

# Regional Solicitation Unique Projects Development Process – Update

Transportation Committee – July 12, 2021



# What is the Regional Solicitation?

Regional process to allocate federal transportation funds to locally-initiated public projects that support regional transportation goals and objectives.

- Solicit and select **\$200 million worth of projects every two years** for implementation four-to-five years into the future (e.g., 2020 Regional Solicitation will fund projects in 2024 and 2025)
- Use a transparent and **technically-driven scoring system** to select projects
- Federal awards pay **up to 80%** of total project cost or adopted maximum awards

# Strong Linkage to Regional Policy

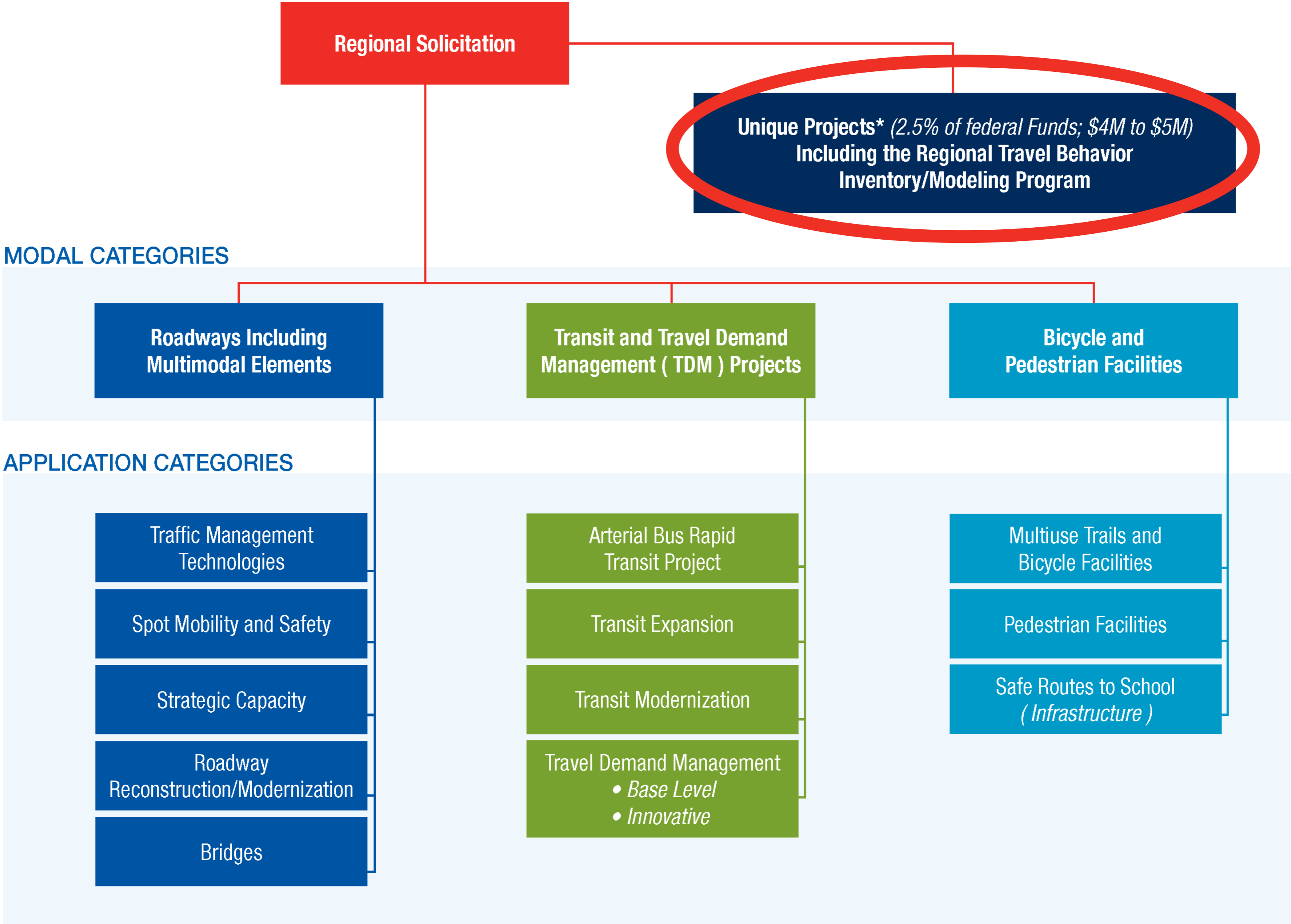


- Qualifying criteria ask applicants to document consistency with regional policy
- Geographic balance is a secondary lens

# 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 Work Group

- Met five times from April 23 – July 9
- Comprised of TAB volunteers
  - 2 Met Council Members (CM Barber and CM Fredson)
  - 4 County representatives
  - 3 City representatives
  - 5 citizen or modal representatives
- Provide policy direction to technical staff to develop category details

# 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	September 2021
Regional Solicitation public comment	Sept – Nov 2021
Initial project interest form due	November 2021
Consultation w/ 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
- Share information with Regional Solicitation Policy Work Group

# 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
- Regional Solicitation Policy Work Group members evaluate and rank projects

# Recommendations (cont.)

## Evaluation Criteria Questions

- Criteria are the six primary factors used to evaluate projects
  - 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 is the project **innovative**?
  - 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

# 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 items to Transportation Advisory Board and technical committees in July and 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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