

## INFORMATION ITEM

**DATE:** June 10, 2021  
**TO:** TAC Funding and Programming Committee  
**PREPARED BY:** Joe Barbeau, Senior Planner (651-602-1705)  
Steve Peterson, Manager of Highway Planning and TAC/TAB  
Process (651-602-1819)  
Elaine Koutsoukos, TAB Coordinator (651-602-1717)  
**SUBJECT:** 2022 Regional Solicitation: Geographic Balance

Over many Regional Solicitation cycles, TAB and its technical committees have struggled with the concept of geographic (or regional) balance (i.e., how funding and projects are spread across the region). Geographic balance is not part of how projects are scored. Instead, it is a secondary lens used by TAB when selecting a funding scenario. In the 2020 funding cycle, overprogramming funds were used to meet geographic balance objectives by funding at least one project within each county.

“Geographic balance” has never been defined and seems to mean different things to different participants. Some of the key questions to consider are discussed below.

### 1. What is the Geographic Goal?

This essentially asks whether simply rating applications on regionally based criteria and measures is sub-optimal in that it does not necessarily geographically balance (however that may be defined) the location of projects and federal funding. From your technical standpoint, feedback may be based on the best approach for improving transportation cohesively across the region.

### 2. Geography

Traditionally, balance has been explored county-by-county (Figures 1A-C and 5A). This method was not selected for any compelling reason; it was used initially as counties were some of the primary applicants for projects. This provides a general look across the region, though does not distinguish, for example, Minneapolis versus northwestern Hennepin County. Other potential geographies include:

- Council districts (Figures 2A-B and 5B) – 16 Smaller areas nearly equal in population.
- Regional quadrant (Figures 3A-B and 5C) – Four large areas, as opposed to seven. The concentration near the “four corners” (i.e., center point) and edges (the two downtowns) could call into the question the optimality of this map.
- Land Use (Figures 4A-B and 5D) – This is the only view that doesn’t focus on east/west geography, but more on city, suburb, and rural project spread.

From your technical standpoint, is any of the above geographies (or some other geography) preferable to the others?

### 3. What does “Geographic Balance” Mean?

What is the best approach to defining “geographic balance?” Traditionally, discussions of geographic balance have focused on comparing the total federal funding for projects to county population as this is how most of the federal funding is given to the region (i.e., based on population). As discussed above, this was mostly a function of simplicity and the committees

have never had a discussion on whether this is the best way to measure balance. Some options for how to determine balance include:

- Distribution (numerator): Federal funding? Number of Projects? Something else?
- Appropriate balance (denominator): Population? Jobs? Population + Jobs? Something else, perhaps related to existing travel patterns?

For example, this currently is usually framed as federal funding / county population. But it could also be number of projects / jobs by land use. Any technical rationale that members have to consider an updated approach can be considered by TAB as it determines how to address geographic balance.

The above-mentioned figures show geographic distribution of projects and funds by each geography over the past four Regional Solicitation cycles.

- Figures 1A-B show that federal funds over the last four cycles (2014-2020) are similar to regional distribution of population and jobs. Figure 1C shows roadway project funding is allocated in a similar proportion to VMT.
- Figures 2A-B show that central Council districts receive high funding versus population, though that evens out when compared to jobs.<sup>1</sup>
- Figures 3A-B show distribution by four quadrants. The Northeast quadrant shows proportionately less funding than population. However, note that many projects are located near the midpoint of all four quadrants.
- Figures 4A-B show that funding and jobs are roughly the same proportion.

#### **4. What, if Anything, is Needed in Advance of Application?**

Technical committee members are closer to the application process than TAB members. Therefore, TAB may value technical input on whether any geographic balance methods or rules (see part 5 below) could impact how potential applicants approach the number or type of applications they will submit.

#### **5. Future Questions**

At this point, the objective is to find a common understanding of what geographic balance means. However, over the next one-to-two meeting cycles practical application of geographic balance may be considered. Some of these questions may include:

- Should geographic balance be assessed over time or cycle-by-cycle? In either case, how would this be implemented?
- Should geographic balance be codified in the application, or should it continue to be addressed as projects are selected (which has been the practice to this point)?
- Will the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) solicitation be considered? Traditionally HSIP has not been considered, but the question of whether to consider it has never been raised.

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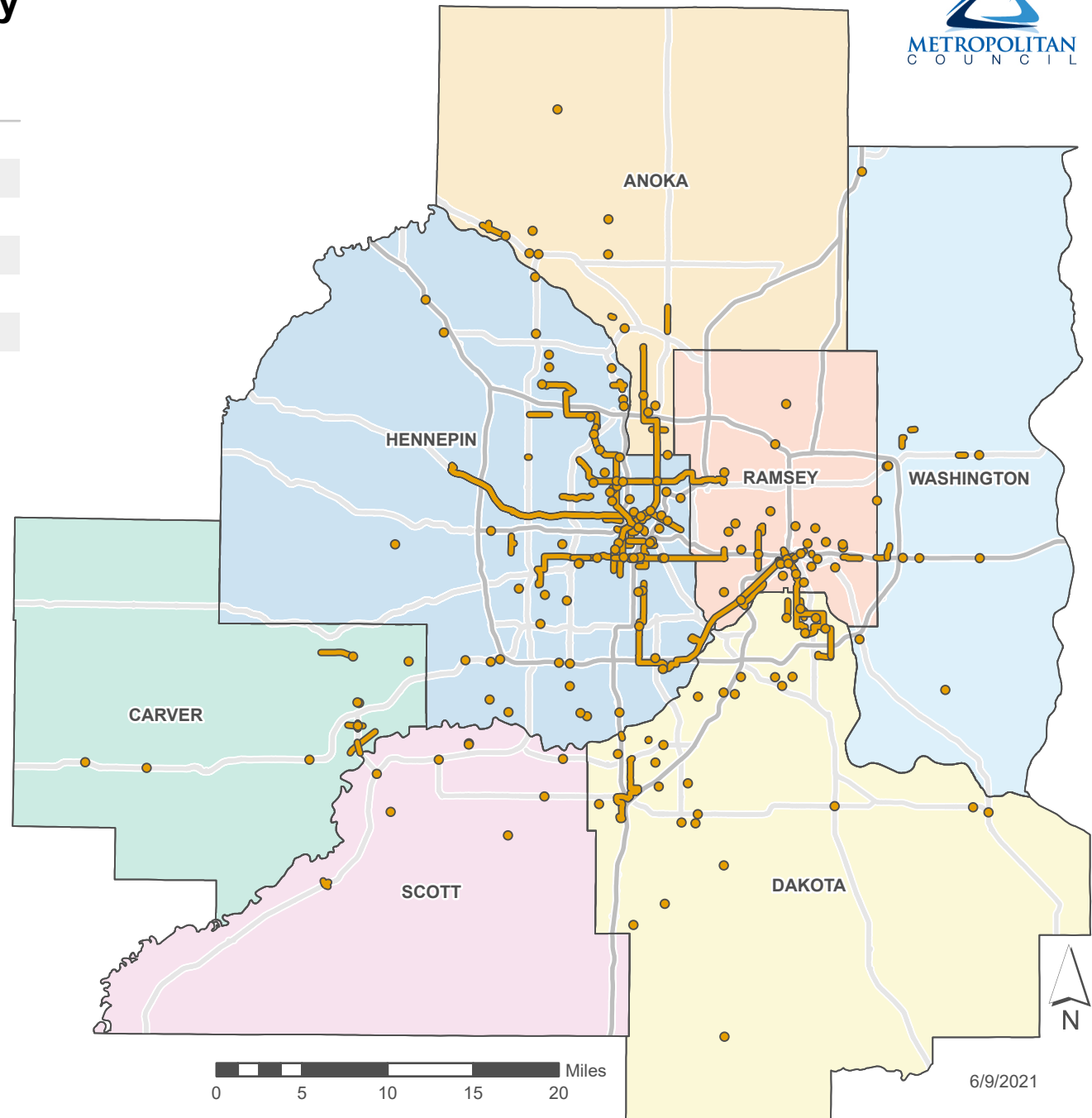
<sup>1</sup> The presented council district analysis is limited by spatial resolution of project data; accuracy of funding information by council district will improve through an ongoing project to improve historical project data.

# Figure 1A. Location of 2014-2020 Regional Solicitation Funded Projects by County



| County     | Federal Funds | Pop | Jobs |
|------------|---------------|-----|------|
| Anoka      | 10%           | 12% | 7%   |
| Carver     | 5%            | 3%  | 2%   |
| Dakota     | 9%            | 14% | 11%  |
| Hennepin   | 50%           | 41% | 53%  |
| Ramsey     | 16%           | 18% | 19%  |
| Scott      | 5%            | 5%  | 3%   |
| Washington | 4%            | 8%  | 5%   |

Notes: Federal funding refers to amount awarded in Regional Solicitation only. Population (2019) and employment (2020) data based on Metropolitan Council Community Profiles. Project corridors are only available for 2020 projects and 2018 transit projects. Excludes regional and travel demand management projects. Projects that cross boundaries are evenly divided among intersecting jurisdictions.



- Selected Project Points
- Selected Project Corridors
- Interstate Highways
- Other Major Roads
- Counties

# Figure 1B. Location of 2014-2020 Regional Solicitation Funded Projects by County, Scaled



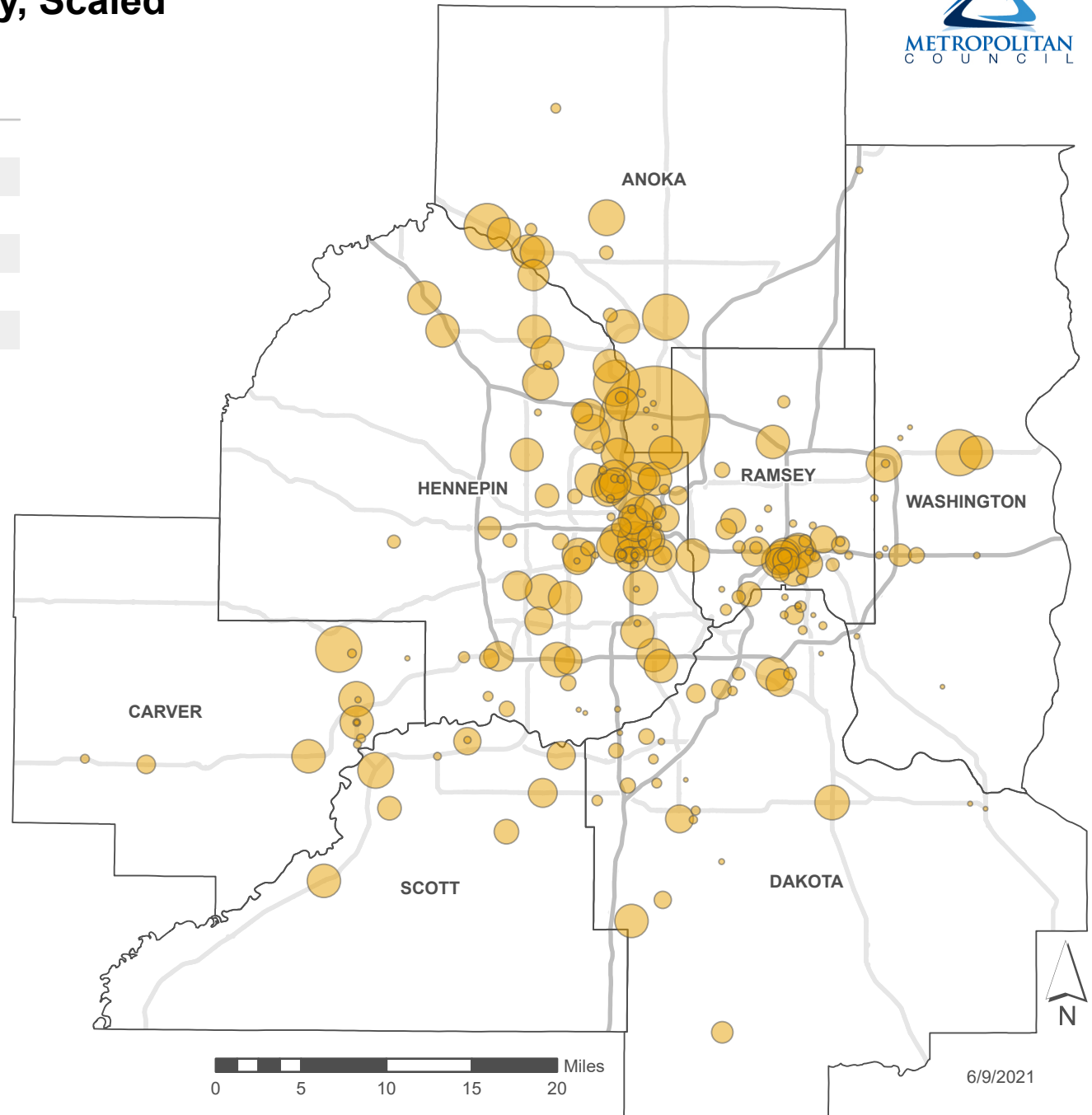
| County     | Federal Funds | Pop | Jobs |
|------------|---------------|-----|------|
| Anoka      | 10%           | 12% | 7%   |
| Carver     | 5%            | 3%  | 2%   |
| Dakota     | 9%            | 14% | 11%  |
| Hennepin   | 50%           | 41% | 53%  |
| Ramsey     | 16%           | 18% | 19%  |
| Scott      | 5%            | 5%  | 3%   |
| Washington | 4%            | 8%  | 5%   |

Notes: Federal funding refers to amount awarded in Regional Solicitation only. Population (2019) and employment (2020) data based on Metropolitan Council Community Profiles. Project corridors are only available for 2020 projects and 2018 transit projects. Excludes regional and travel demand management projects. Projects that cross boundaries are evenly divided among intersecting jurisdictions.

### Selected Projects (\$)

- 100,000
- 500,000
- 1,000,000
- 5,000,000
- 10,000,000

- Interstate Highways
- Other Major Roads
- Counties

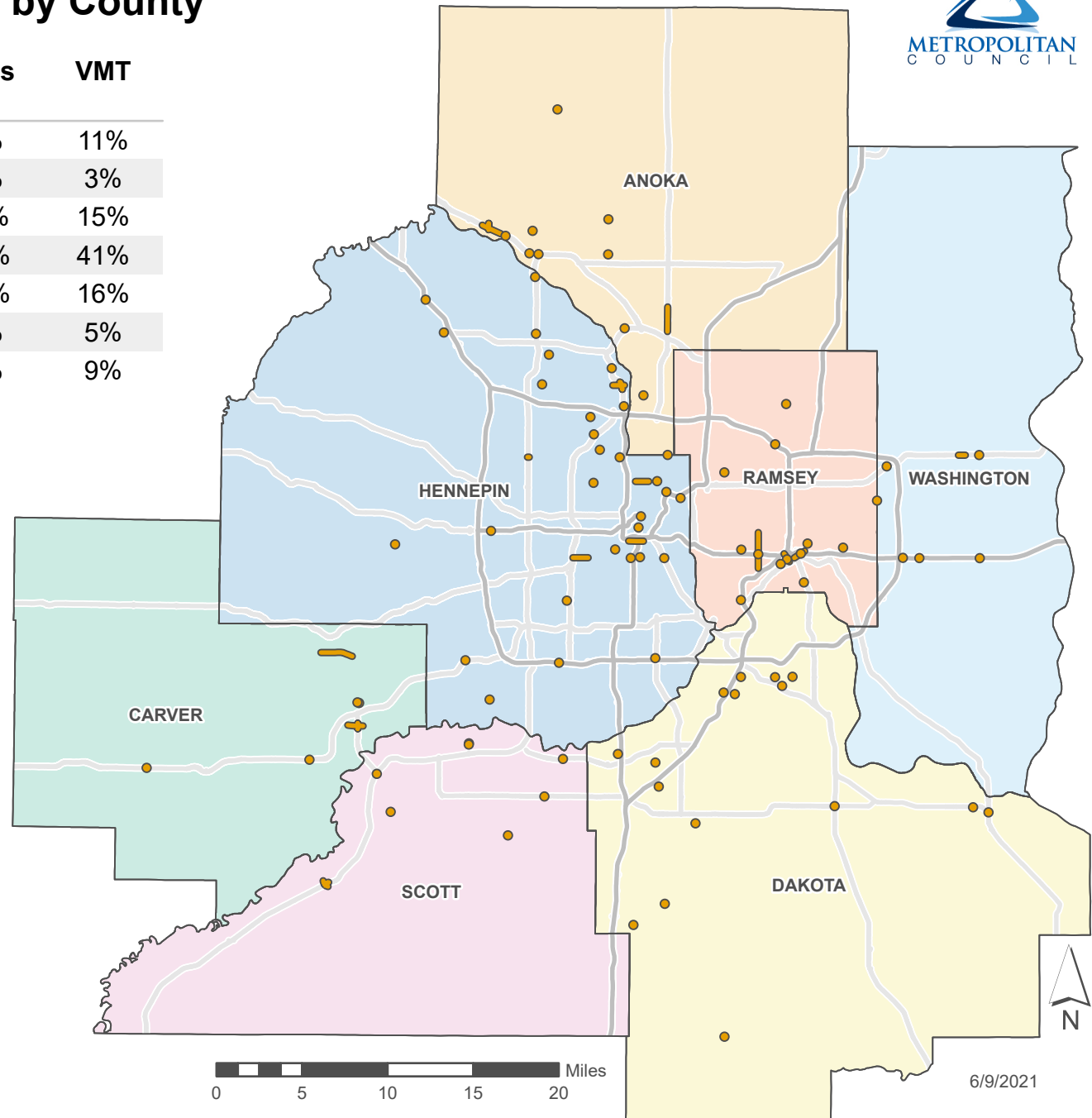


# Figure 1C. Location of 2014-2020 Regional Solicitation Funded Roadway Projects by County



| County     | Roadway Funds | Pop | Jobs | VMT |
|------------|---------------|-----|------|-----|
| Anoka      | 13%           | 12% | 7%   | 11% |
| Carver     | 7%            | 3%  | 2%   | 3%  |
| Dakota     | 10%           | 14% | 11%  | 15% |
| Hennepin   | 41%           | 41% | 53%  | 41% |
| Ramsey     | 13%           | 18% | 19%  | 16% |
| Scott      | 9%            | 5%  | 3%   | 5%  |
| Washington | 7%            | 8%  | 5%   | 9%  |

Notes: Roadway funds refers to federal amount awarded in Regional Solicitation only. Population (2019) and employment (2020) data based on Metropolitan Council Community Profiles. VMT (2019) data from MnDOT TDA. Project corridors are only available for 2020 projects and 2018 transit projects. Excludes regional and travel demand management projects. Projects that cross boundaries are evenly divided among intersecting jurisdictions.



- Selected Project Points
- Selected Project Corridors
- Interstate Highways
- Other Major Roads
- Counties

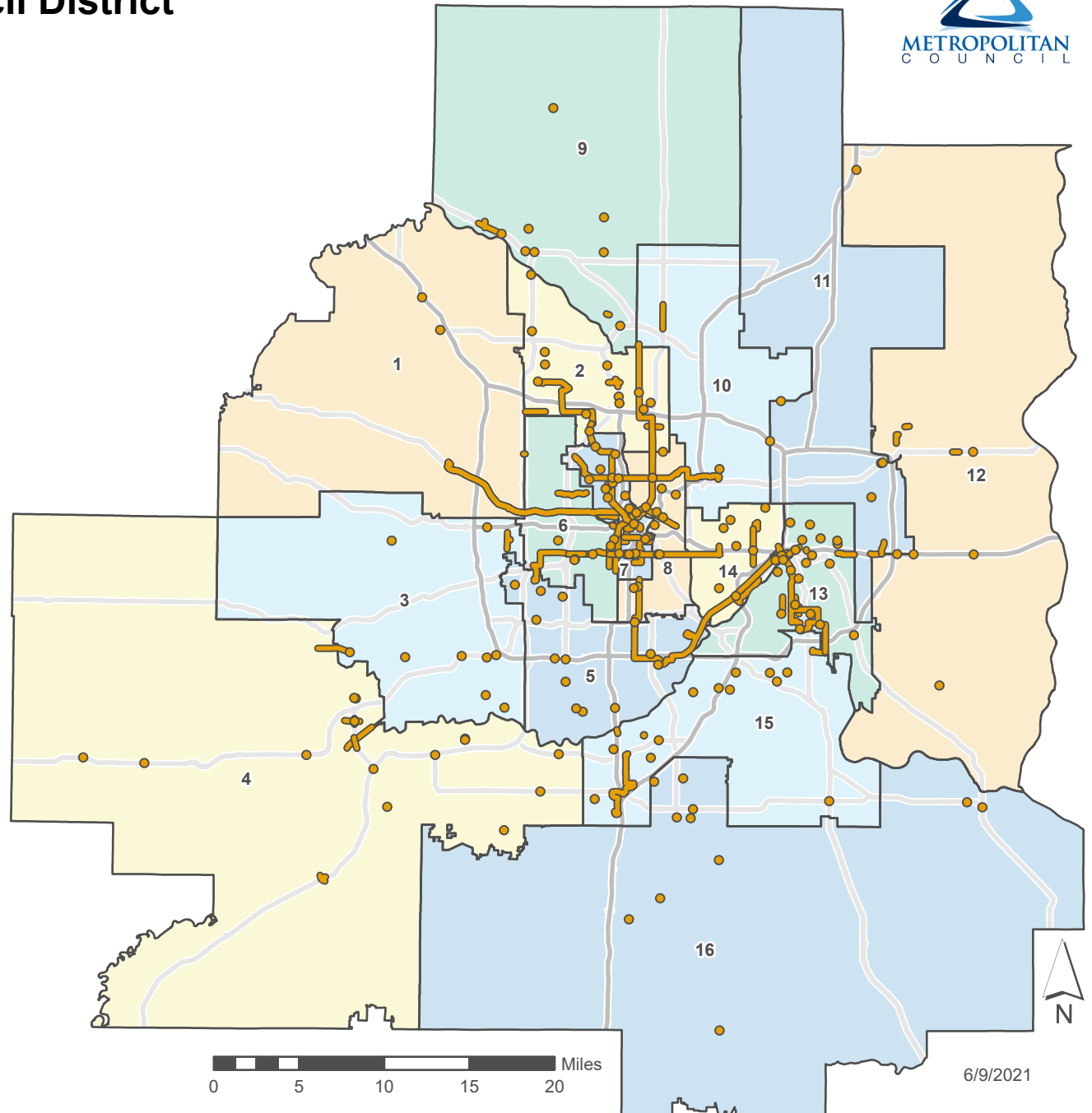
# Figure 2A. Location of 2014-2020 Regional Solicitation Funded Projects by Council District



| District | Federal Funds | Pop | Jobs |
|----------|---------------|-----|------|
| 1        | 2%            | 6%  | 7%   |
| 2        | 11%           | 6%  | 5%   |
| 3        | 4%            | 6%  | 8%   |
| 4        | 9%            | 7%  | 4%   |
| 5        | 7%            | 6%  | 12%  |
| 6        | 6%            | 6%  | 6%   |
| 7        | 14%           | 6%  | 12%  |
| 8        | 9%            | 6%  | 6%   |
| 9        | 6%            | 6%  | 3%   |
| 10       | 2%            | 6%  | 7%   |
| 11       | 2%            | 6%  | 5%   |
| 12       | 3%            | 7%  | 4%   |
| 13       | 11%           | 6%  | 6%   |
| 14       | 3%            | 6%  | 6%   |
| 15       | 5%            | 6%  | 7%   |
| 16       | 3%            | 7%  | 3%   |

Notes: Federal funding refers to amount awarded in Regional Solicitation only. Population and employment data based on 2020 estimates in Metropolitan Council's TAZ with Current Forecasts dataset. Project corridors are only available for 2020 projects and 2018 transit projects. Excludes regional and travel demand management projects. Projects that cross boundaries are evenly divided among intersecting jurisdictions.

- Selected Project Points
- Selected Project Corridors
- Interstate Highways
- Other Major Roads
- Metropolitan Council Districts



# Figure 2B. Location of 2014-2020 Regional Solicitation Funded Projects by Council District, Scaled



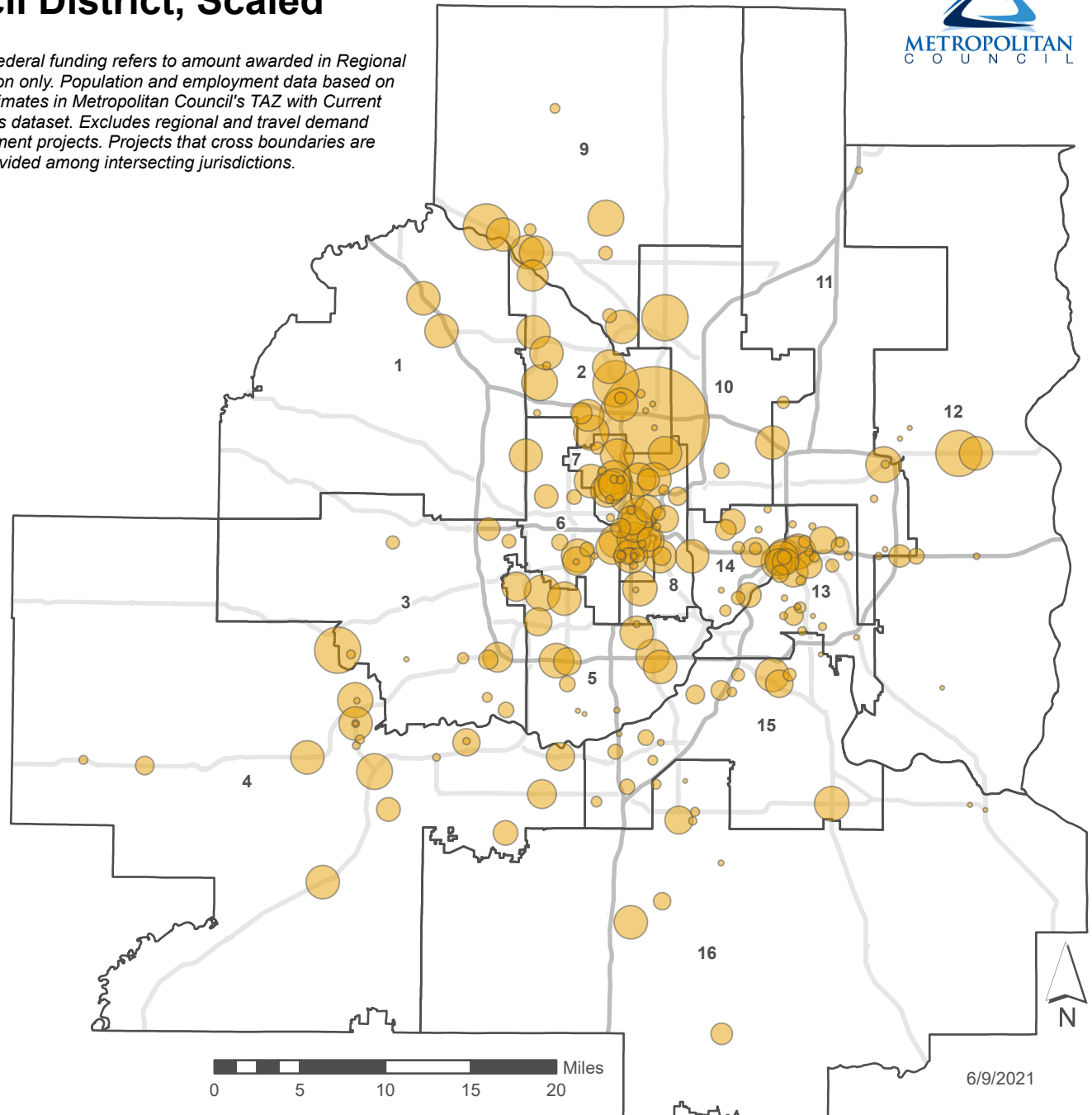
| District | Federal Funds | Pop | Jobs |
|----------|---------------|-----|------|
| 1        | 2%            | 6%  | 7%   |
| 2        | 11%           | 6%  | 5%   |
| 3        | 4%            | 6%  | 8%   |
| 4        | 9%            | 7%  | 4%   |
| 5        | 7%            | 6%  | 12%  |
| 6        | 6%            | 6%  | 6%   |
| 7        | 14%           | 6%  | 12%  |
| 8        | 9%            | 6%  | 6%   |
| 9        | 6%            | 6%  | 3%   |
| 10       | 2%            | 6%  | 7%   |
| 11       | 2%            | 6%  | 5%   |
| 12       | 3%            | 7%  | 4%   |
| 13       | 11%           | 6%  | 6%   |
| 14       | 3%            | 6%  | 6%   |
| 15       | 5%            | 6%  | 7%   |
| 16       | 3%            | 7%  | 3%   |

Notes: Federal funding refers to amount awarded in Regional Solicitation only. Population and employment data based on 2020 estimates in Metropolitan Council's TAZ with Current Forecasts dataset. Excludes regional and travel demand management projects. Projects that cross boundaries are evenly divided among intersecting jurisdictions.

### Selected Projects (\$)

- 100,000
- 500,000
- 1,000,000
- 5,000,000
- 10,000,000

- Interstate Highways
- Other Major Roads
- Metropolitan Council Districts



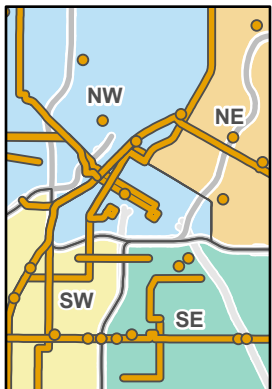
# Figure 3A. Location of 2014-2020 Regional Solicitation Funded Projects by Quadrant



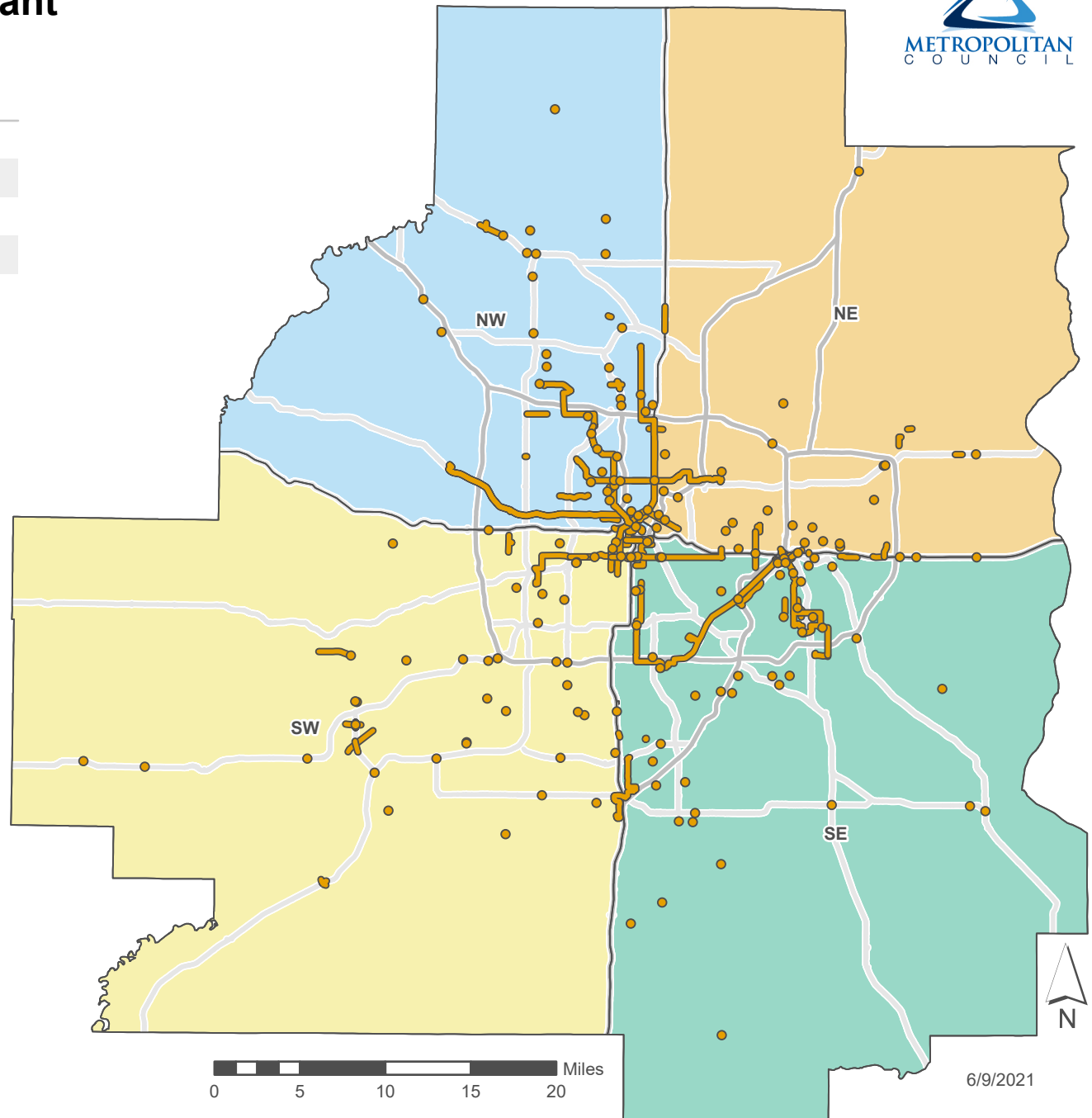
| Quadrant  | Federal Funds | Pop | Jobs |
|-----------|---------------|-----|------|
| Northwest | 32%           | 25% | 28%  |
| Northeast | 15%           | 23% | 23%  |
| Southeast | 26%           | 28% | 25%  |
| Southwest | 27%           | 24% | 24%  |

Notes: Federal funding refers to amount awarded in Regional Solicitation only. Population and employment data based on 2020 estimates in Metropolitan Council's TAZ with Current Forecasts dataset. Project corridors are only available for 2020 projects and 2018 transit projects. Excludes regional and travel demand management projects. Projects that cross boundaries are evenly divided among intersecting quadrants.

Downtown Minneapolis Detail



Downtown Saint Paul Detail



- Selected Project Points
- Selected Project Corridors
- Interstate Highways
- Other Major Roads
- Quadrants



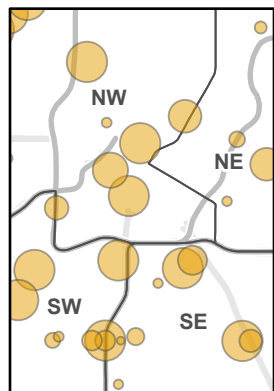
# Figure 3B. Location of 2014-2020 Regional Solicitation Funded Projects by Quadrant, Scaled



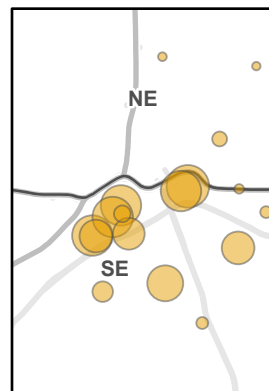
| Quadrant  | Federal Funds | Pop | Jobs |
|-----------|---------------|-----|------|
| Northwest | 32%           | 25% | 28%  |
| Northeast | 15%           | 23% | 23%  |
| Southeast | 26%           | 28% | 25%  |
| Southwest | 27%           | 24% | 24%  |

Notes: Federal funding refers to amount awarded in Regional Solicitation only. Population and employment data based on 2020 estimates in Metropolitan Council's TAZ with Current Forecasts dataset. Project corridors are only available for 2020 projects and 2018 transit projects. Excludes regional and travel demand management projects. Projects that cross boundaries are evenly divided among intersecting quadrants.

**Downtown Minneapolis Detail**



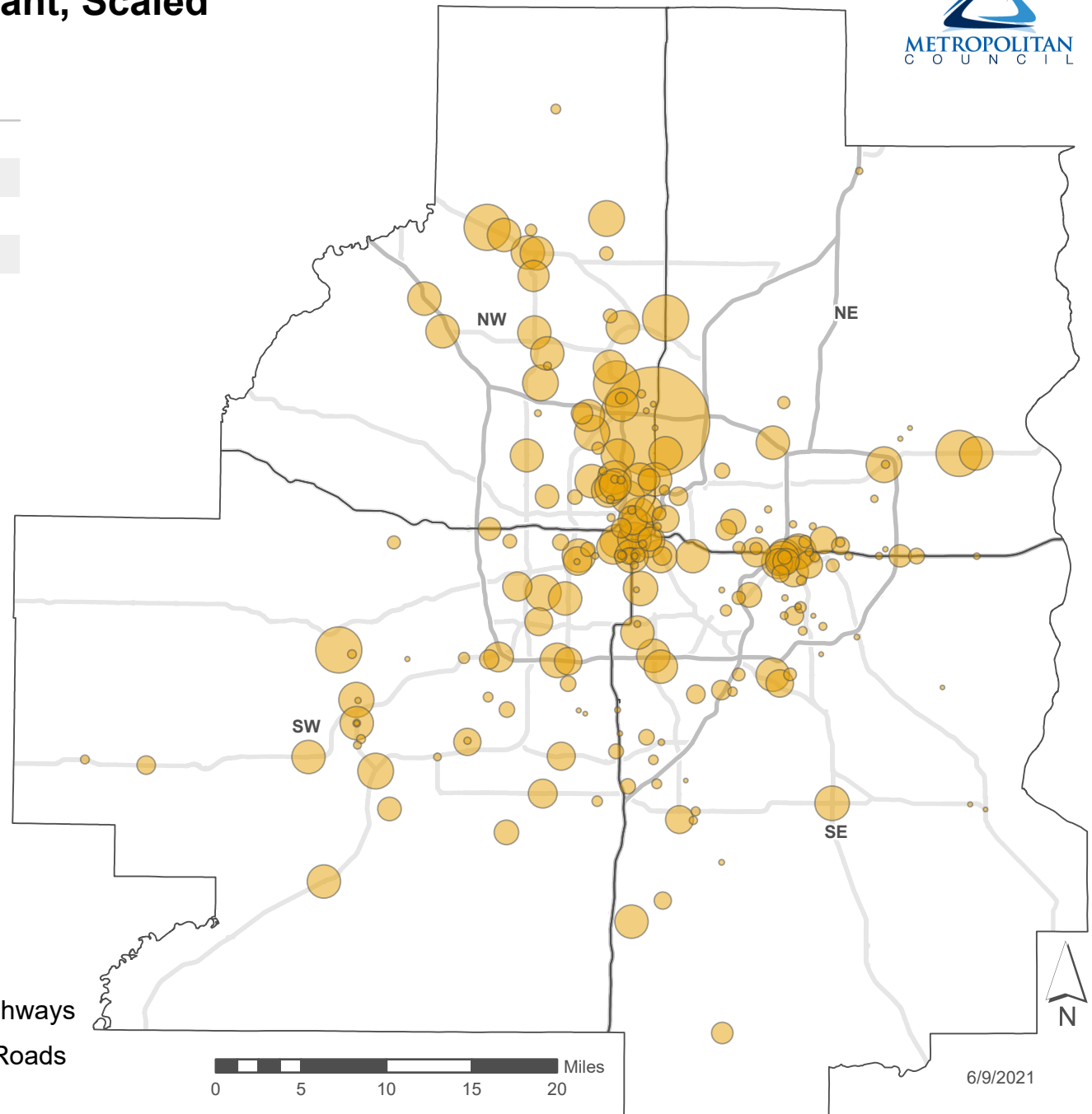
**Downtown Saint Paul Detail**



**Selected Projects (\$)**

- 100,000
- 500,000
- 1,000,000
- 5,000,000
- 10,000,000

- Interstate Highways
- Other Major Roads
- Quadrants

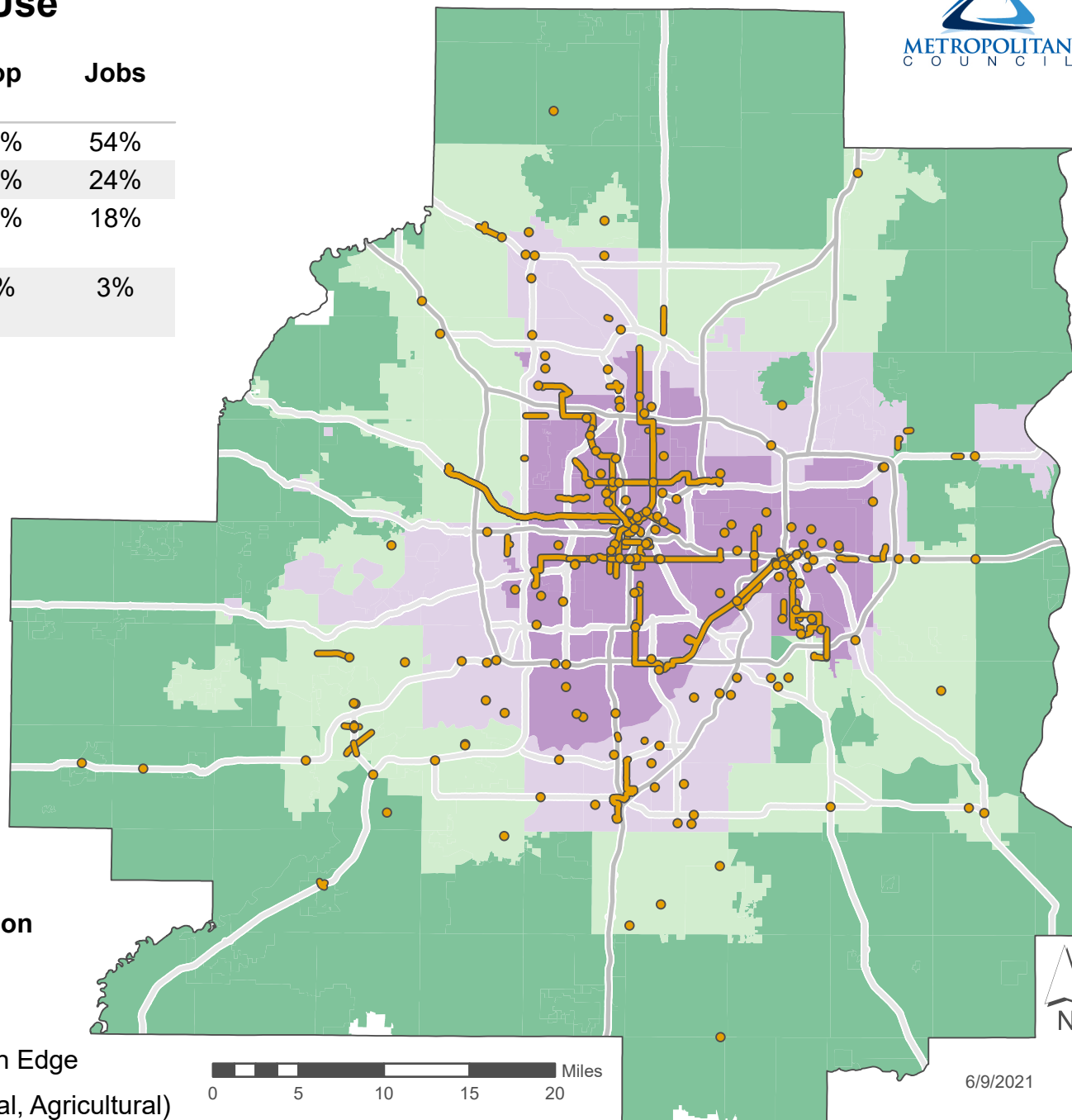
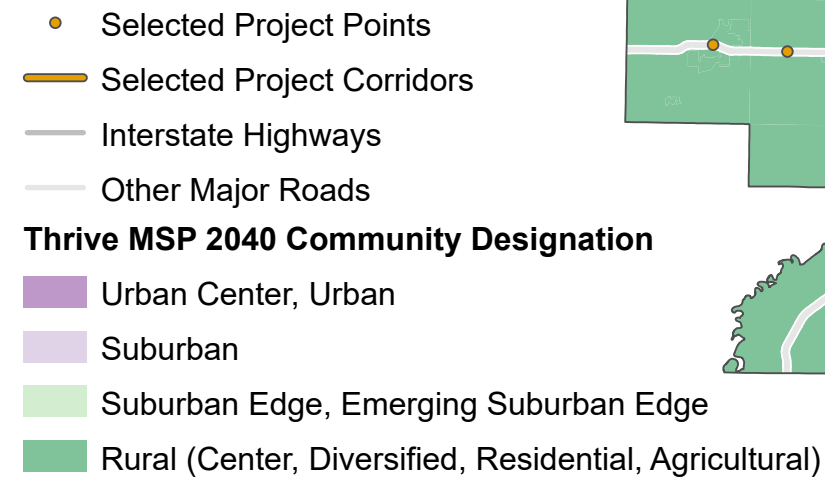


# Figure 4A. Location of 2014-2020 Regional Solicitation Funded Projects by Land Use



| Designation Summary                                    | Federal Funds | Pop | Jobs |
|--|---------------|-----|------|
| Urban, Urban Center                                    | 56%           | 42% | 54%  |
| Suburban   | 22%           | 24% | 24%  |
| Suburban Edge, Emerging Suburban Edge                  | 18%           | 25% | 18%  |
| Rural (Center, Diversified, Residential, Agricultural) | 4%            | 8%  | 3%   |

Notes: Federal funding refers to amount awarded in Regional Solicitation only. Population and employment data based on 2020 estimates in Metropolitan Council's TAZ with Current Forecasts dataset. Project corridors are only available for 2020 projects and 2018 transit projects. Excludes regional and travel demand management projects. Projects that cross boundaries are evenly divided among intersecting designations.



# Figure 4B. Location of 2014-2020 Regional Solicitation Funded Projects by Land Use, Scaled



| Designation Summary                                    | Federal Funds | Pop | Jobs |
|--|---------------|-----|------|
| Urban, Urban Center                                    | 56%           | 42% | 54%  |
| Suburban   | 22%           | 24% | 24%  |
| Suburban Edge, Emerging Suburban Edge                  | 18%           | 25% | 18%  |
| Rural (Center, Diversified, Residential, Agricultural) | 4%            | 8%  | 3%   |

Notes: Federal funding refers to amount awarded in Regional Solicitation only. Population and employment data based on 2020 estimates in Metropolitan Council's TAZ with Current Forecasts dataset. Project corridors are only available for 2020 projects and 2018 transit projects. Excludes regional and travel demand management projects. Projects that cross boundaries are evenly divided among intersecting designations.

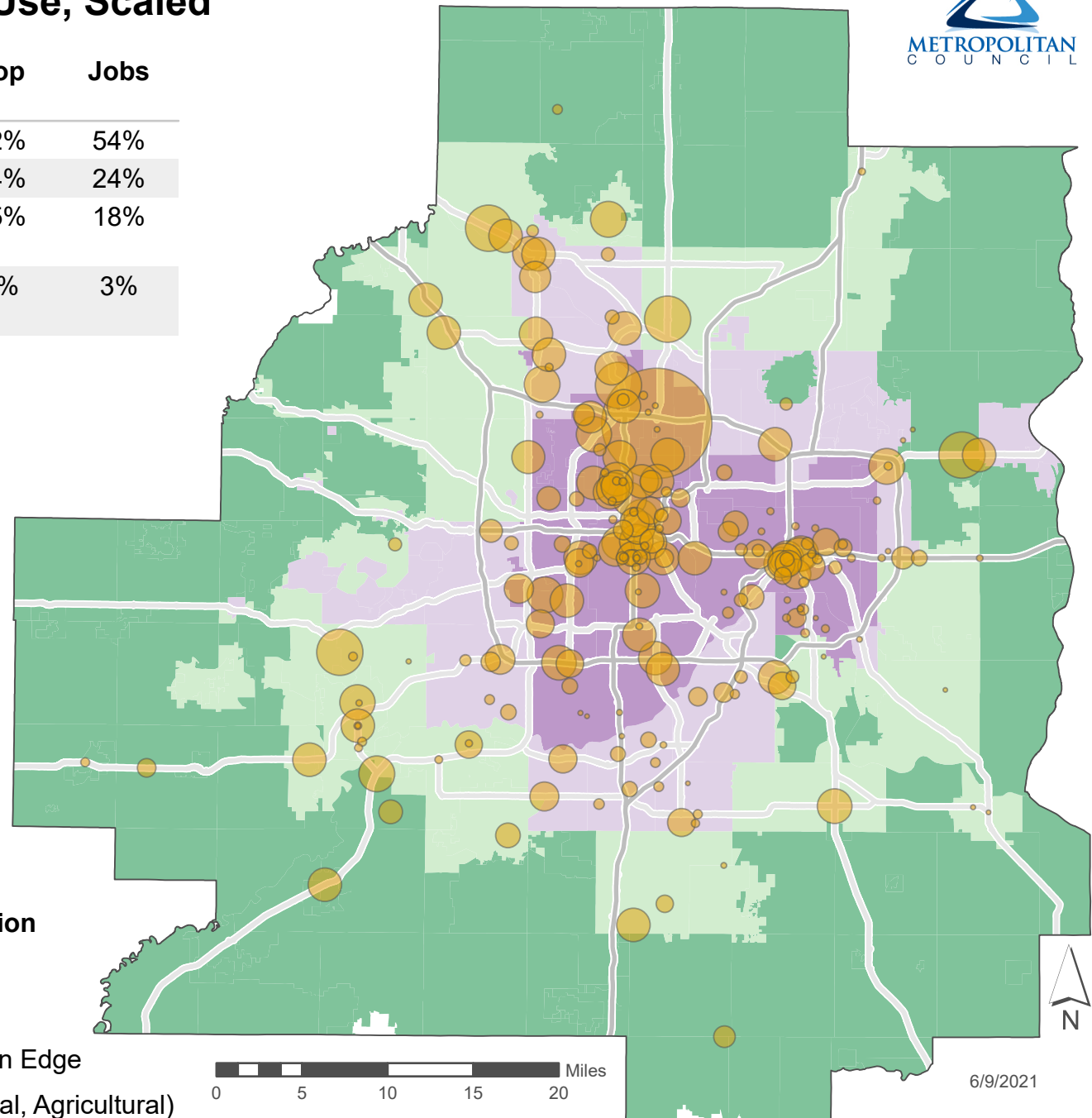
### Selected Projects (\$)

- 100,000
- 500,000
- 1,000,000
- 5,000,000
- 10,000,000

- Interstate Highways
- Other Major Roads

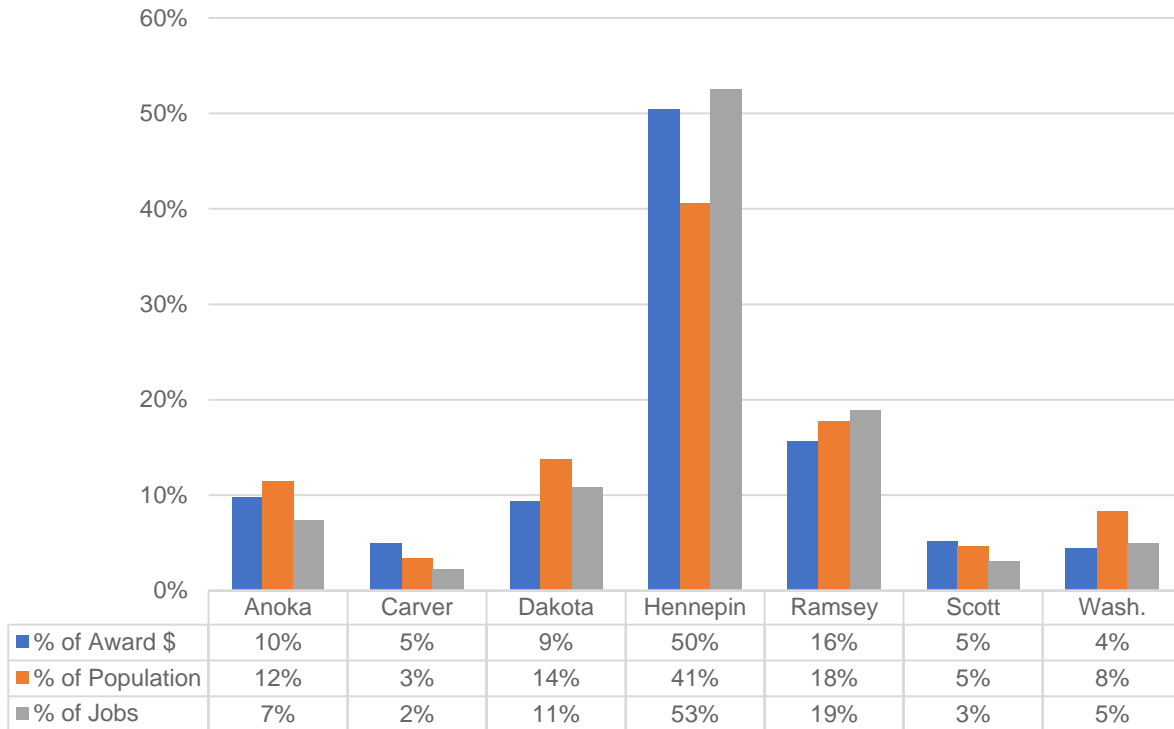
### Thrive MSP 2040 Community Designation

- Urban Center, Urban
- Suburban
- Suburban Edge, Emerging Suburban Edge
- Rural (Center, Diversified, Residential, Agricultural)

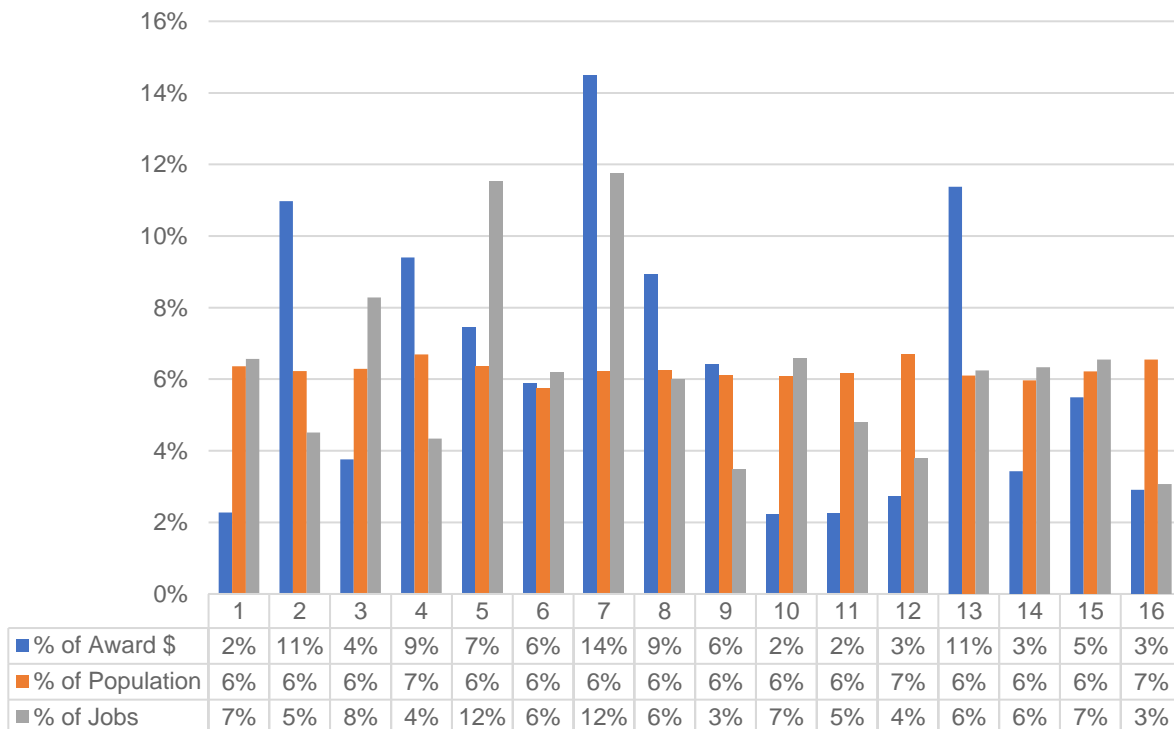


# Geographic Balance of Regional Solicitation Awards, 2014-2020

**Figure 5A. 2014-2020 Awards by County**  
Excluding TDM and Regional Projects



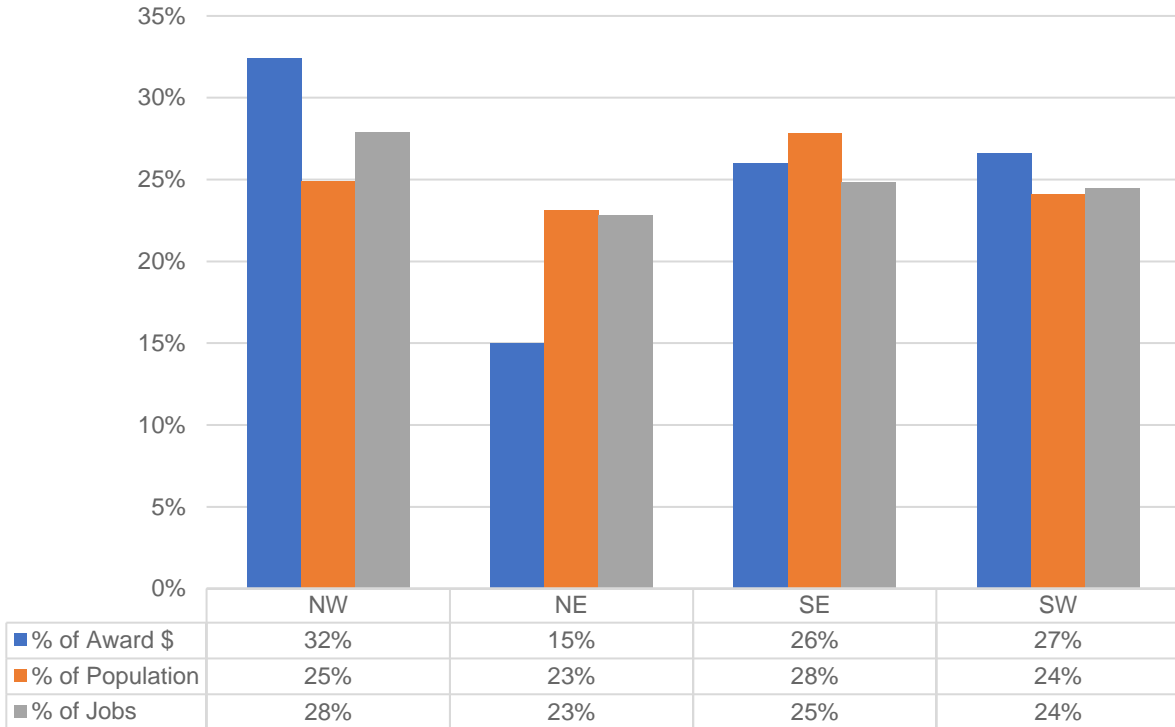
**Figure 5B. 2014-2020 Awards by Council District**  
Excluding TDM and Regional Projects



# Geographic Balance of Regional Solicitation Awards, 2014-2020

## Figure 5C. 2014-2020 Awards by Quadrant

Excluding TDM and Regional Projects



## Figure 5D. 2014-2020 Awards by Land Use Designation

Excluding TDM and Regional Projects

