



# Technical Advisory Committee

[metro council.org](http://metro council.org)



October 2, 2024



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# Regional Solicitation Evaluation Overview



# Regional Solicitation

## What is the Regional Solicitation?

- The Regional Solicitation is a **competitive process** to award federal transportation funding to projects that **address regional transportation needs**.
- Part of the Metropolitan Council's **federally required continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process** for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.
- Since 1993 and approximately **every two years** thereafter, the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), with the assistance of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), solicits, evaluates, ranks, and recommends projects.
- Through the 2013 Solicitation, the application categories were set up by funding sources and project category.
- Since 2014 the application categories have been modally-based.

# Evaluation

## Regional Solicitation Evaluation

- Met Council conducts an evaluation of the Regional Solicitation process every 10 years (previous occurred 2012-2013)
- Previous study revised structure and funding allocation beginning with 2014 application cycle
- This study will:
  - Examine the processes and impacts of the 2014-2024 application cycles
  - Solicit feedback from the general public and a wide variety of stakeholders
  - Develop recommendations for funding structure, application categories, project selection criteria
  - Develop new applications for the 2026 funding cycle
- For more information visit the project website:  
<https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Funding/Regional-Solicitation/Regional-Solicitation-Evaluation-Active-Transporta.aspx>

# What are we trying to achieve?

## Overarching goal of the Regional Solicitation Evaluation:

To align the allocation of the region's federal transportation funds through the Regional Solicitation project selection process to help achieve **the goals, objectives, and policies** of the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan and Imagine 2050.

### 2050 TPP Goals

Equitable  
and Inclusive

Healthy and  
Safe

Dynamic and  
Resilient

Climate  
Change

Natural  
Systems

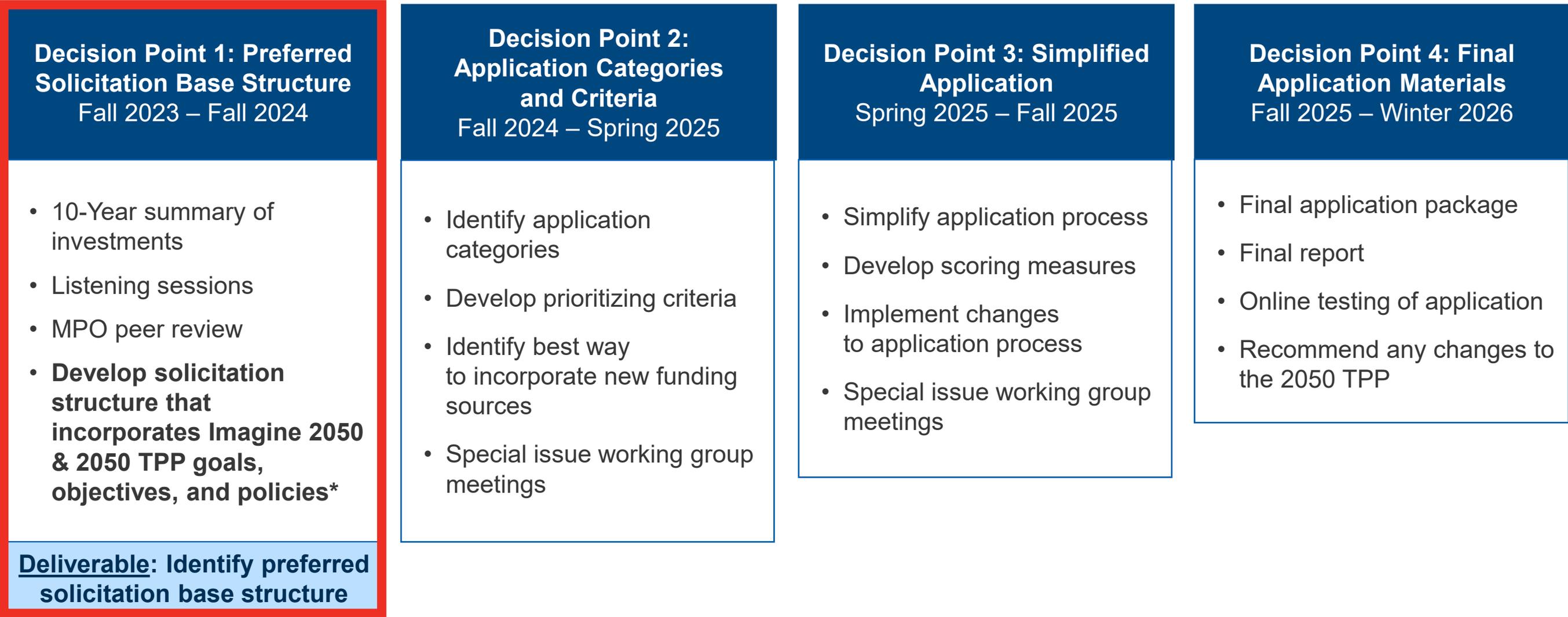
# Federal rules

## The solicitation must include:

- Projects must be selected by the MPO Board.
  - Must be a competitive process (TA and CMAQ).
  - STBG funds cannot be suballocated to individual jurisdictions by pre-determined percentages.
- Must align with the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan.
- Selected project must be shown in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Selection must involve other stakeholders and the public, including traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations.

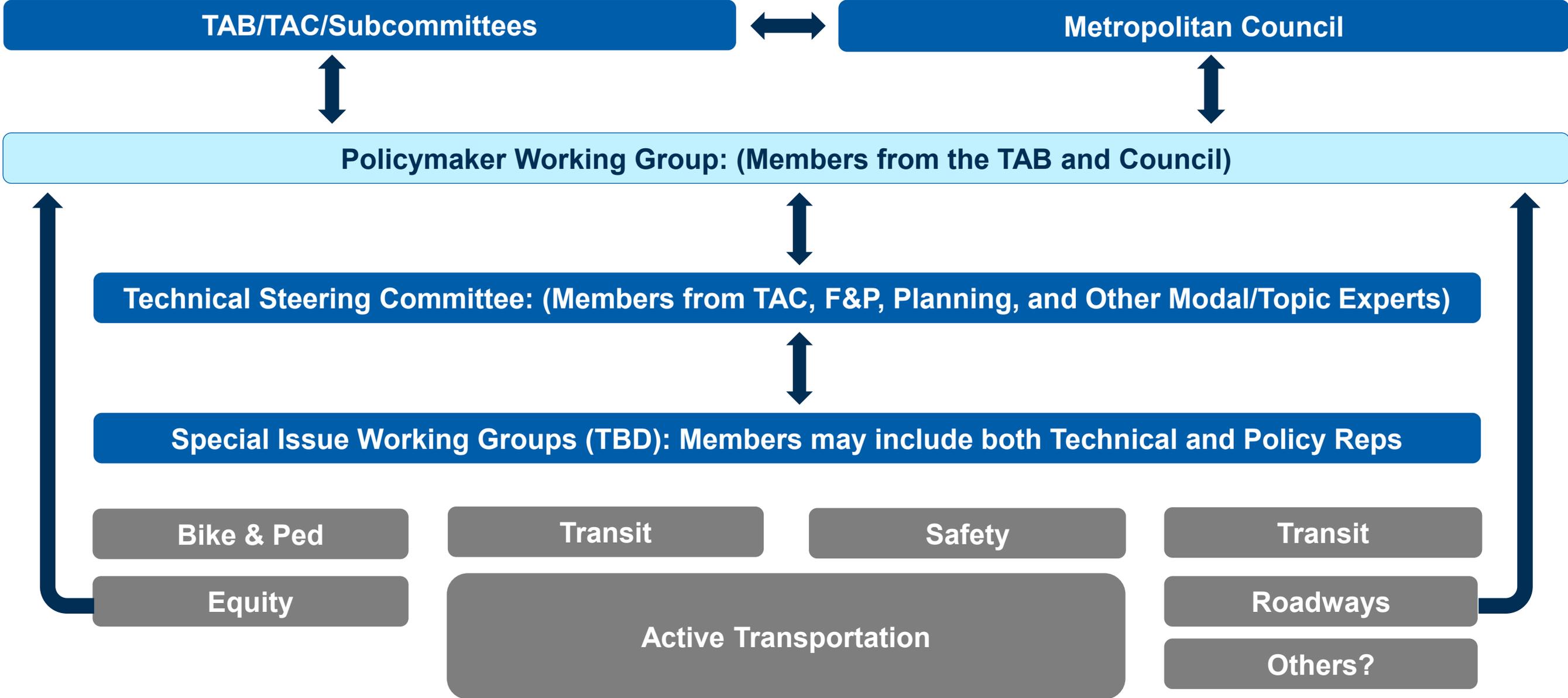
# Evaluation Decisions Timeline

## Stakeholder Groups, Public Engagement, Equity Engagement



\*See this link for 2050 TPP goals, objectives and policies  
<https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Key-Transportation-Planning-Documents/Transportation-Policy-Plan/TPP-Goals-Objectives-Policies.aspx>

# Decision-making Process





# Investment Summary



# Investment Summary Purpose

## What is the role of the Investment Summary in the Regional Solicitation Evaluation?

- Summarizes the past 10 years (2014-2024) of project awards (\$1.5 billion).
- Summarizes major policy and technical changes in the Regional Solicitation process in the past 10 years.
- Compares the different outcomes of funding between when the solicitation used funding source-based categories (prior to 2014) and modal-based categories (2014 and beyond).
- Compares funding outcomes between cycles since the last evaluation.

# Investment Summary Findings

## Selected major changes:

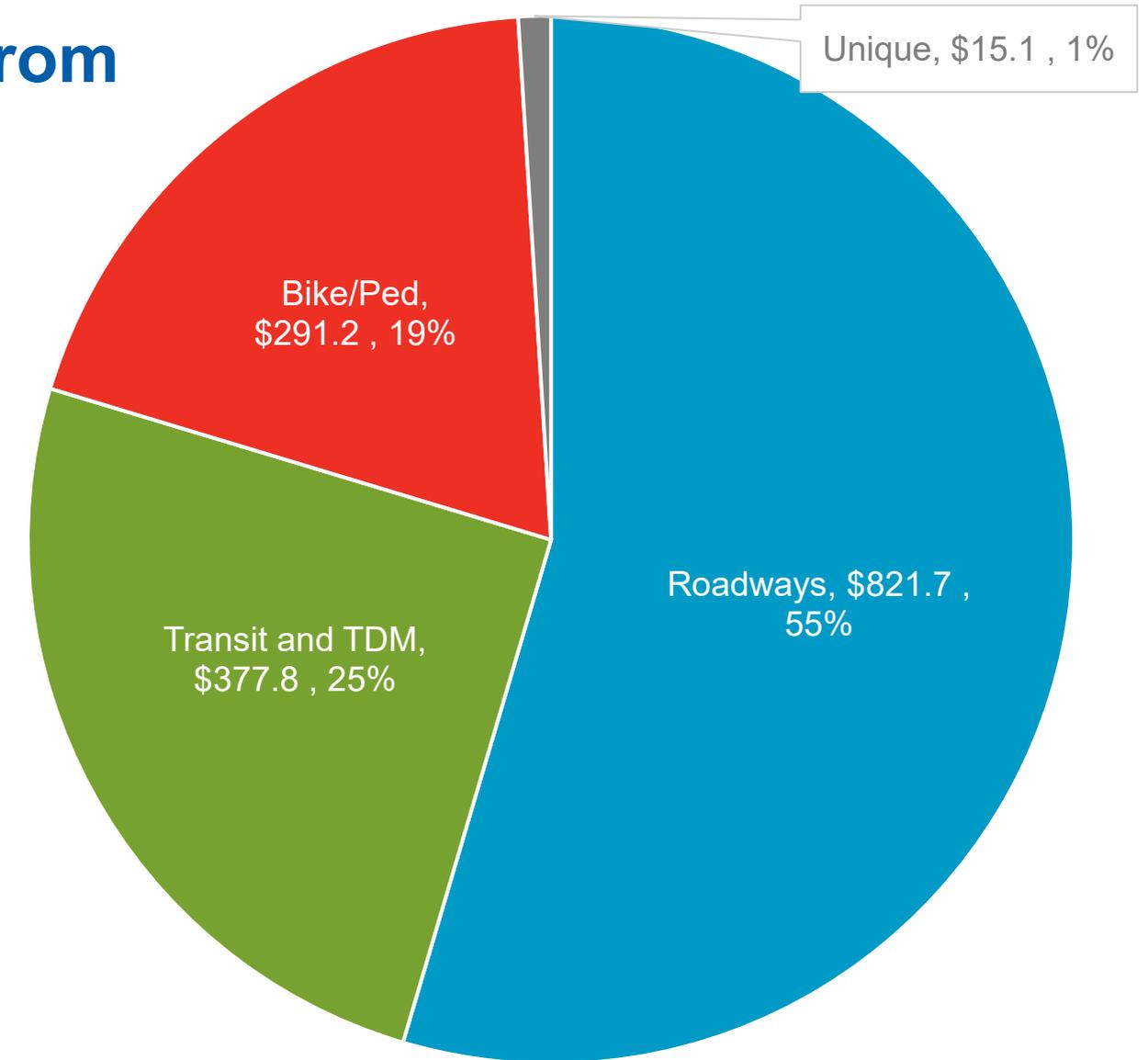
- 2014:
  - Application categories switched from funding program-based to modal-based
  - Application moved online and shortened
  - Equity added as criterion
- 2020:
  - Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ABRT) category added
  - Spot Mobility and Safety category added
- 2022
  - Unique Projects category added

# Investment Summary Findings

## Summary of Projects Federal Funding from 2014 – 2024

Over the evaluated period, **\$1.5 billion** in federal funds were distributed to 420 projects across three modal categories.

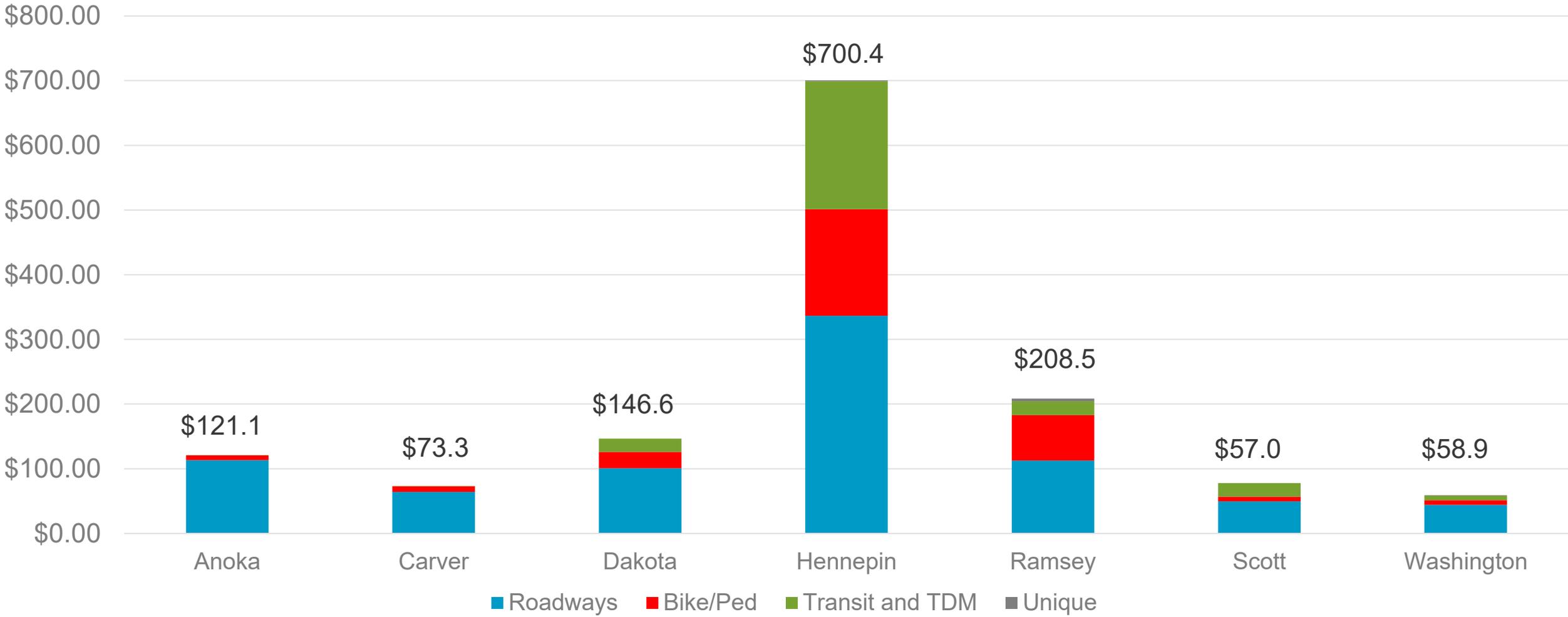
The Regional Solicitation funding leveraged **\$1.6 billion** from other sources, bringing the total regional investment to **\$3.1 billion**.



Share of Total Federal Funding From the Regional Solicitation (2014 – 2024) (Shown in \$ millions)

# Investment Summary Findings

## Regional Solicitation Federal Funding by Project Category and County (2014 – 2024, millions)



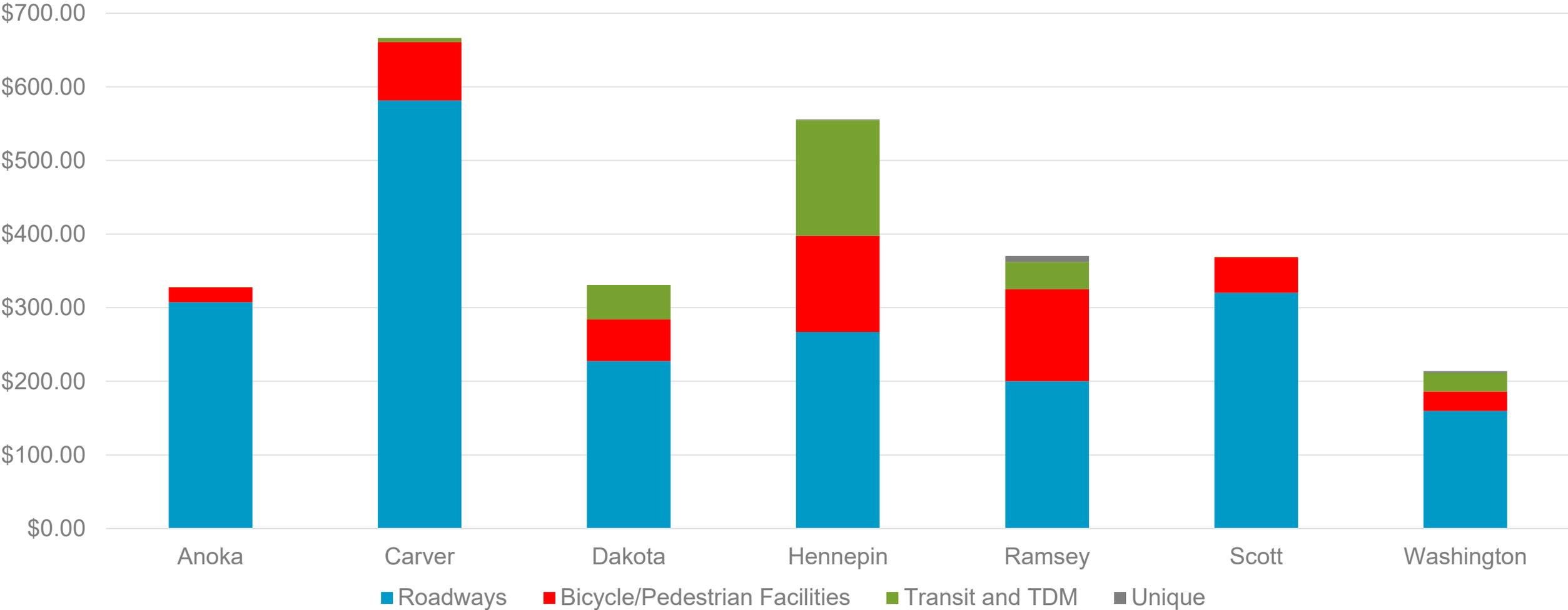
# Investment Summary Findings

## Funding Distribution by County vs Population and Jobs

Measure	Anoka	Carver	Dakota	Hennepin	Ramsey	Scott	Washington
Population	12%	3%	14%	41%	18%	5%	8%
Jobs	7%	2%	11%	53%	19%	3%	5%
Funding Distribution	9%	5%	11%	50%	15%	6%	4%

# Investment Summary Findings

## Regional Solicitation Federal Funding Per Capita by Project Category and County (2014 – 2024)



# Investment Summary Findings

## Safety Benefits

Safety is a key component of the Regional Solicitation and is one of the key determinants in project scoring and selection. **The safety benefits of selected roadway projects were monetized as one measure of effectiveness.**

This table also shows a large jump in total benefits in 2020. This was the same year that **Spot Mobility and Safety Roadway** category was added to the application.

Cycle	Total Safety Benefit
2014	\$142.2
2016	\$160.1
2018	\$200.8
2020	\$395.0
2022	\$410.8
2024	\$293.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,601.9</b>

*Monetized Safety Benefits as Reported by Applicants by Solicitation Year (Shown in \$ millions)*

# Investment Summary Findings

## Funding awards on or impacting MnDOT system (\$435 million total)

- 29% of the total regional solicitation funding over the past 10 years directly improved the state system.
- 49% (\$400 million) of all funding (\$821.7 million) distributed in the Roadways Including Multimodal Elements category went to projects directly on or significantly improving the state system.
- 75% (\$228.8 million) of all funding (\$306.9 million) distributed in the Strategic Capacity category went to projects (mostly interchanges) on the state system.
- 12% (\$33.9 million) of all funding (\$291.2 million) distributed in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities category went to state trail projects and crossings or trails along the trunk highway system

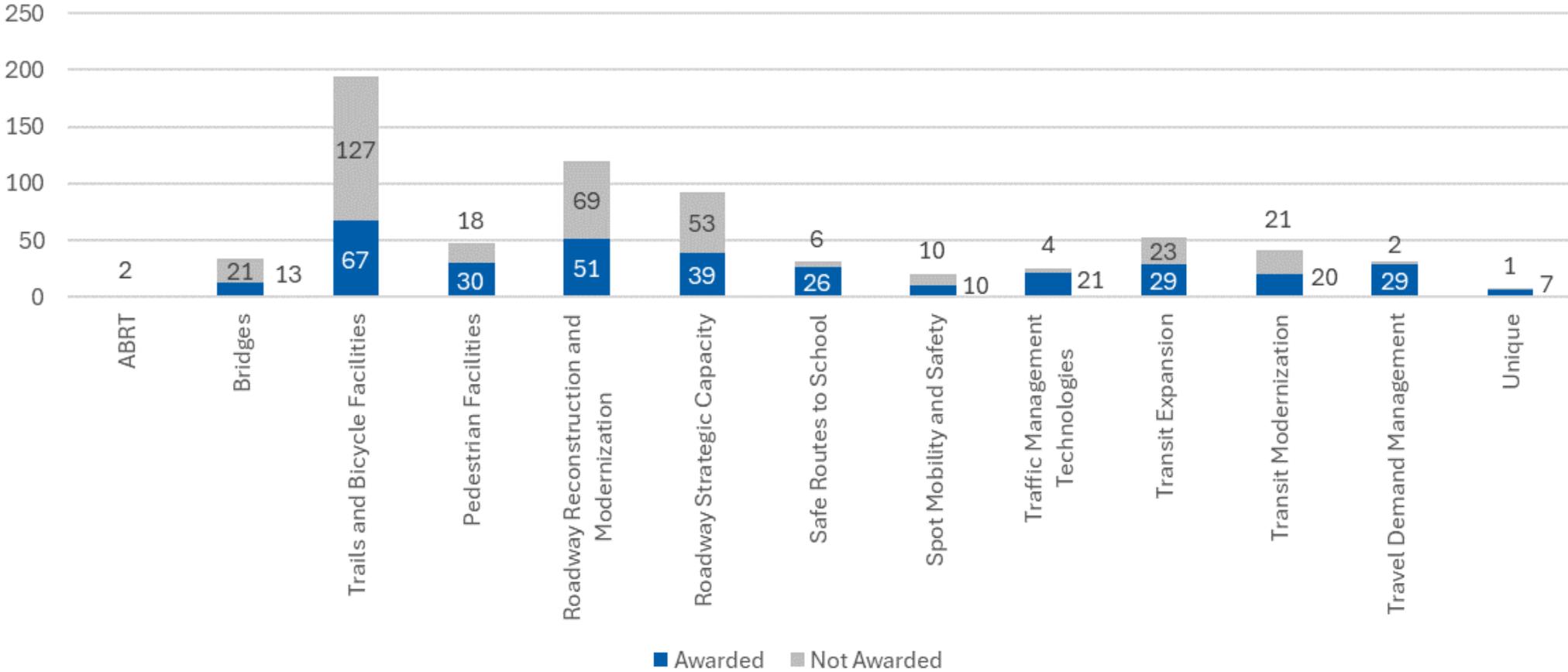
# Investment Summary Findings

## Multimodal Investments

- 307 miles of trails and sidewalks
  - 162 miles of trail and sidewalk constructed as separate bike/ped projects and
  - 145 miles of trail and sidewalk constructed as part of roadway projects
- Several bike/ped projects selected that connect to major transitways (Gold, Blue, Green Lines, etc.) or major roadway projects (Hwy 36, Hwy 5, etc.).
- Investment in 6 Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Lines and modernization of existing transitway and transit stations.
- 32 TDM awards, including 28 to non-government applicants

# Investment Summary Findings

Number of Applications Selected and not Selected by Application Category (2014 – 2022)



	ABRT	Bridges	Trails/Bike	Ped	Reconstruction	Strategic Capacity	Safe Routes	Safety	Tech	Transit Expand	Transit Modern	TDM	Unique
Success Rate	100%	38%	32%	62%	41%	43%	81%	50%	56%	50%	46%	92%	83%

# Investment Summary Findings

## Application Success Trends

- The total applicant **success rate was 50%**.
  - Roadways including Multimodal Elements: 48%
  - Transit and TDM: 64%
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian Elements: 45%
  - Unique Projects: 71%
- Counties as applicants had an average success rate of 41%, however the success rate varied between 27% and 58%.
- Cities as applicants had an average success rate of 53%.



# What we heard



# Peer Interviews – What We Heard

## Peer Regions Interviewed

- Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)
- San Francisco Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
- Seattle Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)
- Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)
- Columbus Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)
- Kansas City Mid-America Regional Council (MARC)

## Themes

- Emphasis on applicants having buy-in/ownership of process and/or decisions
- Shift toward qualitative applications, but some hesitation
- Exploring role of MPO, committees, and applicants
- Grounding regional solicitation in planning foundation and framework

# Listening Sessions

## Things we heard that some stakeholders think should stay the same:

- Like the open and transparent process.
- Appreciate space for deliberation as part of the decision-making process.
- Past projects selected provided benefit to the region.
- Like having a data-driven process.
- General support for some level of modal balance.

## Things we heard that some stakeholders think should change:

- Make the application easier to complete.
- Projects in more suburban and rural areas do not compete well in bike/ped categories.
- Projects should better align with regional policy goals.
- Current structure does not consider nuance of local government context.
- Make it easier/create more opportunities for local governments to participate

# Structure Discussion

## Preview of Policymaker Working Group November meeting agenda

- In September, the Policymaker Working Group discussed the possibility of shifting from the current structure to goal-focused application structure
- November meeting will discuss example structures on a goal-focused application, and potentially make a recommendation
- Future decision points will focus on application categories, criteria, scoring measures, and funding targets

### Mode-Focused

- Roadways
- Transit & TDM
- Bicycle & Pedestrian
- Unique

### Goal-Focused\*

- Healthy & Safe
- Dynamic & Resilient
- Climate Change
- Natural Systems

*\*Note: This is one example of a goal-focused structure.*

# Next steps



## Next steps:

1. Technical Advisory Committee meeting – November 6
  - Topic: Before and After Study Results and Structure Discussion Update
2. Policymaker Working Group meeting – November 20, December 18
3. Policymaker Workshop for TAB and Council Members – December 18
4. TAB – February – Action item on a base structure recommendation and application categories
5. Technical Steering Committee meeting – January 28

### Ongoing TAC Involvement

- Updates and feedback opportunities throughout the process
- Opportunity to be involved in special issue working groups

# TAC Discussion

- What projects do you want to continue to submit for funding?
- What projects do you wish you could submit for funding that are not currently eligible (e.g., planning studies, charging infrastructure, stormwater management, etc.)?

# Met Council Active Transportation Grant Management



## For TAB Consideration in October

- ~\$19 million of regional sales tax funding for 17 pedestrian, bicycle and safe routes to school projects in the 2024 Regional Solicitation
- Projects will be managed by the Met Council
  - Traditionally, MnDOT State Aid manages Regional Solicitation projects
  - New funding is regionally sourced and allocated by TAB
  - State Aid will not manage, Council must manage grants
  - Not federally funded so do not need to follow federal requirements for grant recipients
- Need to establish key requirements for TAB funds that meet priorities of TAB
  - Reduce administrative burden from federal funding
  - Build management process for Council
  - Requirements considered will be specifically for these pilot funds
- Lessons learned will be taken for future solicitations

# Active Transportation Grants Met Council Management

## Policy level grant requirements recommendations

**Program Year:** No program year, identify project activity period, begin before end of 2026, TAB approval for extension.

**Grant Funding Disbursements:** 50% granted up-front at construction start, remainder reimbursed.

**Eligible Project Costs:** Eligible costs remain the same as Regional Solicitation.

**Plan Documentation and Submittals:** Final plans submitted to Council to ensure project meets minimum standards and project description.

**Project Scope Change:** Scope change process remains the same as Regional Solicitation.

**Right-of-Way Acquisition:** Follow applicable state statutes. Submit ownership or agreement documentation prior to release of grant funds.

**Environmental Review:** Follow applicable state statutes. No documentation to be submitted.

**Business Firm Equity Program (DBE/TGB/MCUB):** Recommendation likely after 9/26 Active Transportation meeting



# Thank You

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