

Regional Solicitation Unique Projects Application Category Update

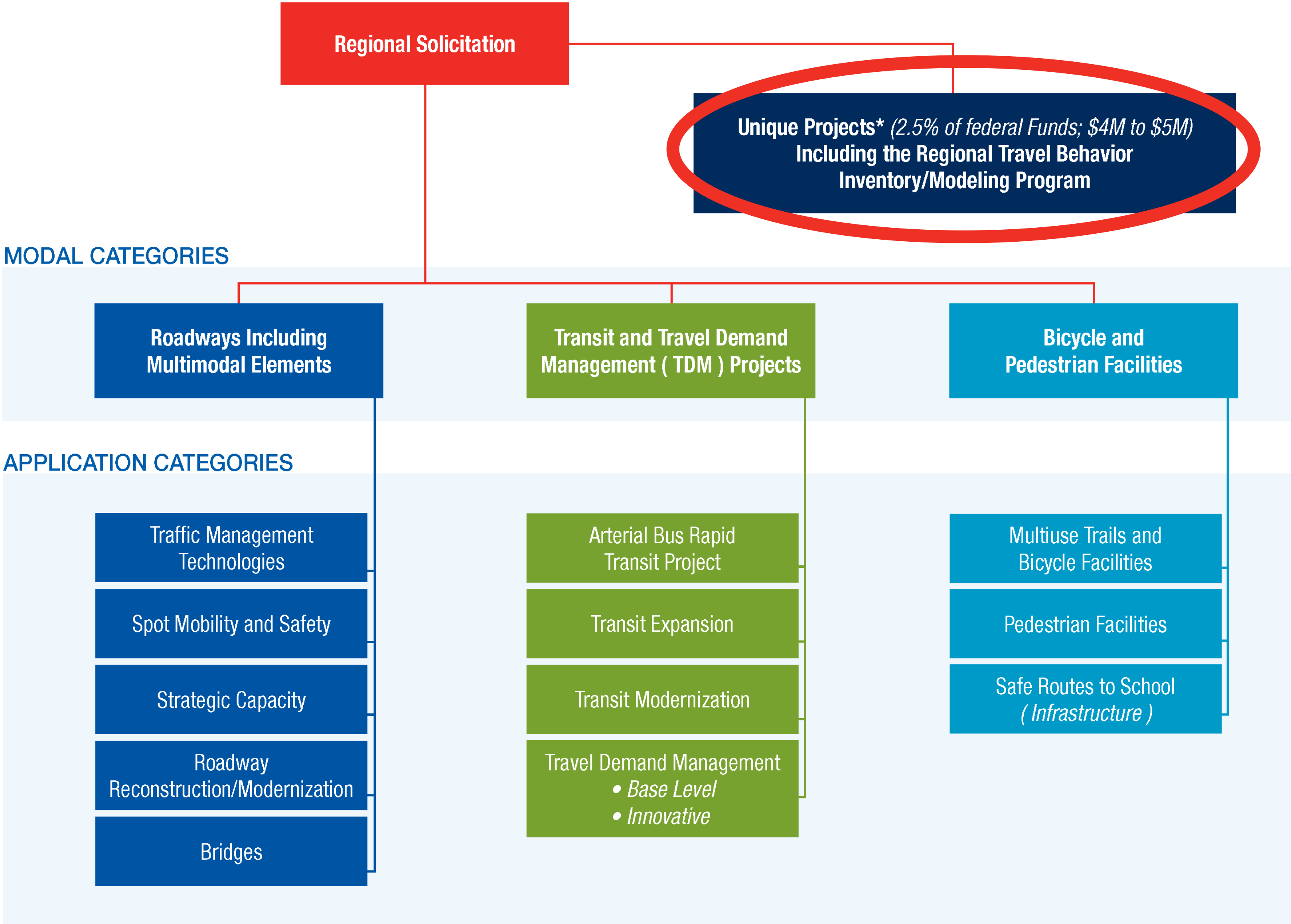
Technical Advisory Committee, August 4, 2021



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

Regional Solicitation Unique Projects Technical Advisory Group

- Met twice in the month of June
- Solicited participation from TAC, TAC Planning, TAC Funding and Programming
 - MnDOT
 - MPCA
 - Washington and Hennepin County
 - Coon Rapids
 - MVTA
 - Met Council
- Identified more detailed descriptions of the evaluation criteria for Work Group to consider; recommended language

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.)

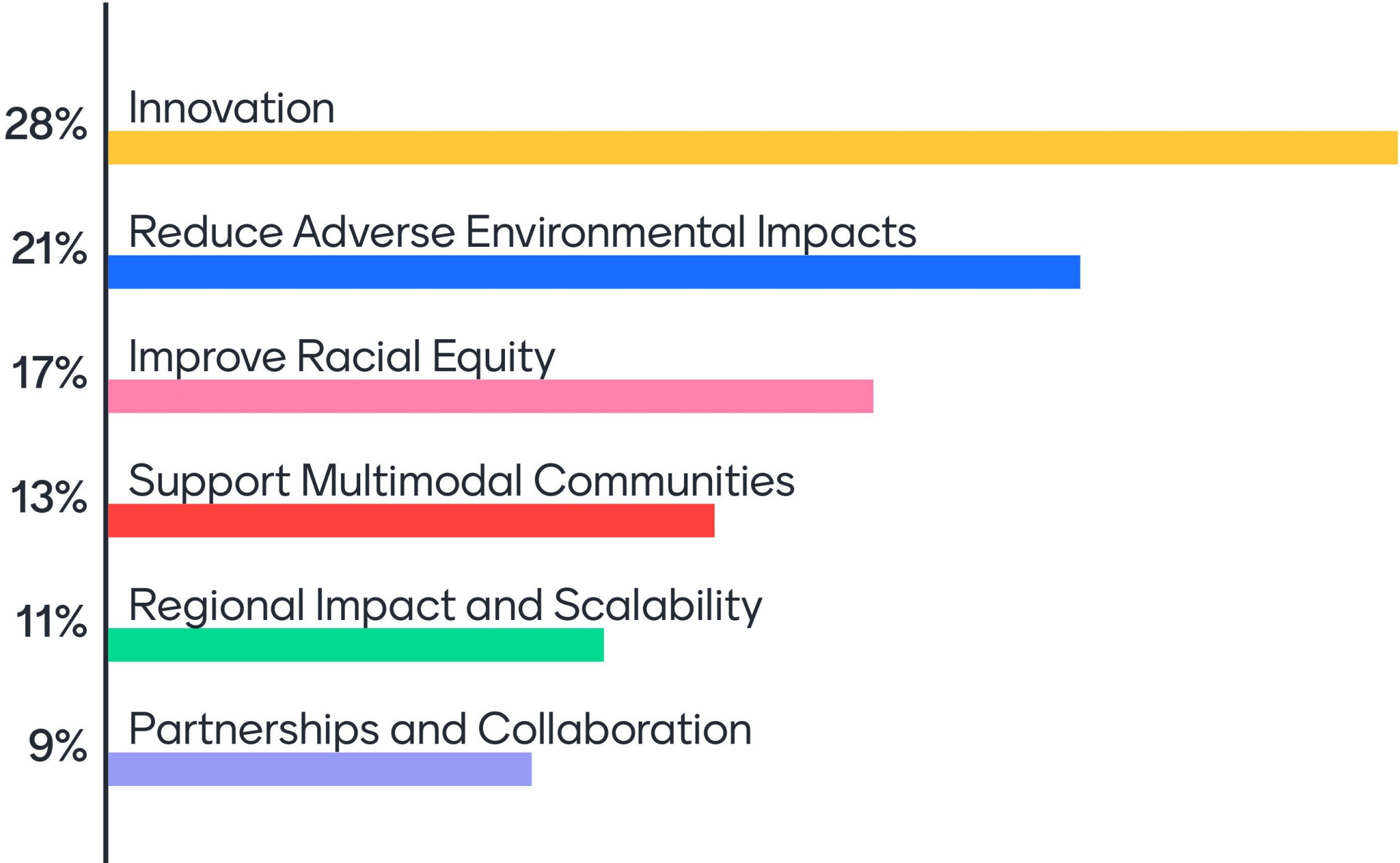
Evaluation Criteria Questions

- 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?



Evaluation Metrics

How is the project innovative?

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

How does the project reduce adverse environmental impacts of transportation?

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

Evaluation Metrics

How does the project improve racial equity?

- Improve connectivity and access to places and opportunity for BIPOC communities
 - Connecting people to places, but also demonstrating an understanding of the places they want to go
 - Connecting communities where known gaps exist (document why connection is needed and source of info)
 - Outreach to, and involvement from these communities in project selection, development, or delivery.
- Removing barriers
 - Physical barriers being addressed (directly or indirectly)
 - Cultural barriers being addressed (language, etc.)
 - Engagement barrier being addressed (improving systemic outreach issues)
- Contributions to quality-of-life improvements
 - Placemaking
 - Safety
 - Job creation, economic development
 - Access to green space
 - Public health

How does the project support multimodal communities?

- Improve multiple non-SOV modes within the system (e.g., transit, biking, walking)
 - Creating interconnectivity between modes
 - Creating “bridges” that serve all modes
 - Multimodal trip planning
- Land use and development strategies that are support walkable, bikeable, transit-friendly communities
 - Supporting growth of dense, mixed-use communities or neighborhoods
 - Contribute to Thrive MSP 2040 outcomes
 - Reducing demand or need for parking
- Support first and last mile solutions for people connecting to places they need to go
 - Mobility hubs and centralized connections for multiple modes
 - Increasing shared trips/shared mobility

Evaluation Metrics

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

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

How does the project build partnerships or collaboration?

- Number of stakeholder groups that helped develop the project
 - How many involved in the project? (The more partners, the more points awarded)
 - Public/private (or 4P; Public, Private, Philanthropic, and People)
 - Percent or number of partners that are small/minority-owned business (DBE/TGB/MCUB).
 - Are businesses or partners locally owned or run?
- Match contribution
 - More points for high amount or percentage (e.g., % of partnership contributions compared to total dollar amount)

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 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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