

# Regional Solicitation Background Information and Decisions for 2022

Transportation Advisory Board – July 21, 2021



# Regional Solicitation Decisions by TAB

- Structure and decisions from 2020 Regional Solicitation:

1. Modal funding ranges
2. Application categories and purpose statements
3. Application category minimum and maximum award amounts
4. Funding guarantees/limits
5. Application category criteria and weighting (for scoring)
6. Criteria scoring measures and scoring methodology (primarily technical)
7. General applicant qualification and eligibility requirements (primarily technical)
8. Full application release for public comment (includes all previous decisions)

- Unique projects application category design and scoring
- Potential new decision item on geographic balance

# Today's Topics

- For discussion and feedback today:
  - Transit Background
  - Decisions 1-5
  - Unique Projects
  - Geographic Balance
- Action items on Decisions 1-5 at TAB in September
- Decisions 6-8 for background only today, with discussion and feedback in August, action items in September

# Transit Background

- Review TAB rationale for transit changes in 2019
- Discuss results of changes in terms of project selection in the 2020 funding cycle

# 1. Modal Funding Ranges

	Roadways	Transit and TDM	Bicycle / Ped	Total
<b>2003-2018</b>	Range of 48%-68% Midpoint: 58%	Range of 22%-32% Midpoint: 27%	Range of 10%-20% Midpoint: 15%	100%
<b>2020</b>	Range of 46%-65% Midpoint: 55.5%	Range of 25%-35% Midpoint: 30%	Range of 9%-20% Midpoint: 14.5%	100%

Note: 2020 also included a Unique Projects category set-aside of 2.5% (\$4.9M) of the total program for project selection in 2022.

# 1. Modal Funding Ranges Decisions (Sept)

- Adopt modal funding ranges and mid-points
- Adopt a set-aside for Unique Projects category for 2024 Solicitation award
- Potential changes:
  - Keep modal funding ranges at 2020 ranges (no change)
  - Return to historical average funding ranges
  - Develop new modal funding ranges
  - Increase or decrease Unique Projects set-aside
  - During final project selection TAB can choose to vary from the mid-point of the modal ranges and in 2020 did so through over-programming
- Current expectation is that the TAB action item will recommend modal funding ranges and Unique Projects set-aside similar to the 2020 Regional Solicitation

# 2. Application Categories with Purpose Statements

## Roadways (including Multimodal Elements):

- Traffic Management Technologies
- Spot Mobility & Safety
- Strategic Capacity
- Roadway Reconstruction/Modernization
- Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement

## Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities:

- Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities
- Pedestrian Facilities
- Safe Routes to School

## Transit/TDM:

- Arterial BRT
- Transit Expansion
- Transit Modernization
- Travel Demand Management

## Unique Projects:

- Innovative projects that do not fit other categories, funds are set-aside from previous Solicitation

## 2. Application Category Decisions (Sept)

- Comments on application categories:
  - Regional Solicitation Before & After Study concluded some applicants are unclear on the primary purpose of each application category
  - “Primary purpose” is indicated through the number of points allocated to each scoring criteria and measure, i.e., for Spot Mobility & Safety, 25% of points are for safety measures
- September TAB decisions:
  - Adopt application categories and purpose statements
  - Current expectation is that number of application categories will remain as in 2020 Regional Solicitation.



# 3. Application Category Min. & Max. Awards

Modal Application Categories:	Min Fed Award	Max Fed Award
<b>Roadways Including Multimodal Elements</b>		
• Traffic Management Technologies	\$250,000	\$3,500,000
• Spot Mobility and Safety	\$1,000,000	\$3,500,000
• Strategic Capacity	\$1,000,000	\$10,000,000
• Roadway Reconstruction/ Modernization	\$1,000,000	\$7,000,000
• Bridge Rehabilitation/Replacement	\$1,000,000	\$7,000,000
<b>Transit and TDM Projects</b>		
• Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project	N/A	\$25,000,000
• Transit Expansion	\$500,000	\$7,000,000
• Transit Modernization	\$500,000	\$7,000,000
• Travel Demand Management (TDM)	\$100,000	\$500,000
<b>Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities</b>		
• Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities	\$250,000	\$5,500,000
• Pedestrian Facilities	\$250,000	\$1,000,000
• Safe Routes to School	\$250,000	\$1,000,000
<b>Unique Projects</b>	TBD	TBD

# 3. Minimum & Maximum Award Decisions

- Comments on federal minimum and maximum awards:
  - Federal minimum award limits help assure that applicants do not take on too large of a federal process burden for a small federal award
  - Federal maximum award limit amounts help enable a larger number of projects to be funded (and assist in regional balance)
- Technical committees have shown minimal interest in changing these amounts from 2020 levels
- Sept TAB decision:
  - Adopt federal minimum and maximum federal awards
  - Current expectation is that minimum and maximum federal award amounts will not change from 2020 levels

# 4. Funding Guarantees and Limits

- Functional classifications (fund at least one of each type)
  - Non-freeway principal arterials
  - A-minor augmentors
  - A-minor connectors
  - A-minor expanders
  - A-minor relievers
- Bridge target of \$10M
- ABRT up to \$25M (see Transit Memo)
- BRT maximum \$7M (\$32M max for both ABRT and other BRT combined)
- New market guarantee – in transit market areas III, IV, or V
- Sept TAB decision:
  - Adopt funding guarantees and limits
  - Current expectation is that no changes will take place



# 5. Criteria and Weighting Decisions

- Comments on criteria weighting:
  - Weights changed very little from 2018 to 2020.
  - TAC members commented on increasing the safety weighting in the Spot Mobility and Safety funding category, which was new for 2020. One member recommended reallocating the existing safety and congestion/air quality points to be 2/3 for safety, 1/3 for congestion/air quality.
- Sept TAB decisions:
  - Adopt criteria and weighting
  - Current expectation is that weighting will not change except for potentially increasing safety weighting in Spot Mobility and Safety

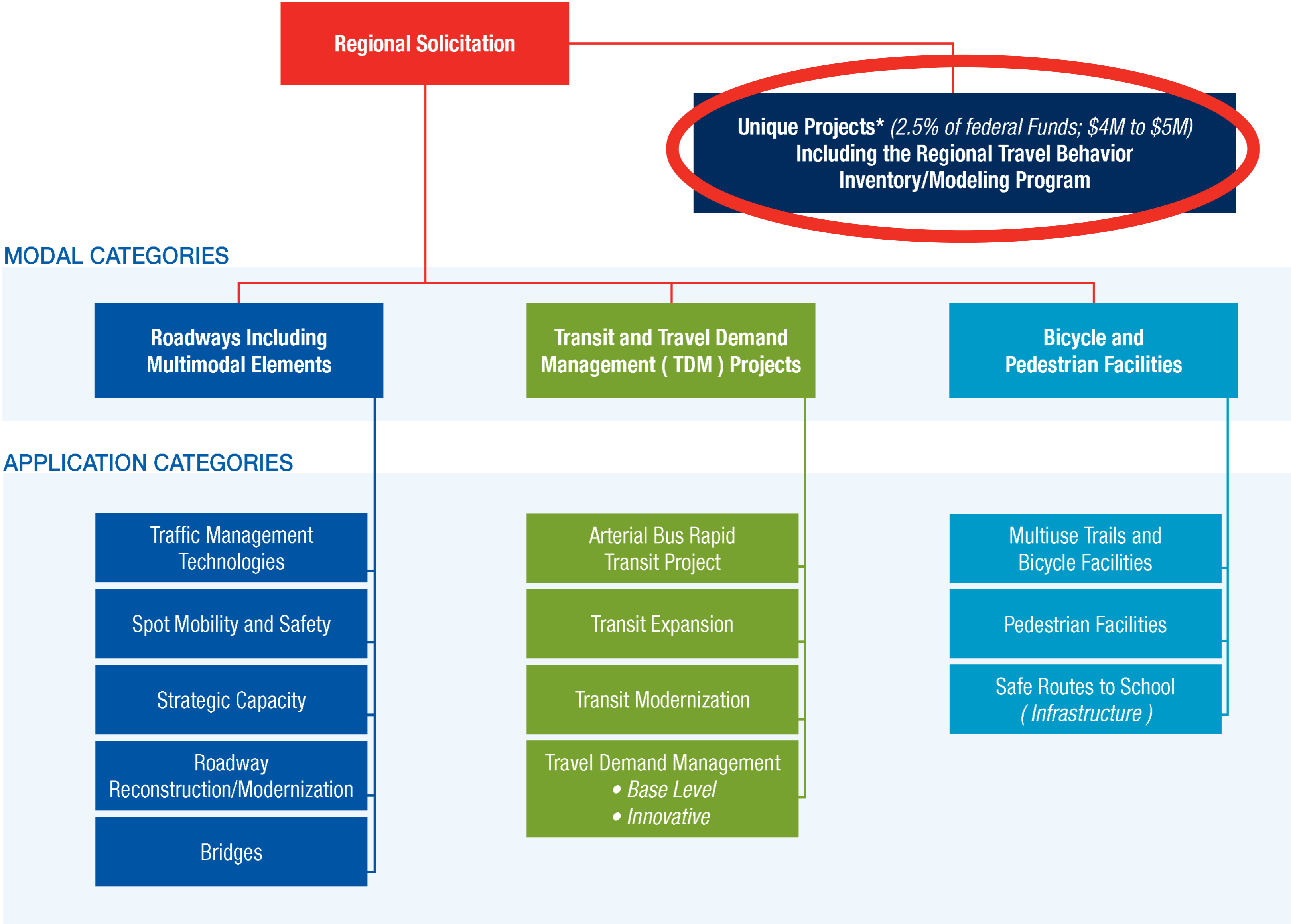
# Unique Project Application Design and Scoring



# Unique Projects History

- Prior to 2014, unique projects funded on a case-by-case basis
- Unique projects application category suggested to be added during 2014 Regional Solicitation evaluation (for 2016 application)
- 2018 St. Paul/Hourcar Mobility Hub Charging Stations
- Adopted recommendations as part of the 2020 Solicitation:
  - Create a Unique Projects application category
  - Set aside 2.5% of total funding in 2020 Solicitation for Unique projects
  - Select Unique projects in the 2022 Solicitation
  - Identify the Unique Projects criteria and evaluation process after the 2020 Solicitation

# 2020 Approved Application Categories





# Regional Solicitation Unique Projects Policy Work Group

- Met five times from April 23 – July 9
- Comprised of TAB volunteers
  - 2 Met Council members
  - 4 County representatives
  - 3 City representatives
  - 5 citizen or modal representatives
- Provided policy direction to technical staff to develop category details

# Unique Projects Policy Work Group Recommendations to TAB



# Project Eligibility

- Staff recommend that we do not make Unique Projects eligibility based on ineligibility in other funding categories
  - Difficult to determine specifically what isn't eligible in each category
  - Two-step application process will help guide applicants
- Allow evaluation criteria to determine whether Unique Project proposals fit the purpose or not
- Unique Projects purpose statement:  
“To fund innovative projects that would not be eligible or competitive in other application categories and that reduce adverse environmental impacts, improve racial equity, and support multimodal communities.”

# Recommendations

## Two-Step Application Process

Unique Projects	Timeframe
Adopt unique projects draft application and release request for initial project interest	September 2021
Regional Solicitation public comment	Sept – Nov 2021
Initial project interest form due	November 2021
Consultation w/ potential applicants	Nov – Jan 2022
Release final Regional Solicitation	February 2022
Applications due	April 2022
Evaluation	May – August 2022
Project selection	Sept – Nov 2022

Overlap public comment period with initial project interest form

# Recommendations (cont.)

## Evaluation Process

- First Step – Applicants provide:
  - Project title and description
  - List of project tasks or elements
  - Approximate budget and potential match sources
  - Description of project location or impacted areas
  - Brief description of how project will advance Unique Project goals: multiple responses with short word limit
- Staff review for eligibility and provide technical feedback to potential applicants
- Possibly share information with Unique Projects Policy Work Group, but otherwise kept confidential

# Recommendations (cont.)

## Evaluation Process

- Second Step – Applicants provide:
  - Detailed description of project, including documented need and approach
  - Detailed list of project elements
  - Line-item budget and confirmed match sources
  - Detailed description of project location and affected populations
  - Responses to criteria and metrics, both qualitative and quantitative
- Staff review for errors and provide technical input to evaluators
- Unique Projects Policy Work Group members evaluate and rank projects

# Recommendations (cont.)

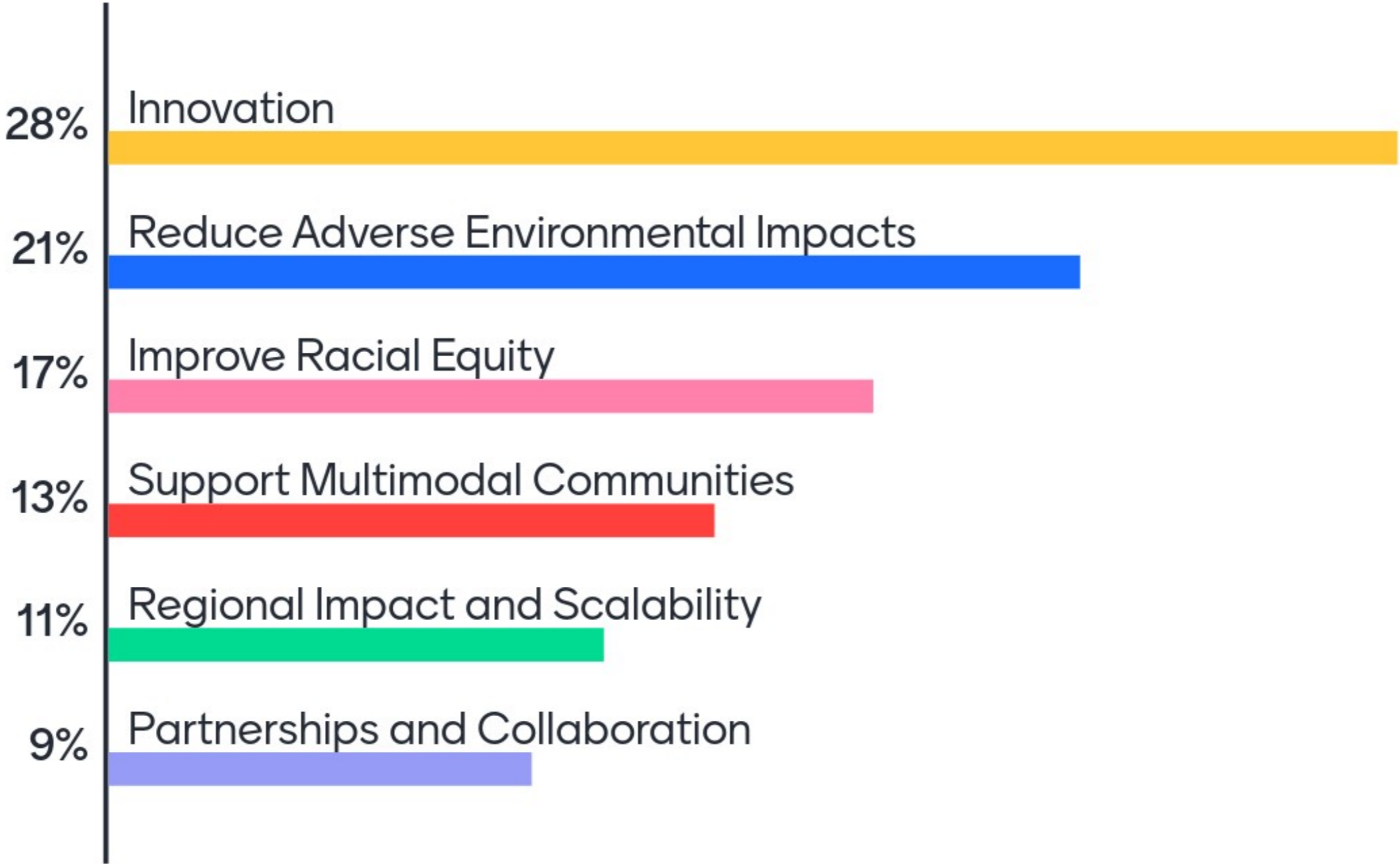
## Evaluation Criteria Questions

- Criteria are the six primary factors used to evaluate projects
  - How is the project **innovative**?
  - How does the project **reduce adverse environmental impacts** of transportation?
  - How does the project **improve racial equity**?
  - How does the project **support multimodal communities**?
  - How does the project have **regional impact** or how **could it be expanded** to more of the region?
  - How does the project **build partnerships or collaboration**?
- Metrics are the more-detailed measures used to evaluate each criteria

# Criteria Weighting Poll Results

Mentimeter

## How would you allocate 100% to weight the criteria?





# Recommendations – Evaluation Metrics

## How is the project innovative?

- New approach to existing and/or emerging challenge(s)

## How does the project reduce adverse environmental impacts of transportation?

- Improve air quality
- Contribution to climate change improvement
- Improve surface or ground water quality and management
- Other environmental improvements

# Recommendations – Evaluation Metrics (cont.)

## How does the project improve racial equity?

- Improve connectivity and access to places and opportunity for BIPOC communities
- Removing barriers for BIPOC communities
- Contributions to quality-of-life improvements for BIPOC communities

## How does the project support multimodal communities?

- Improve multiple non-single-occupant vehicle (SOV) modes within the system (e.g., transit, biking, walking)
- Land use and development strategies that support walkable, bikeable, transit-friendly communities
- Support first and last mile solutions for people connecting to places they need to go

# Recommendations – Evaluation Metrics (cont.)

**How does the project have regional impact or how could it be expanded to more of the region?**

- Regional impact
- Expandability

**How does the project build partnerships or collaboration?**

- Number and diversity of stakeholder groups that helped develop the project
- Match contribution

# Recommendations (cont.)

## Rules

- Minimum and maximum funding limits
  - Maximum Recommendation: no limit for this round, could be revisited for future solicitations
  - Minimum Recommendation: \$500k to ensure cost-effectiveness for federal requirements
- Match requirements
  - Considered as part of scoring for partnerships and collaboration
- TDM innovation funding
  - Recommend keeping pot separate until TDM Study complete in 2023

# Regional Solicitation Unique Projects Next Step

- Information item to Funding and Programming tomorrow and TAC in August, revisit for more discussion at TAB in August
- Finalize applications materials based on feedback in August-early Sept.
- Released for public comment by TAB in September, along with initial call for interest from applicants

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**METROPOLITAN  
COUNCIL**

# Geographic Balance Decisions

- Comments on geographic balance:
  - There is no rule related to geographic balance in terms of what geography to use or to determine what is “balanced”
  - Funding & Programming members expressed belief that balance should be examined over time, as opposed to within each funding cycle
- TAB options moving forward:
  - No change (address geographic balance at end of process as has been done in past to provide flexibility in the final decision)
  - Establish project programming rules related to awards in each cycle or over time

# Regional Solicitation Decisions in Sept

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# 6. Scoring Measures

- Equity (to be discussed by TAB in August)
- Affordable housing (to be discussed by TAB in August)
- Risk assessment
- Pedestrian safety
- Others
- Sept TAB decisions:
  - Adopt scoring measures
  - Current expectation is that technical committees will work through most of the potential changes

# 7. Qualifications, Eligibility Decisions

- Qualifying Requirements
  - Examples include:
    - Consistent with the goals and policies including the Transportation Policy Plan
    - Inclusion in local planning documents or studies
    - ADA self-evaluation or transition plan covering public right-of-way must be completed
- Technical Committees have not expressed interest in major changes beyond addition of the purpose statements
- Sept TAB decision
  - Adopt qualifying requirements
  - Current expectation is that qualifying requirements will not change

# 8. Full Application and Release for Public Comment

- Includes all previous actions
- Sept TAB decision
  - Adopt full application and release for public comment