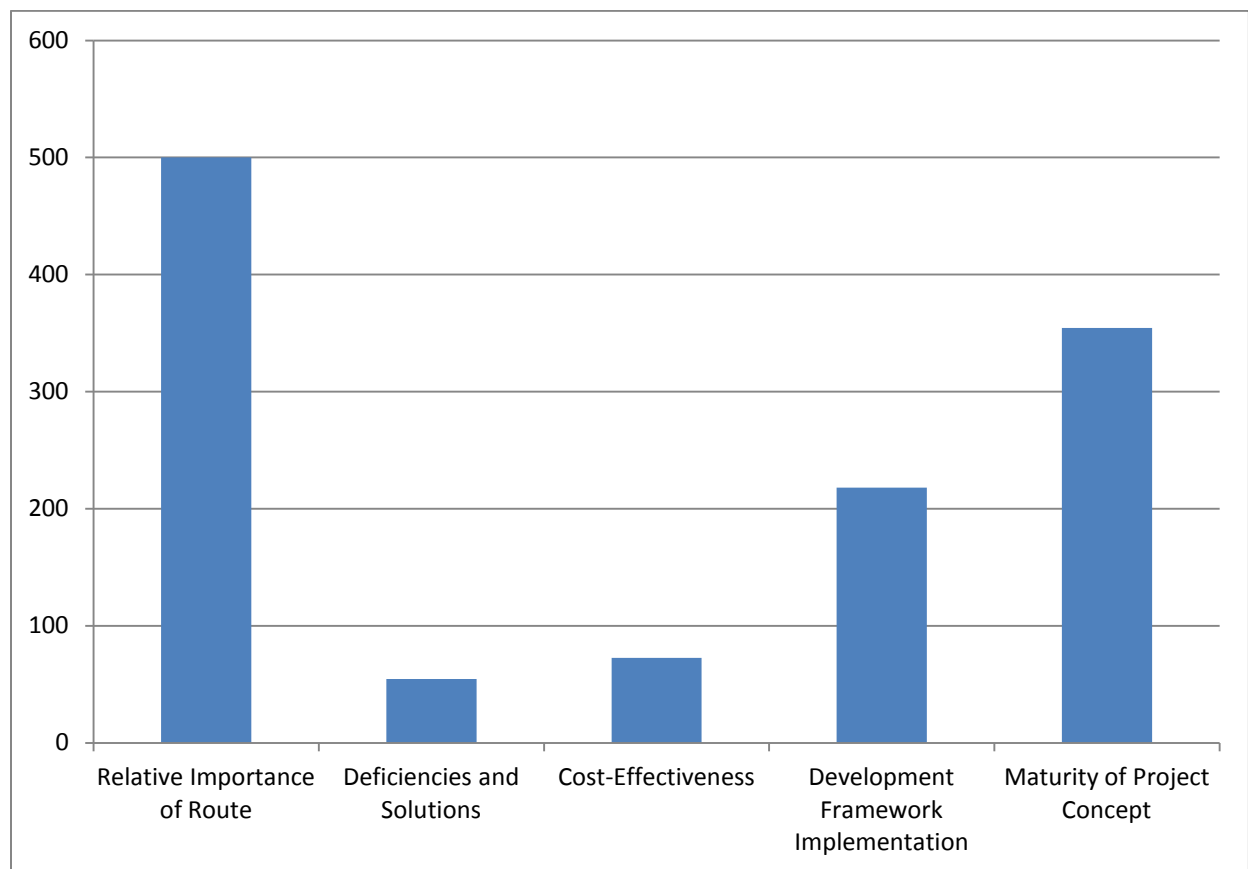
*39. Comments related to what improvements could be made to improve the Regional Solicitation's ranking and selection process (7 Respondents)*

- Shorten time between solicitation, ranking/selection and actual availability of funding
- Clear identification of potential scenarios to be studied for project selection
- Suggest a consistent GIS system be created so projects can be reviewed based on same GIS base map – Possibly a customized Google Earth application that allows council staff and reviewers, applicants access to consistent base map
- Consider higher ranking of projects that could be combines or result in a better, more efficient project if done jointly.
  - Combine road project with parallel trail projects etc.
- Provide guide to scoring so all applications are scored in similar fashion
- Keep knowledgeable, helpful and experienced staff
- Too costly to administer many federal projects – larger projects distributed in a geographical manner is better

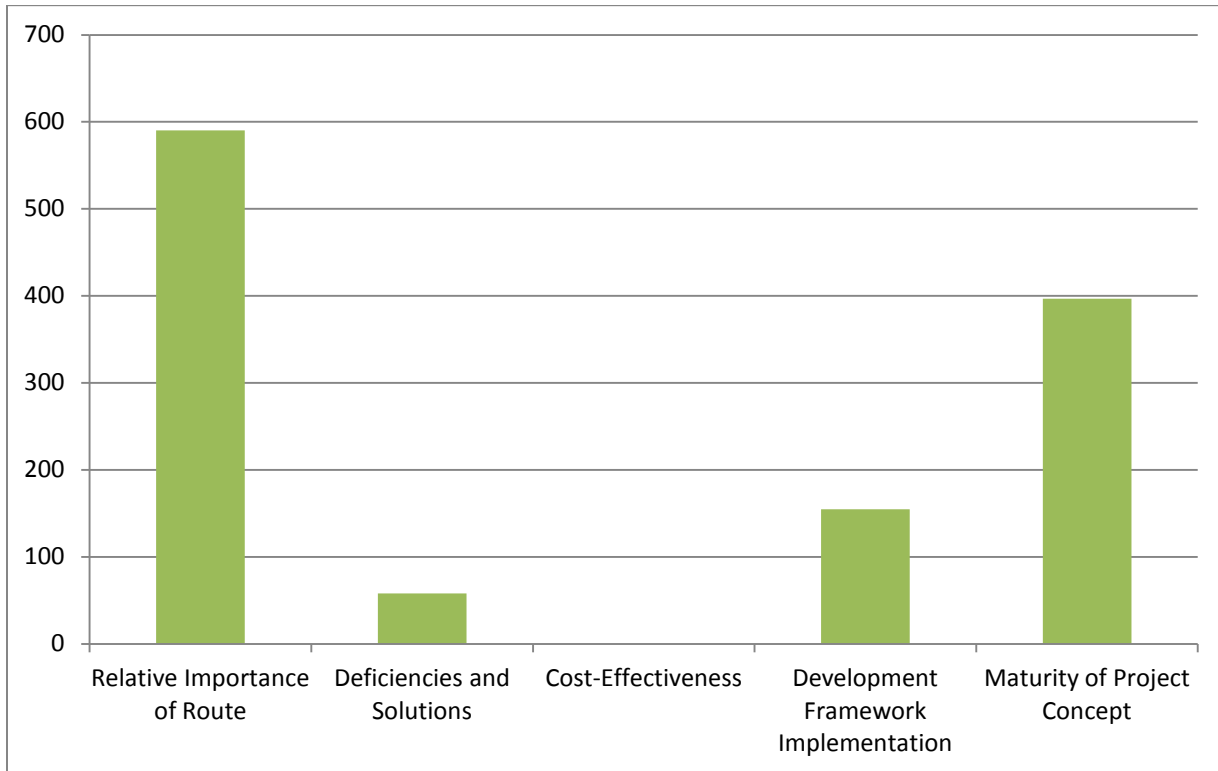
### Surface Transportation Program – Urban Guarantee (STP-UG) Questions

Participants were asked questions about the Surface Transportation Program – Urban Guarantee (STP – UG). They were also provided with six charts showing the current distribution of points under the five arterial roadway categories and the bikeway/walkway category. Participants were asked to redistribute the points in each graph according to their priority. If participants did not wish to respond to questions relating to STP-UG they were automatically transferred to the following section. Of the 53 participants, 16 (30.2 percent) responded to this section.

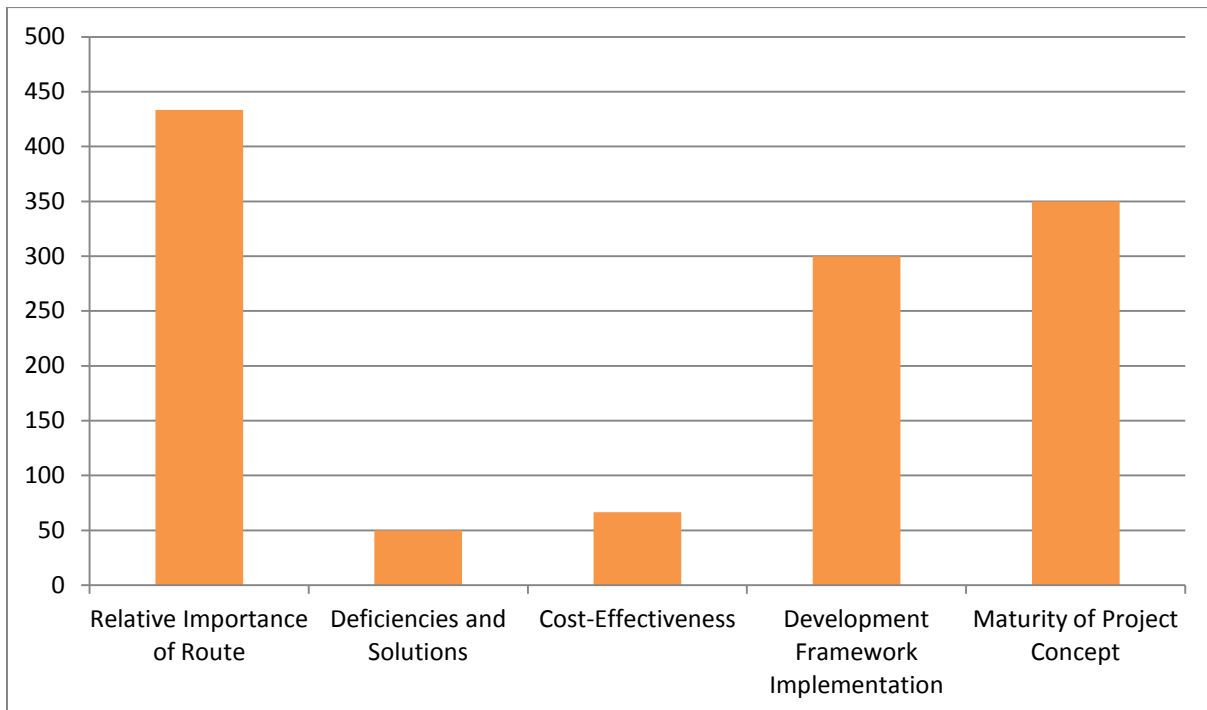
#### 41. Results of the “A” Minor Arterial Reliever Criteria point redistribution (14 Respondents)



**42. Results of the STP "A" Minor Expander Criteria point redistribution (13 Respondents)**

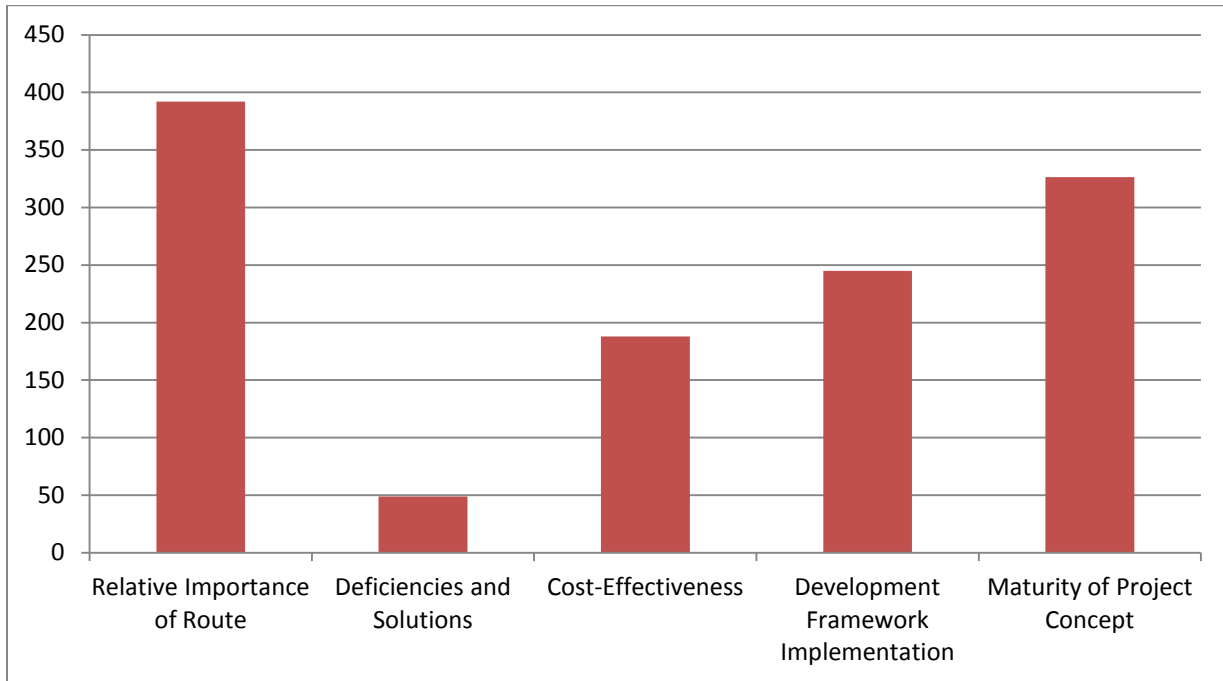


**43. Results of the STP "A" Minor Arterial Connector Criteria point redistribution (13 Respondents)**

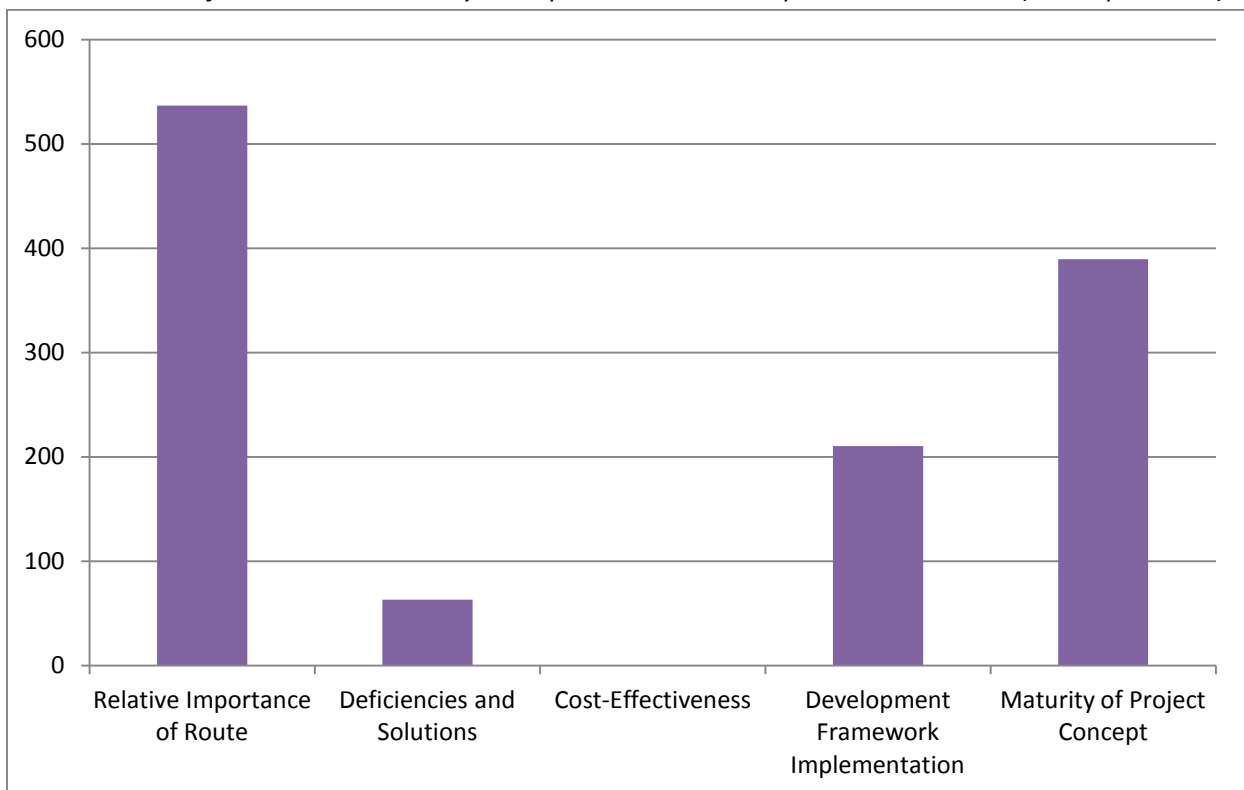




*44. Results of the STP "A" Minor Arterial Augmenter Criteria point redistribution (12 Respondents)*

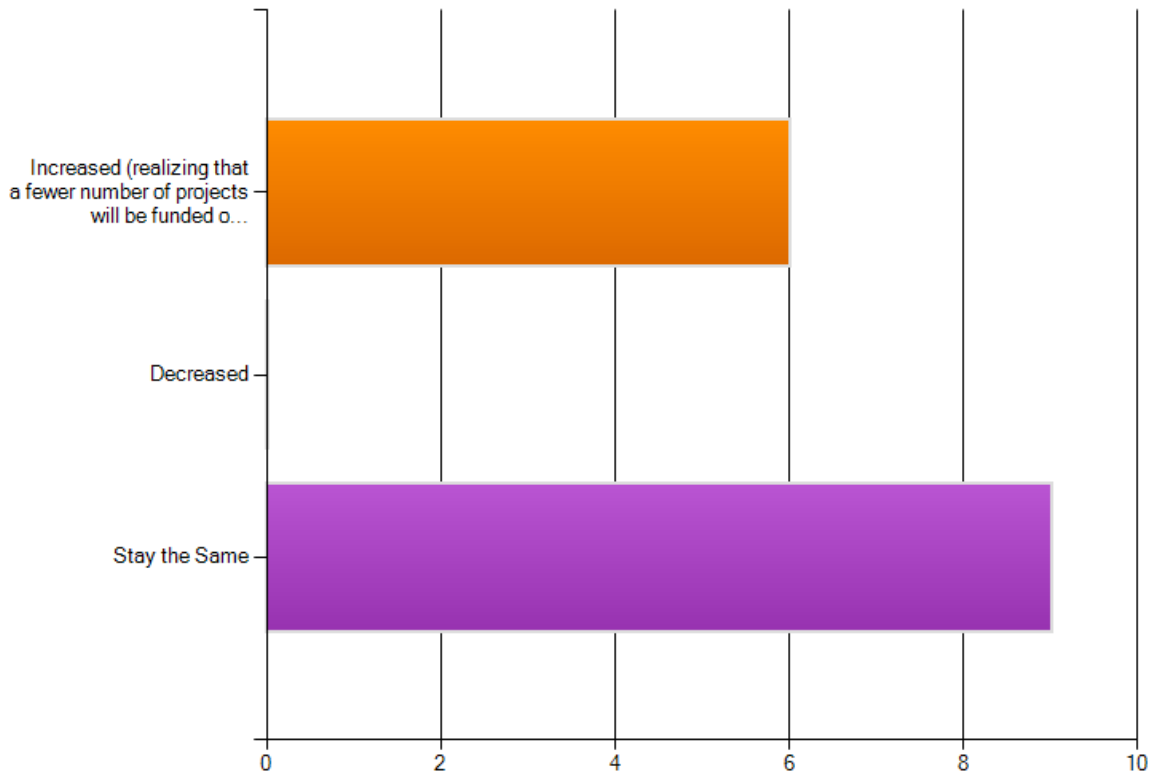


*45. Results of the STP Non-Freeway Principal Arterial Criteria point redistribution (11 Respondents)*



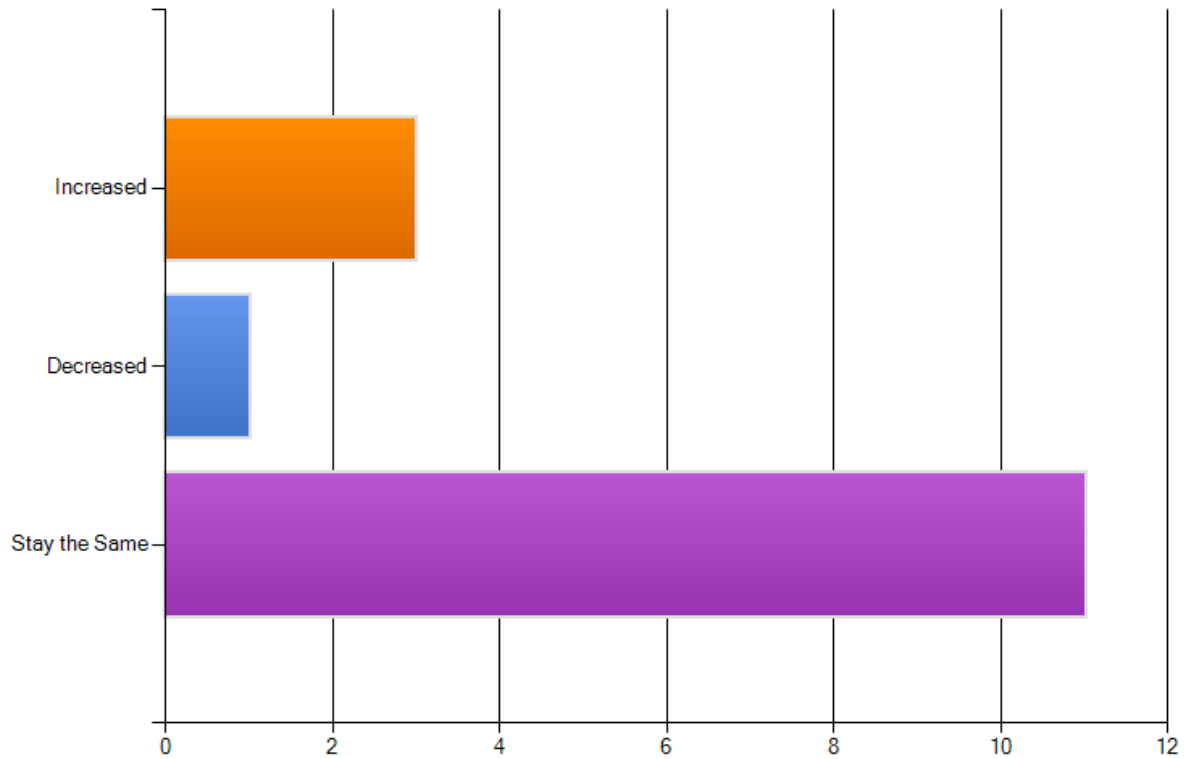
46. *The future grant maximum should be (15 Respondents)*

**The maximum Surface Transportation Program – Urban Guarantee (STP-UG) grant amount for STP “A” Minor Arterial Relievers, Expanders, Augmenters and Non-Freeway Principal Arterial projects is \$7 million. In the future, the grant maximum should be...**



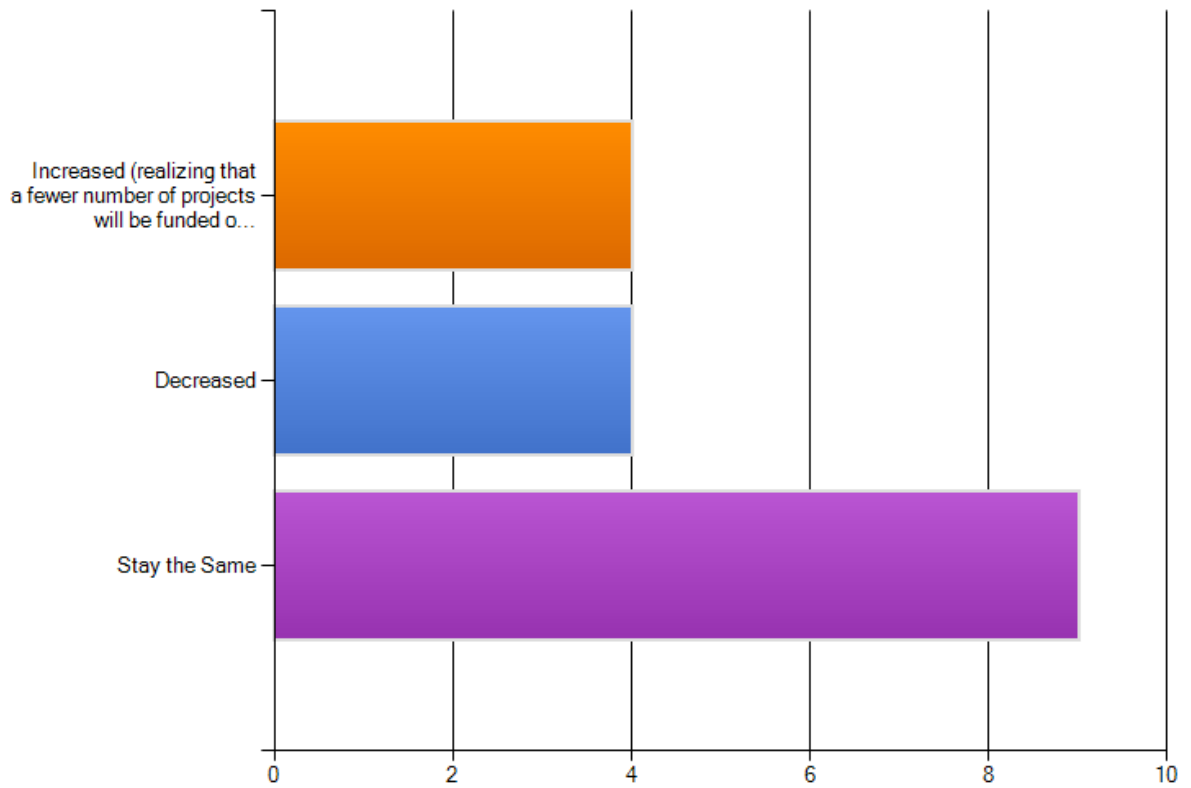
*47. The future grant minimum for roadway projects should be (15 Respondents)*

The cost of preparing a project for funding authorization can be substantial. For that reason, grant minimum amounts were established for each funding category. The current minimum grant request is \$1 million for Surface Transportation Program – Urban Guarantee (STP-UG) ROADWAY PROJECTS. In the future the grant minimum should be:



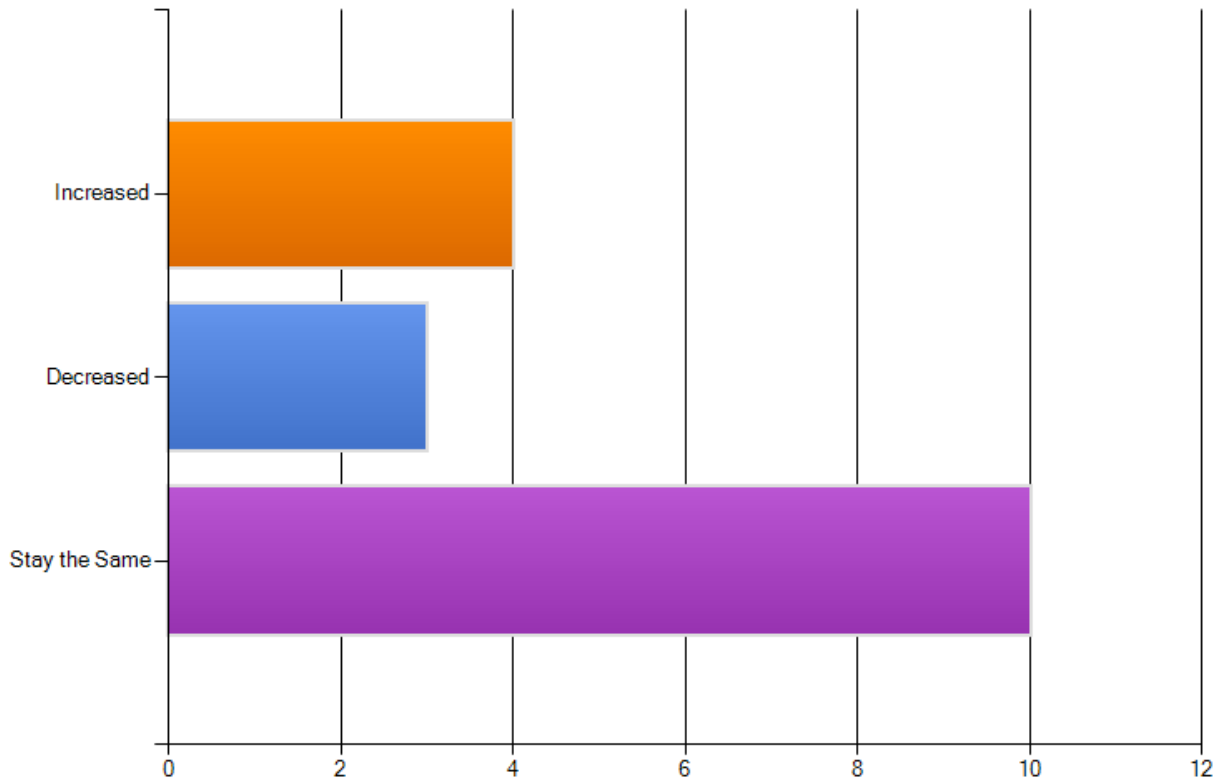
48. *The future grant maximum for connector and bike/walk projects should be (17 Respondents)*

**The maximum Surface Transportation Program – Urban Guarantee (STP-UG) grant amount for STP “A” Minor Arterial CONNECTOR and BIKE/WALK projects is \$5.5 million. In the future, the grant maximum should be...**



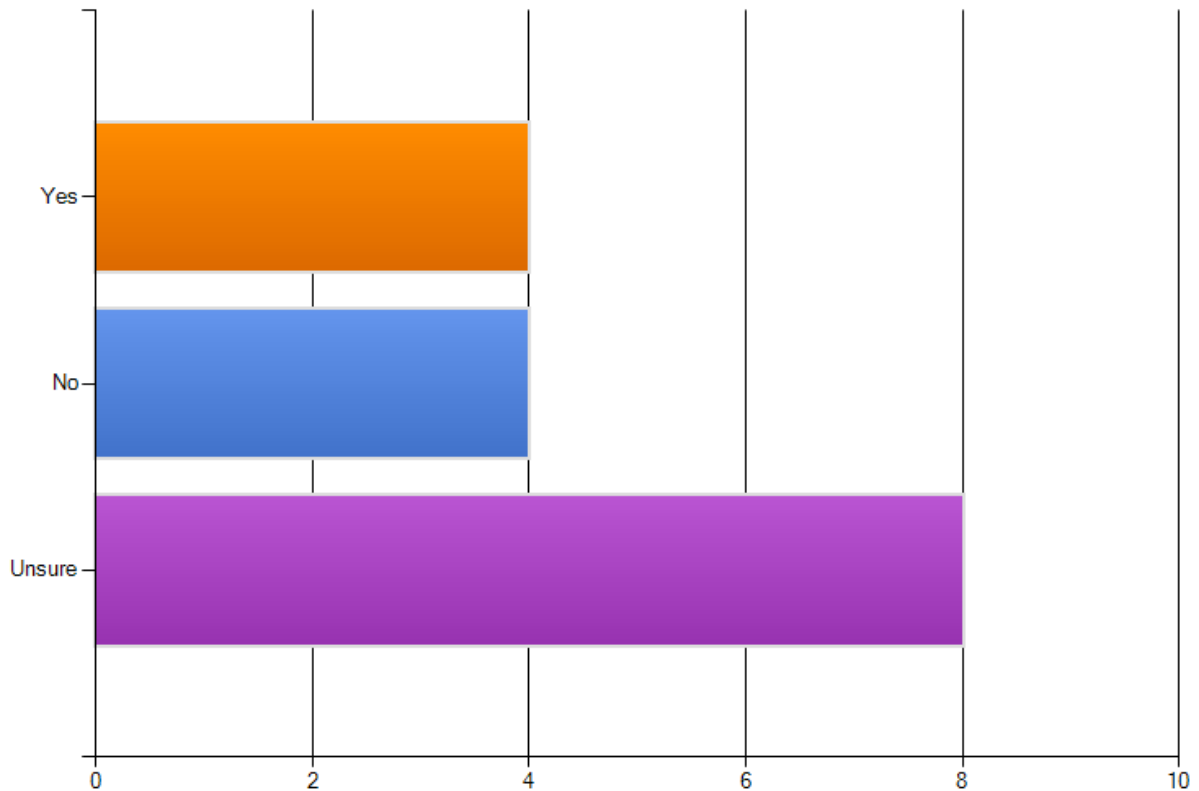
*49. The future grant minimum for bike-walk projects should be (17 Respondents)*

**The cost of preparing a project for funding authorization can be substantial. For that reason, grant minimum amounts were established for each funding category. The current minimum grant request is \$250,000 for Surface Transportation Program – Urban Guarantee (STP-UG) BIKE-WALK projects. In the future the grant minimum should be:**



**50. Congestion reduction calculation is effective at identifying anticipated reduction in congestion  
(16 Respondents)**

**The reduction in congestion is measured by comparing the peak hour volume to capacity ratios before and after the improvement. Is the congestion reduction calculation using volume to capacity ratios effective at identifying the anticipated reduction in congestion due to the proposed project?**

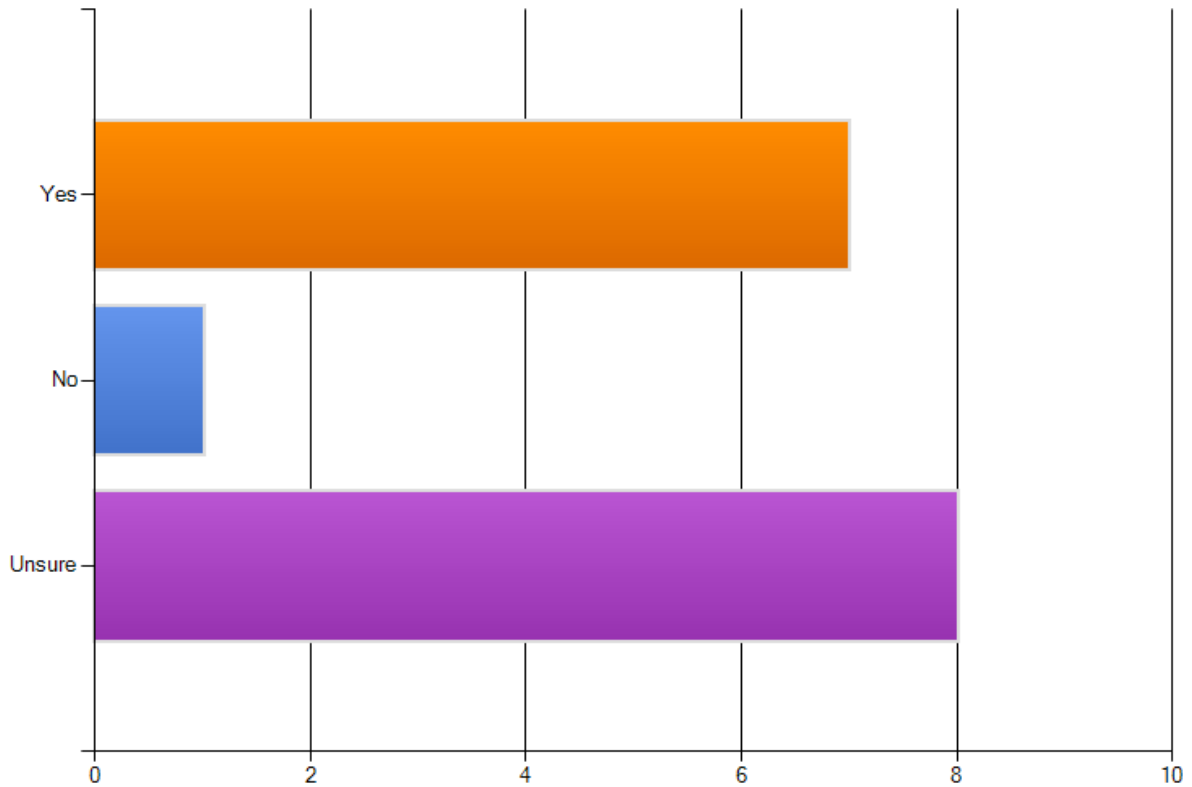


**Other Comments:**

- Person through-put is better in assessing corridor benefits
- Only using peak hour V/C results is unused roadway lanes most of the time, other measures should include shoulder hour V/C, weekday V/C, weekend V/C and travel time
- Good proxy – faster than modeling everything
- By using V/C, only reduction you can get is when you add a lane. If there's a way to calculate person through-put that may be a more effective measure
- Across metro – very common for noon peak to be higher than the AM or PM; in commercial areas, it is often a weekend peak (10-1 on Saturday) to be highest volume and most critical time period – agencies should be able to make a case for congestion strategies that reduce congestion at critical times in the context of the project

**51. Crash reduction calculation and data required effective at identifying safety benefits (16 Respondents)**

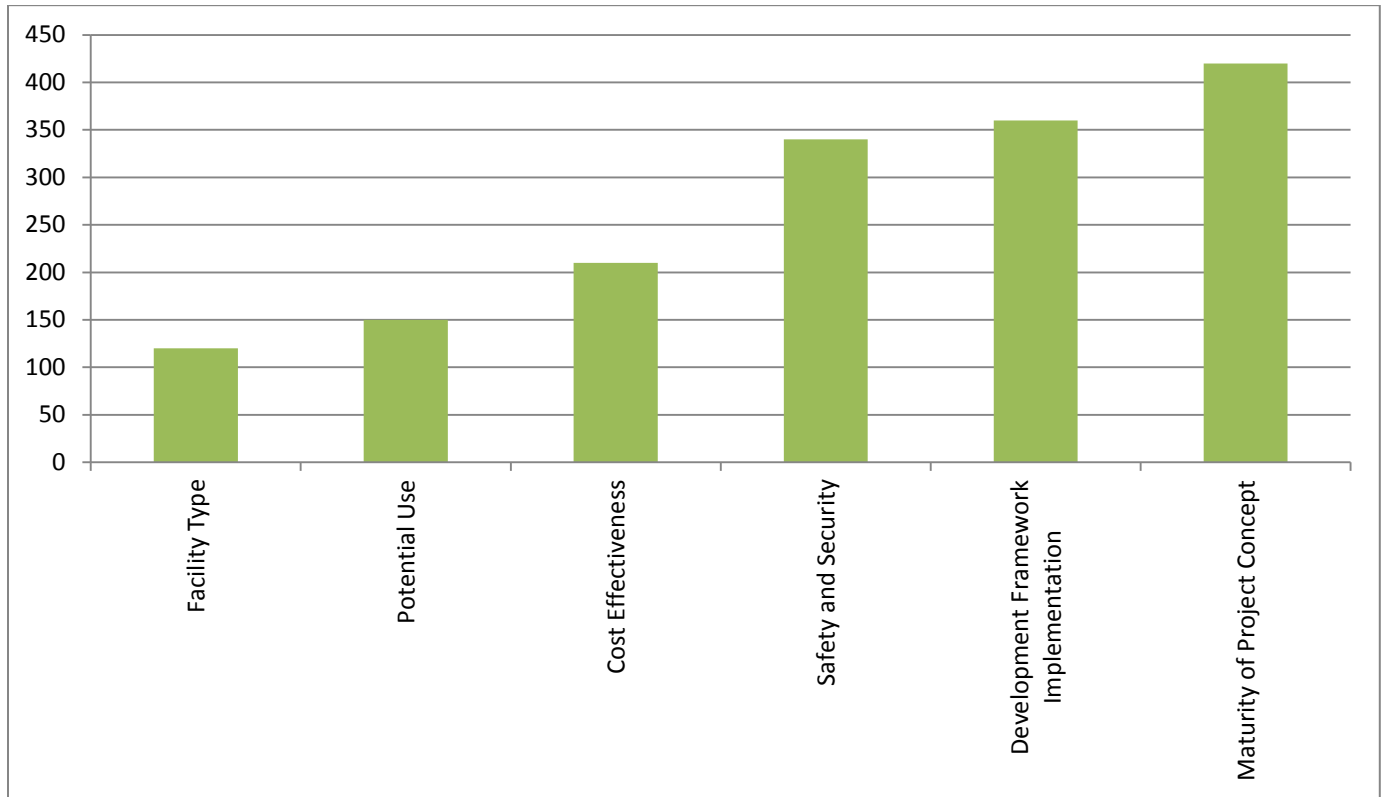
**The reduction in crashes is measured by applying reduction rates from the Kentucky Report that can be attributed to the project. Is the crash reduction calculation and data required effective at identifying the safety benefits due to the proposed project?**



**52. Suggestions for improving the prioritizing criteria in the STP-UG "A" Minor and Non-Freeway Principal Arterial funding categories (3 Respondents)**

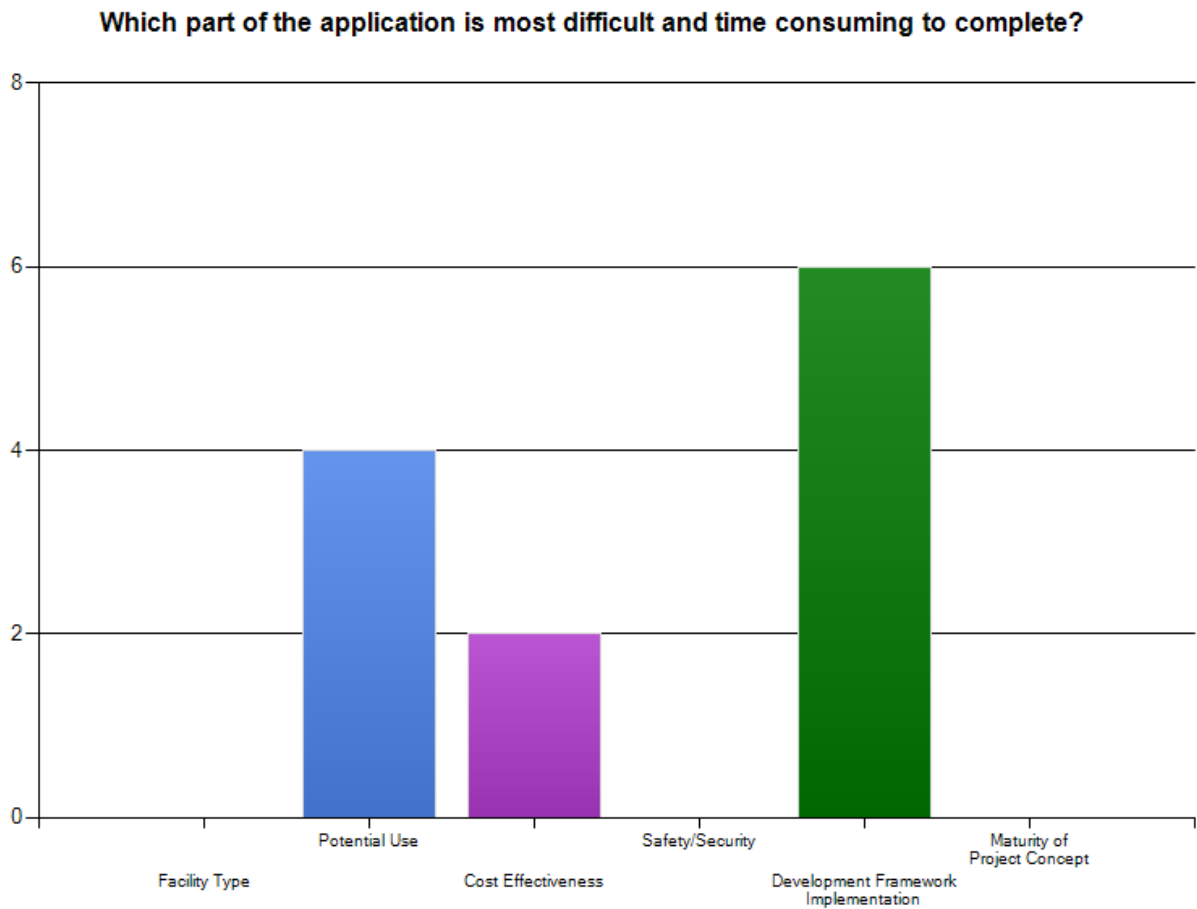
- Exercise non-freeway Principal Arterials from solicitation
- Get rid of double counting questions
- High scores given to meeting development framework goals is somewhat subjective and should be given less weight - If projects are properly vetted through public involvement process they will be consistent with comprehensive plans and consistent with regional framework. Cases where they are not, points should be reduced – Overall criterion is overstated in current system

53. Results of the STP Bikeways and Walkways point redistribution (14 Respondents)





54. Application that is most difficult and time consuming to complete (12 Respondents)



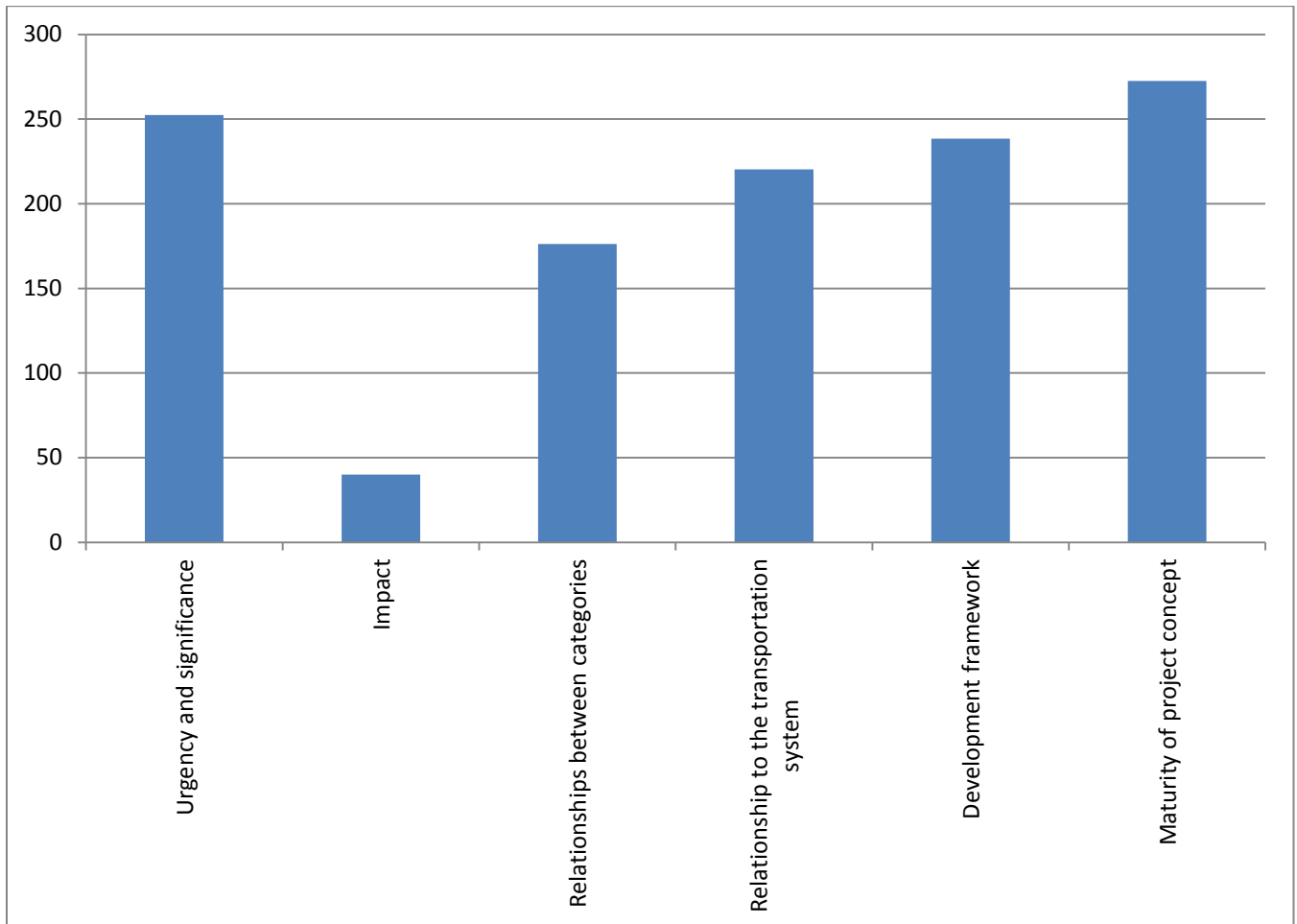
55. Suggestions for improving the prioritizing criteria in the STP-UG Bikeway Walkway funding categories (0 Respondents)

- --No Responses Given

### Transportation Enhancement/Alternatives Questions

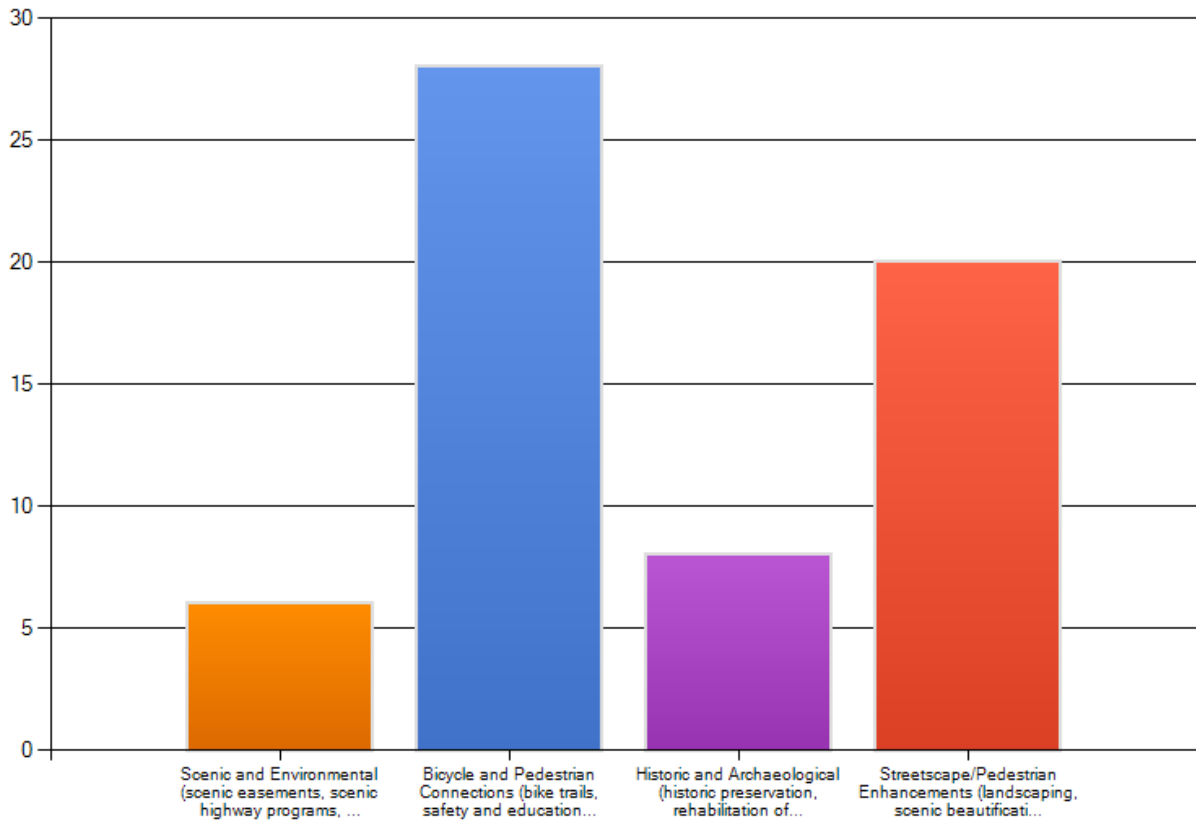
Participants were asked questions about MAP-21's transportation enhancements (TE) and transportation alternatives (TA). They were also provided with a chart showing the current point distribution for the transportation enhancement/alternatives category and were asked to redistribute points according to their priority. Of participants did not wish to respond to questions relating to TE/TA they were automatically transferred to the following section. Of the 53 participants, 29 (54.7 percent) responded to this section.

57. Results of the Transportation Enhancements/Alternatives point redistribution (25 Respondents)



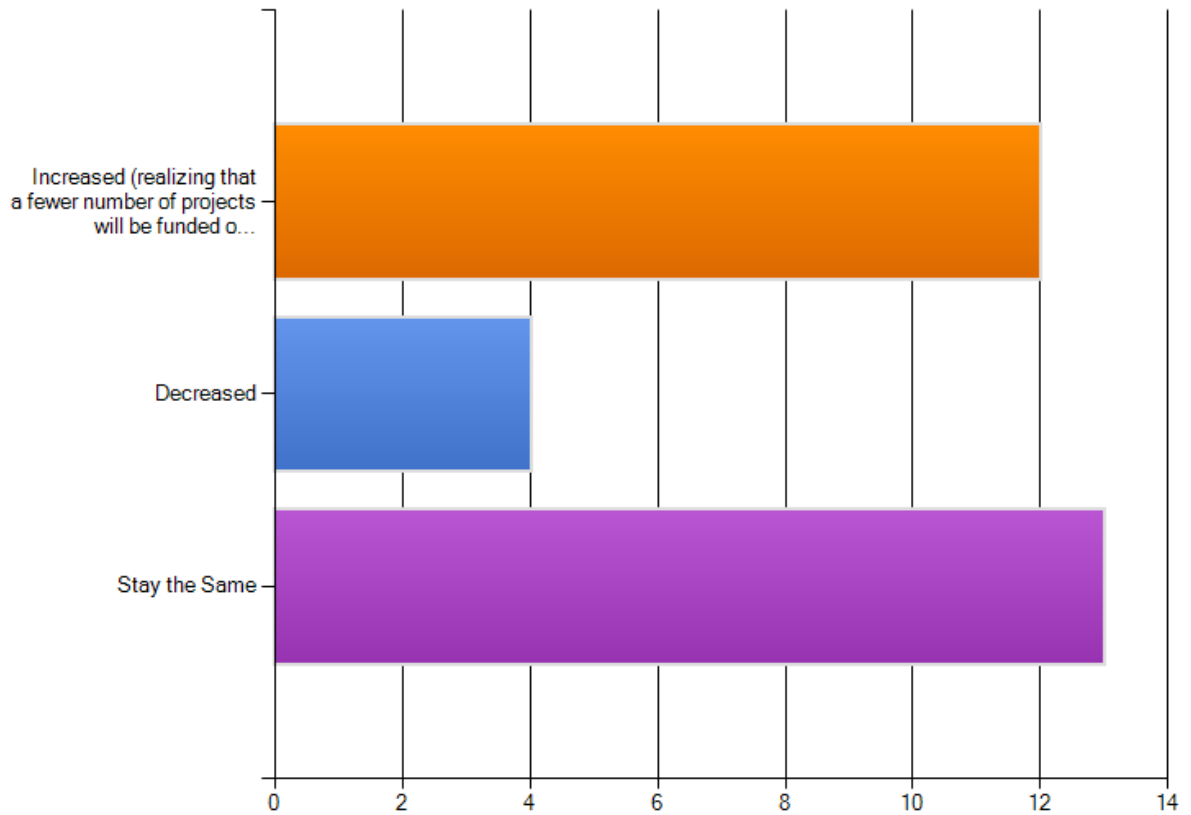
58. TE subcategories that should continue in the future (28 Respondents)

The existing Transportation Enhancement (TE) Program has four funding sub-categories. Which ones should continue in the future? Select all that apply.



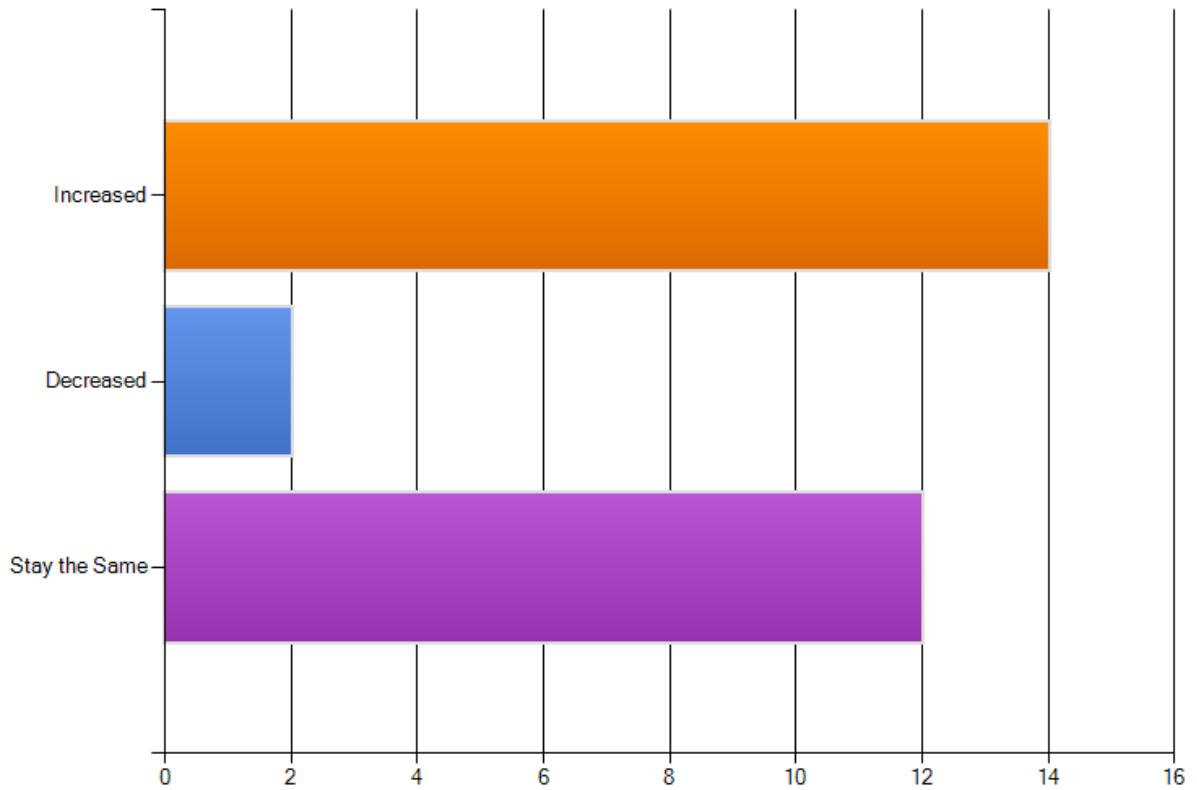
59. Future grant maximum for TE projects should be (29 Respondents)

The maximum grant amount for Transportation Enhancements (TE) projects is \$1 million. In the future, the grant maximum should be:



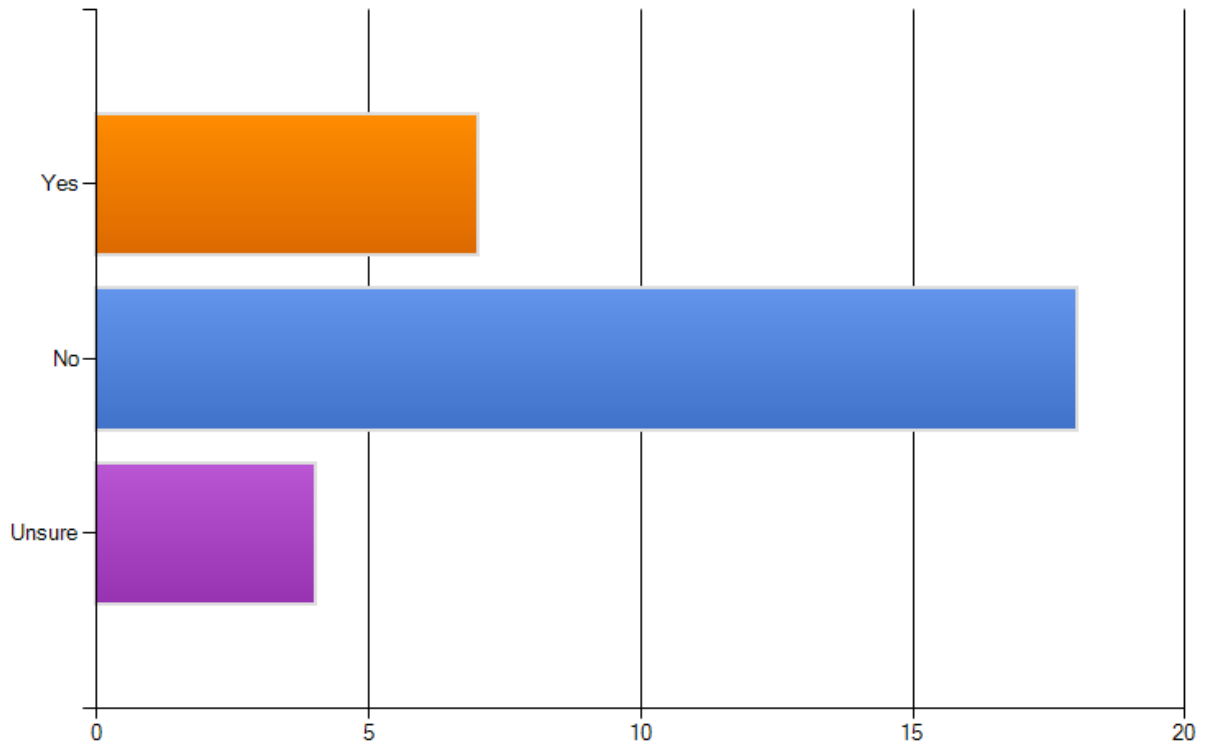
60. Future grant minimum for TE projects should be (28 Respondents)

The cost of preparing a project for funding authorization can be substantial. For that reason, grant minimum amounts were established for each funding category. The current minimum grant request is \$125,000 for Transportation Enhancements (TE) projects. In the future the grant minimum should be:



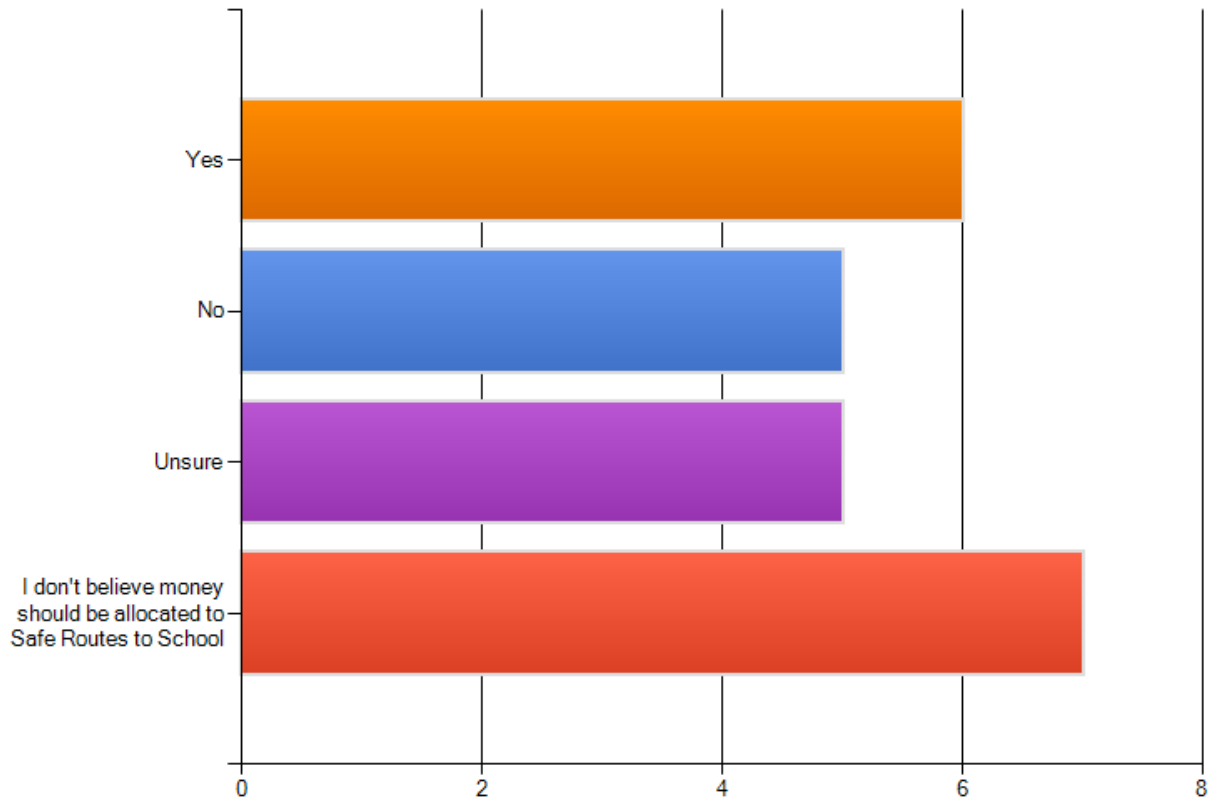
**61. Safe routes to school should receive funding through Regional Solicitation process (29 Respondents)**

**Safe Routes to School funding is currently being allocated by MnDOT. With changes in Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), MnDOT's Safe Routes to School apportionment may be reduced. There is also flexible Transportation Alternatives money that could or could not be used for Safe Routes to School funding through the Regional Solicitation. Should Safe Routes to School projects receive funding through the Regional Solicitation Process (realizing that other trail projects would receive less money)?**



62. *Infrastructure and improvements and non-infrastructure improvements should be funded as they currently are (23 Respondents)*

**If you believe that money should be allocated to Safe Routes to School projects, should both infrastructure and improvements and non-infrastructure improvements be funded as they currently are under MnDOT grant process?**



63. *Priority ranking of federal funding allocation with 1 being highest priority (28 Respondents)*

RANK	
1	Regional Trails
2	Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridges
3	Local Trails
4	Streetscapes
5	Safe Routes to School
6	Equal Balance Between Project Types

*64. Suggestions for prioritizing criteria in a future Transportation Alternatives funding category (6 Respondents)*

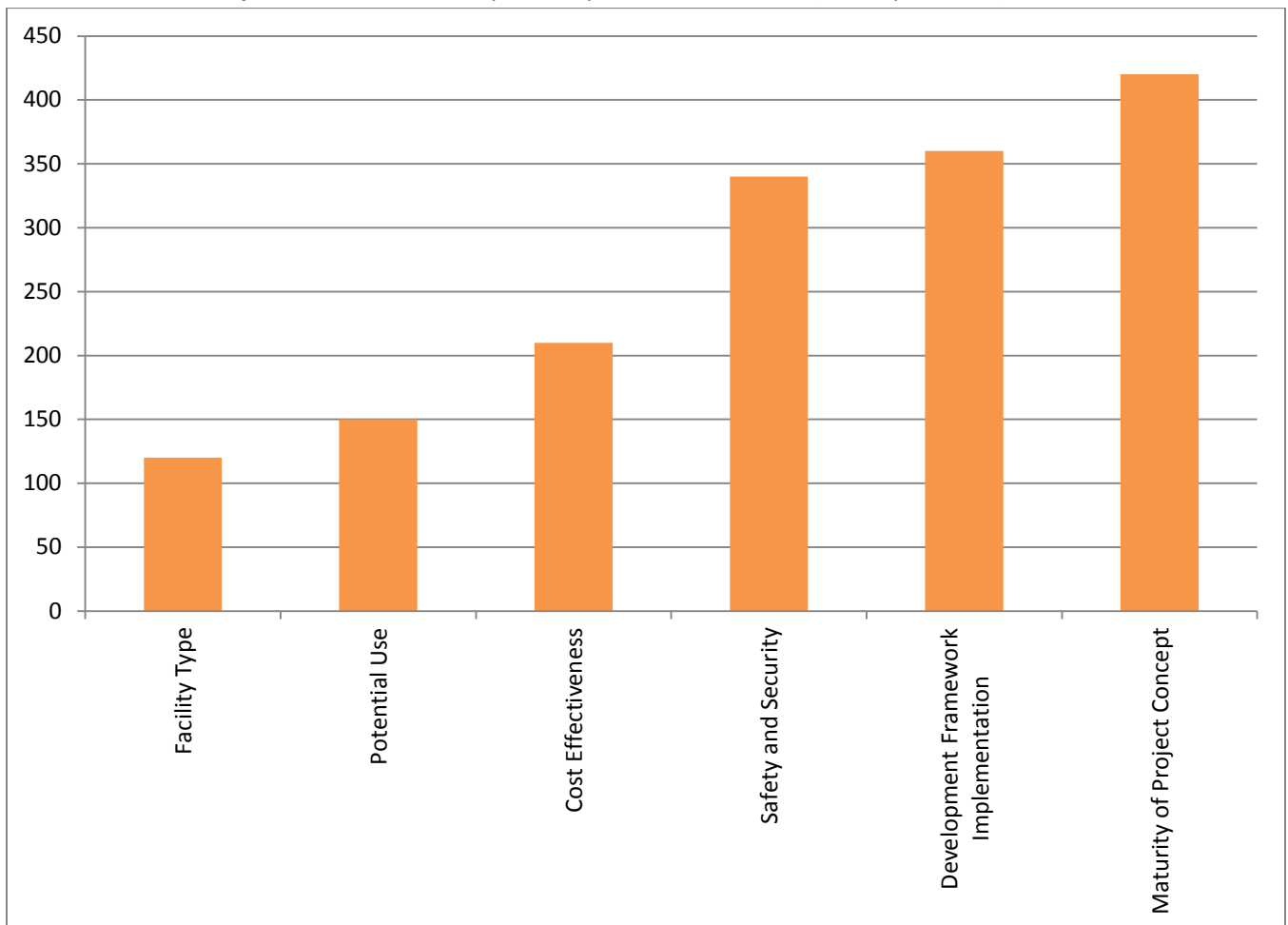
- If safe routes to school is included – it should only be for capital improvements
- Trail definition is limiting – Safe routes should include and be funded through other safety programs (HSIP, etc.)
- Increasing maximum is big. Projects currently being divided to fit funding ultimately costing more federal money to build these facilities
- Cost effectiveness must be a large part of scoring criteria
- Prioritize projects that complete existing/approved regional parks policy plan, serve greatest number of potential users, overcome the greatest barriers, are the longest in length, have the greatest environmental benefit, include greatest opportunity for multi-modal and alternative transportation options
- Scoring in this category is fair.
- Large number of projects that are proposed vs. what can be better funded is a concern



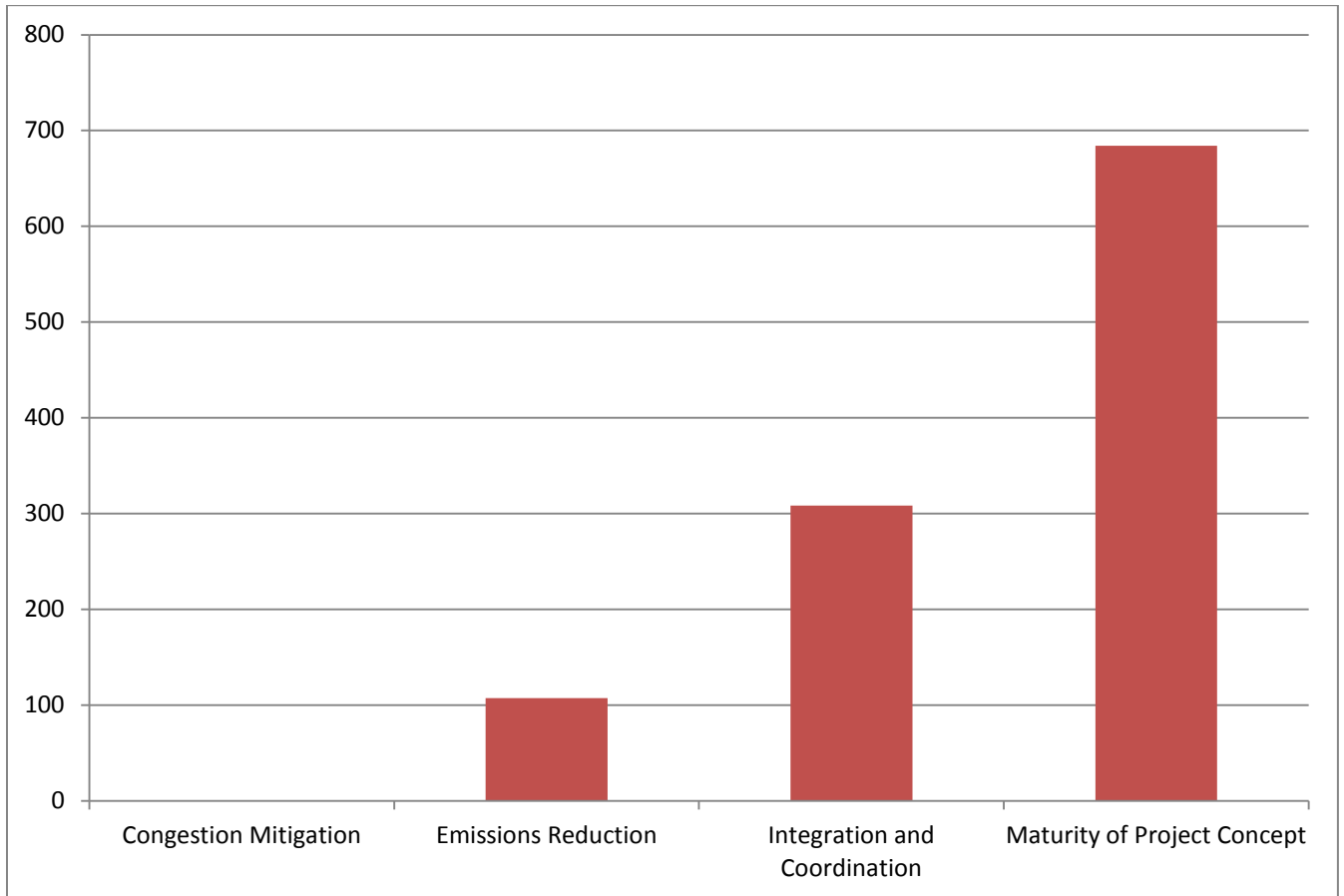
### Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Questions

Participants were asked questions about Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding since MAP-21 will be changing the requirements. They were also provided with two charts showing the current distribution of points under CMAQ transit expansion and system management and were asked to redistribute the points according to their priority. If participants did not wish to respond to questions related to CMAQ, they were automatically transferred to the thank you page of the survey. Of the 53 participants, 15 (28.3 percent) responded to this section.

66. Results of the CMAQ Transit Expansion point redistribution (11 Respondents)

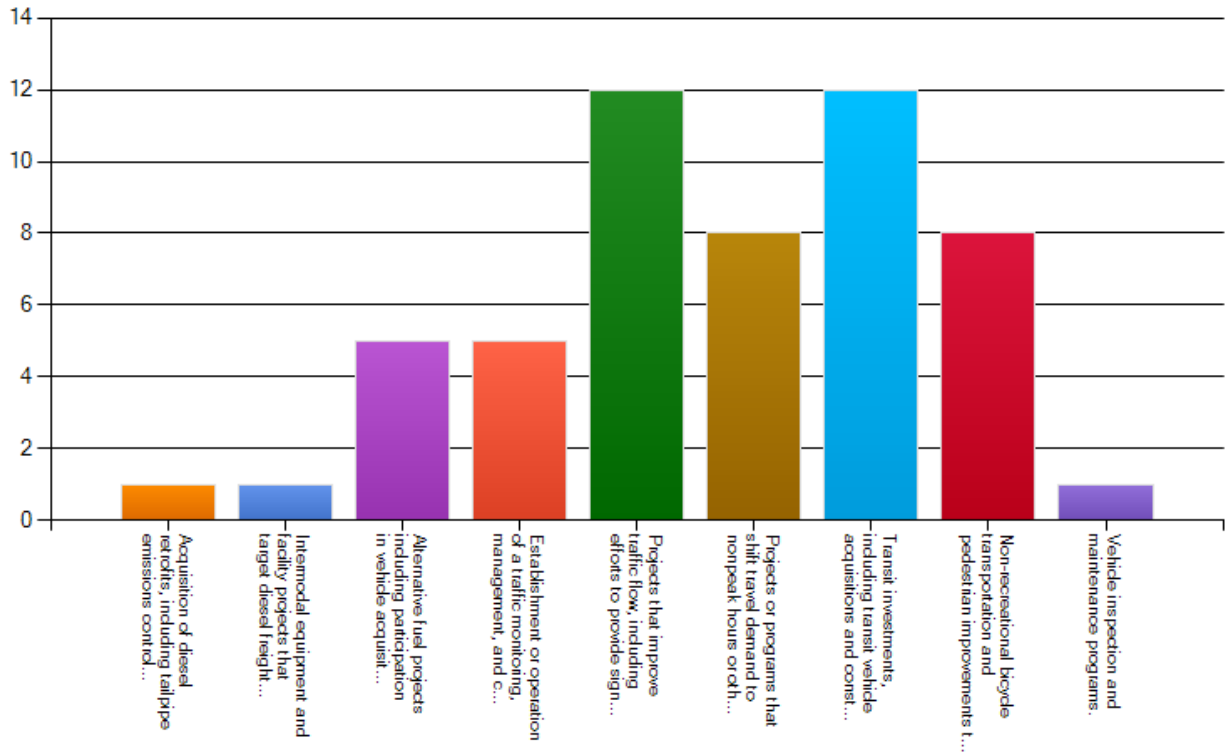


67. Results from the CMAQ System Management point redistribution (13 Respondents)



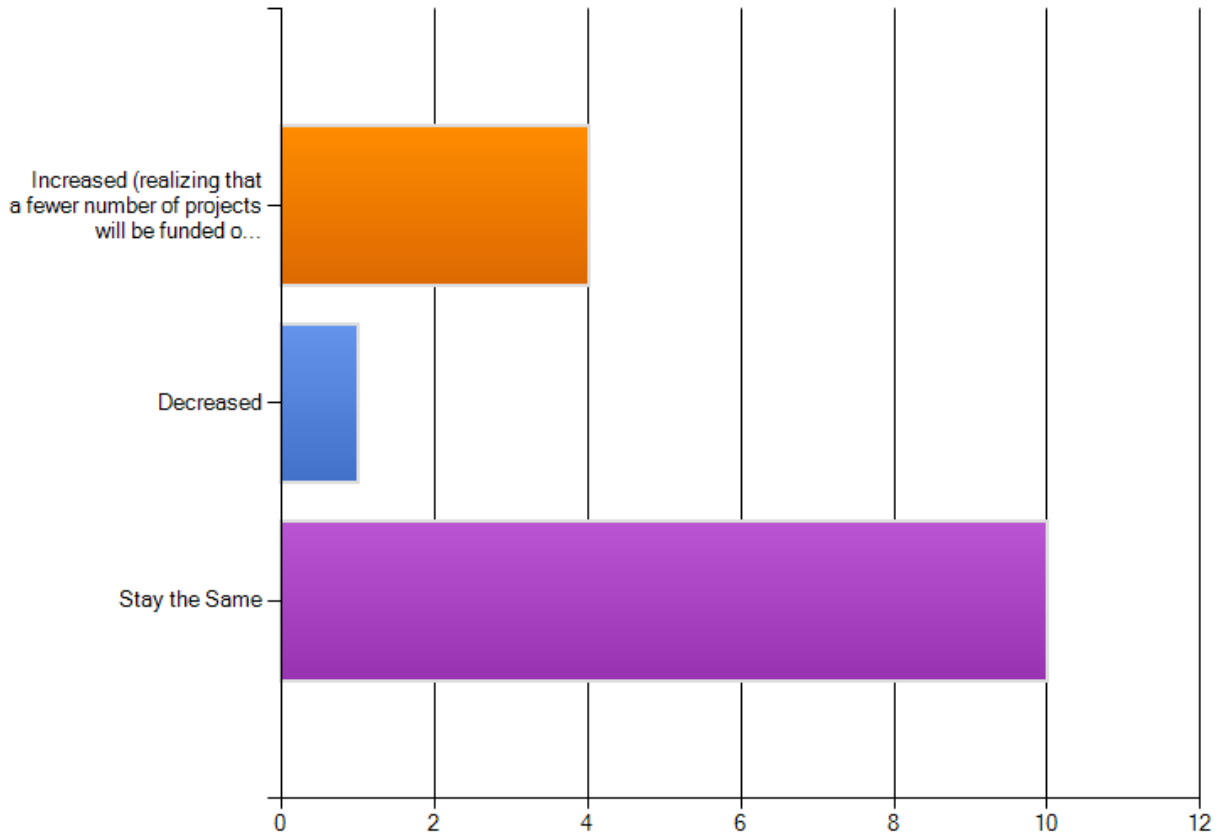
68. Which should be part of the next solicitations CMAQ funds (14 Respondents)

The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) currently limits the allocation of CMAQ funds to two types of projects; Transit Expansion and Transportation System Management. FHWA guidance under MAP-21 states that generally, projects eligibly for CMAQ funds prior to MAP-21 remain eligible. The federal guidance lists the following activities eligible for CMAQ funds. Identify which ones you feel should be part of the next regional solicitation for CMAQ funds. Select all that apply.



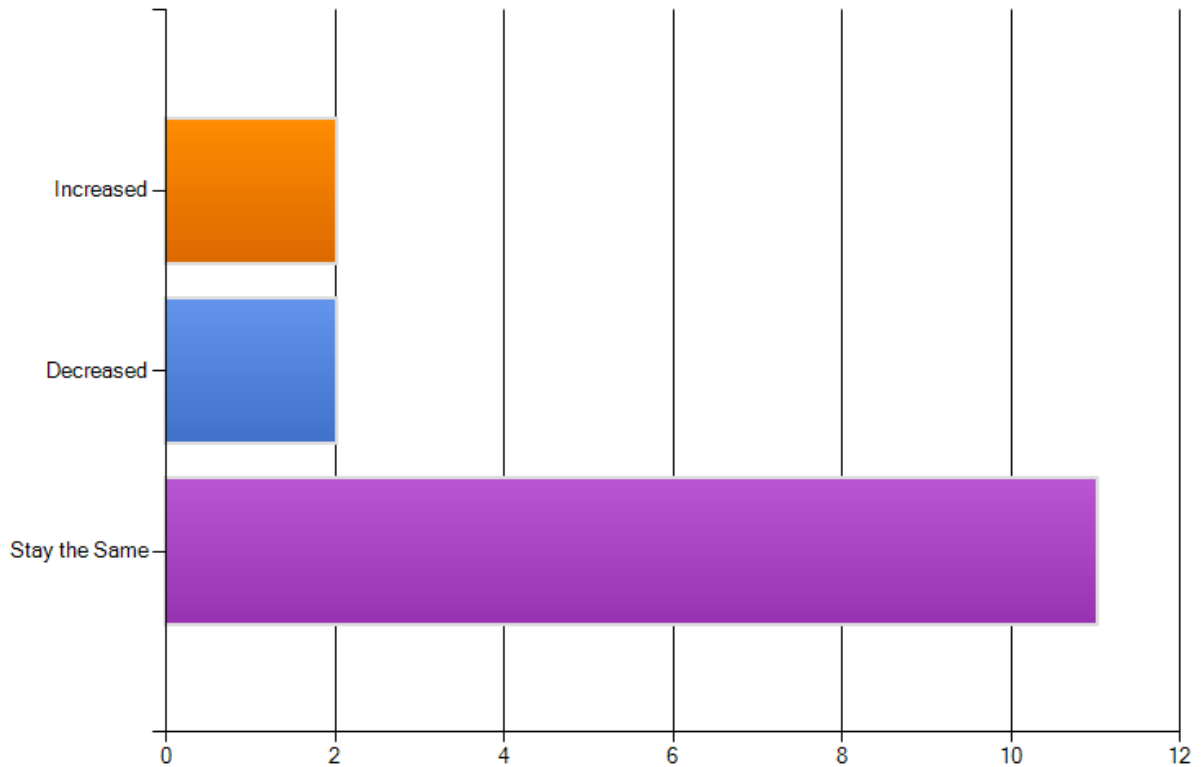
69. The future grant maximum for CMAQ projects should be (15 Respondents)

The maximum grant amount for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects is \$7 million. In the future, the grant maximum should be...



**70. The future grant minimum for CMAQ projects should be (15 Respondents)**

The cost of preparing a project for funding authorization can be substantial. For that reason, grant minimum amounts were established for each funding category. The current minimum grant request is \$500,000 for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects. In the future the grant minimum should be:



**71. Suggestions for the prioritizing criteria in a future Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects funding category (2 Respondents)**

- Transit investments should be made but not fleet purchase. Direct FTA funds for transit investments should be accounted for and tracked as part of the Regional Solicitation. Decrease minimum to \$300K
- Intersection delay. Don't think speed calculation for NOx, CO, etc. gives a good representation of the saving benefit