POLICYMAKER WORKSHOP SUMMARY
REGIONAL SOLICITATION EVALUATION

December 18, 2024

Overview

The Metropolitan Council hosted a workshop to gather input on potential application categories for future Regional Solicitation funding categories on December 18, 2024. The workshop focused on aligning project funding with the goals and objectives outlined in the Imagine 2050 Transportation Policy Plan, with participants engaging in structured small-group discussions to evaluate and prioritize various application categories for the Regional Solicitation process. Attendees included policymakers from around the region.

Date: December 18, 2024

Time: 1:30 PM – 4:00 PM

Location: 101 5th St E 10, St Paul, MN 55101; Minnesota Room and St. Paul Room (16th Floor)

Attendees

The workshop brought together 54 participants, including 36 key policymakers representing various regional transportation bodies. Attendees included members of the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), TAB alternates, representatives from the Metropolitan Council's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and members of the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Committee. The discussion groups were supported by 18 staff members who served as facilitators, ensuring productive dialogue and clear documentation of the participants' recommendations and priorities (Table 1).

Table 1: List of participants and staff attendees at the Regional Solicitation's Policymaker workshop.

Group	Name	Organization
TAB	Becky Petryk	City
TAB	Brian Martinson	Modal, Non-motorized
TAB	Charles Carlson	Agency
TAB	Christopher Geisler	Citizen
TAB	Christopher Vaughan	Modal, Transit
TAB	Deb Barber	Met Council
TAB	Debbie Goettel	County
TAB	Doug Anderson	Citizen
TAB	Gary Hansen	Agency
TAB	George Schember	Modal, Freight
TAB	Glen Johnson	Citizen
TAB	James Hovland	City
TAB	Jeffrey Weisensel	City
TAB	John Fahey	County
TAB	Jon Ulrich	County
TAB	Julie Jeppson	County
TAB	Kevin Burkart	City
TAB	Khani Sahebjam	Agency
TAB	Mark Jenkins	Citizen

TAB	Mark Windschitl	City

Group	Name	Organization
TAB	Mary Jo McGuire	County
TAB	Mary Liz Holberg	County
TAB	Peter Dugan	Citizen
TAB	Stan Karwoski	County
TAB Alternate	Bill Droste	County
TAB Alternate	Brandon Wagenfeld	Citizen
TAB Alternate	Karla Bigham	County
TAB Alternate	Katie Cashman	City
TAB Alternate	Kevin Anderson	County
TAB Alternate	Mike Gamache	County
TAB Alternate	Saura Jost	City
TAB Alternate	Timothy Marino	Modal, Transit
TAC	Aaron Tag	MnDOT
TAC	Brian Isaacson	County
TAC	Gina Mitteco	County
TAC	Jenifer Hager	City
TAC	Joe MacPherson	County
TAC	KC Atkin	County
TAC	Lyssa Leitner	County
TAC	Molly McCartney	MnDOT
TAC	Paul Oehme	City
Transportation Committee	Anjuli Cameron	Met Council
Transportation Committee	Diego Morales	Met Council
Transportation Committee	Toni Carter	Met Council
Transportation Committee	Tyronne Carter	Met Council
Staff	Amy Vennewitz	Met Council
Staff	Bethany Brandt-Sargent	Met Council
Staff	Cole Hiniker	Met Council
Staff	Colin Kelly	Met Council
Staff	Dan Marckel	Met Council
Staff	David Buins	Met Council
Staff	David Vessel	Met Council
Staff	Elaine Koutsoukos	Met Council
Staff	Heidi Schallberg	Met Council
Staff	Joe Barbeau	Met Council
Staff	Joe Widing	Met Council
Staff	Robbie King	Met Council
Staff	Steve Peterson	Met Council
Staff	Lydia Statz	SRF Consulting
Staff	Molly Stewart	SRF Consulting
Staff	Katie Caskey	HDR
Staff	Dan Edgerton	Zan Associates
Staff	David Almaer	Zan Associates
Staff	Julia Nicholson	Zan Associates

Activity

Participants were randomly split into groups of five to eight people and assigned to tables, each with its own copy of the activity. Working together, participants had 85 minutes to sort through a stack of 31 cards (Figure 1), each representing a different TPP Policy or Objective that had been flagged as an investment priority (see Table 2 below). Participants discussed whether the policy or objective should become an application category, be included in some other way such as a scoring measure or qualifying requirement, or not be included in the solicitation. Then, participants placed these cards in one of these three categories on a placemat at their table (Figure 2). Participants also had blank cards at their disposal should they want to add new categories. A facilitator kept each group on track to make sure they discussed every card, while a notetaker kept track of the discussion.
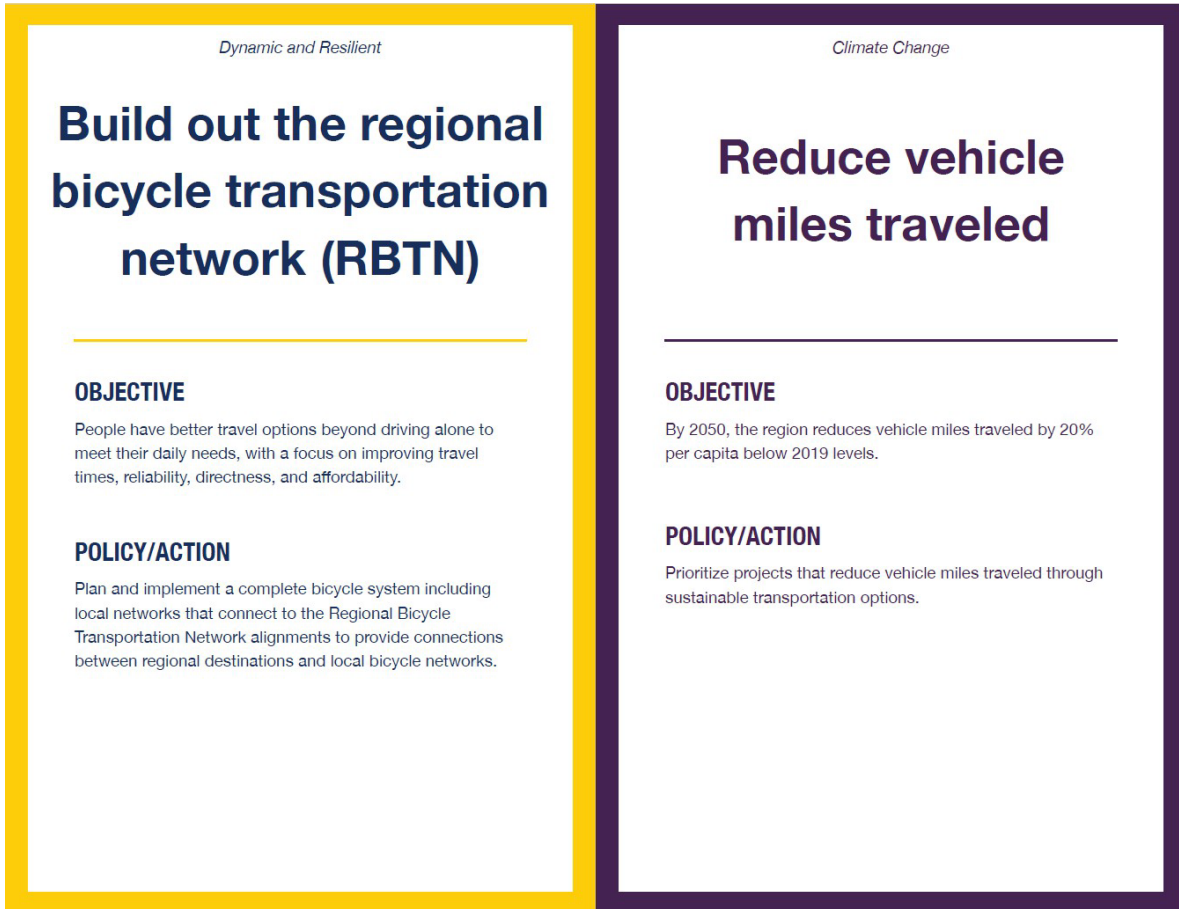
Figure 1: Two cards used in the activity have different colored-borders to show which TPP goal their policy or objective falls under.
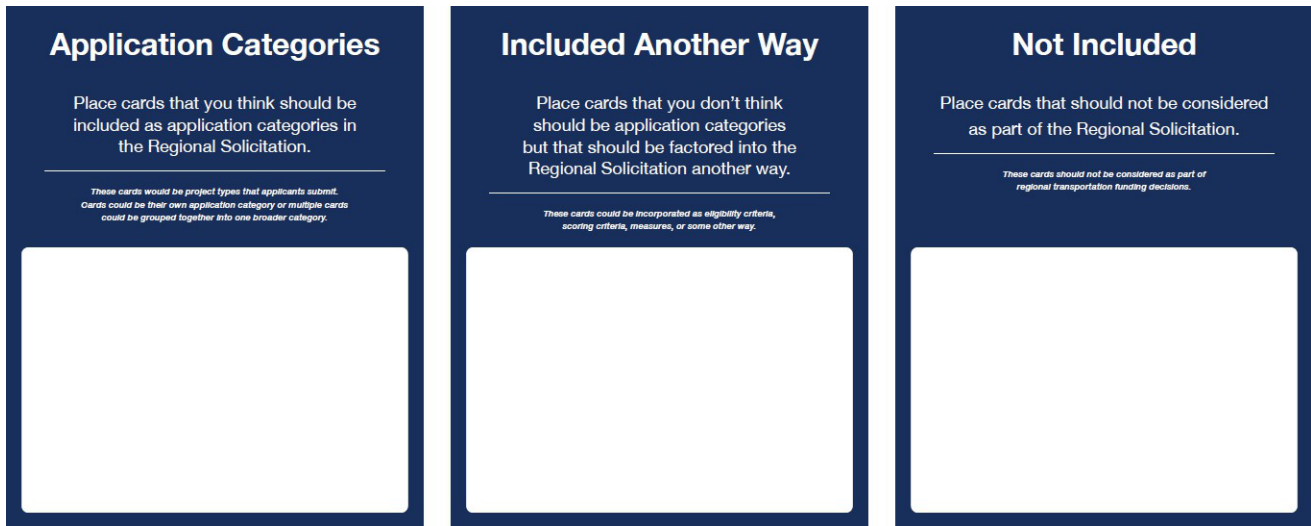

Figure 2: Policymakers sorted each card into one of three boxes on the placemat above.

At the conclusion of the activity, many groups left several cards to the side of placemat or stacked on top of each other, to show that they had not come to an agreement or to show that they believe that the cards should be combined in some way. Every group was given time to share out some of the conversations they had and the choices they made as a result.

Figure 3: Five policymakers at Table 4 work together to complete the small group activity.

The summary of findings below is compiled from the results and discussion shared in each group's notes:

Summary Results

Most groups created a hybrid structure of categories with some modal-focused and some outcome-focused categories. Application categories that every group agreed upon were Improving Multimodal Travel, Improving Highway Mobility/Reliability, and Transit Service Expansion and Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ABRT). Application categories that 7 out of 8 groups agreed upon were Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging and Safety. Climate/Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Regulation was chosen as an application category by 6 out of 8 groups.

Although 7 out of 8 groups put the card Reduce deaths and life changing injuries in the application category column on the placemat, nearly every group noted that it was too broad of a category and therefore should also be included in the Solicitation in some other way.

Several groups created separate categories with a regional focus and a local focus. One participant who represents a smaller city emphasized that bigger cities often win out over smaller cities in the Solicitation and a local category would ensure that smaller cities receive some funding as well.

Figure 4: Table 3 combined cards that could fall within a similar application category.

Groups were split on the card addressing ABRT, with half of all groups grouping it into a larger transit expansion category and the other half emphasizing that it too large of a sector to not be its own category.

Common Scoring Measures or Qualifying Requirements

At least 5 out of 8 groups placed these cards in the middle column of the placemat, indicating that they believe that policy or objective should not be included as an application category, but in some other way, such as a scoring measure or qualifying requirement:

- Repair and eliminate disparate and unjust harms
- Implement decision making with historically underrepresented communities
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled
- Ensure community benefits and burdens are distributed equally
- Improve transportation for people with disabilities that meets and goes beyond minimum ADA standards
- Reduce total impervious surface coverage or minimize right-of-way needs
- Protect and restore natural systems in transportation right-of-way
- Mitigate climate or weather-related impacts through resiliency improvements
- Mitigate and avoid health impacts of nearby transportation infrastructure
- Provide safe, secure, and welcoming transit facilities

Table 2: A summary of where every group placed each card on their placemat shows which policies and objectives were frequently decided to be potential scoring measures or qualifying requirements.

Suggested Category	Application Category	Included Some Way	Not Included	Suggested Outcome
Build out the regional bicycle transportation network (RBTN)	8	0		Application Category
Improve local bicycle connections, with emphasis on filling network gaps and connecting to the RBTN	8	0		Application Category
Improve local pedestrian travel options.	8	0		Application Category
Expand transit services to a variety of transit markets, including microtransit	8	0		Application Category
Improve highway mobility on corridors with high levels of delay and issues with reliability	8	0		Application Category
Improve transportation options and transit advantages on roadway corridors with delay and reliability issues	8	0		Application Category
Improve high-capacity transit corridors with transitway investments, including arterial bus rapid transit (ABRT)	7	0	1	Application Category
Promote and encourage alternatives to driving alone via TDM	7	0	1	Application Category
Improve access to EV charging infrastructure	7	0		Application Category
Reduce deaths and life changing injuries	7	1		Application Category
Provide more opportunities to walk, bike and roll	7	1		Application Category
Improve connections between modes (such as mobility hubs, wayfinding, stop amenities)	7	1		Application Category
Improve the safety and comfort of people outside of vehicles	6	2		Application Category
Eliminate physical barriers to non-motorized travel	6	2		Application Category
Improve transit experience for rider information and fares	4	3	1	TBD
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	4	4		TBD
Improve first/last mile freight connections to major highways	3	2	2	TBD
Invest in asset management projects that advance as many regional goals and objectives as possible.	3	3	2	TBD
Encourage multi-modal travel and improve comfort and safety for all users, based on appropriate context.	3	4		TBD
Implement projects that use a Complete Streets approach	3	4		TBD
Repair and eliminate disparate and unjust harms	3	5		Included Some Way
Provide safe, secure, and welcoming transit facilities	3	5		Included Some Way
Reduce vehicle miles traveled	3	5		Included Some Way

Suggested Category	Application Category	Included Some Way	Not Included	Suggested Outcome
Improve transportation for people with disabilities that meets and goes beyond minimum ADA standards	2	6		Included Some Way
Mitigate and avoid health impacts of nearby transportation infrastructure (for example, air quality, noise, light)	1	6		Included Some Way
Mitigate climate or weather-related impacts through resiliency improvements.	1	6		Included Some Way
Ensure community benefits and burdens are distributed equally	1	7		Included Some Way
Protect and restore natural systems in transportation right of way.	1	7		Included Some Way
Support placemaking that supports community well-being	0	5	3	Included Some Way
Reduce total impervious surface coverage or minimize right-of-way needs	0	6	2	Included Some Way
Implement shared decision making with historically underrepresented communities	0	8		Included Some Way

In general, many groups found the cards with policies and objectives related to the TPP Goals Equitable and Inclusive, Health and Safe, and Natural Systems to fit better within the Solicitation as criteria, while the cards related to Dynamic and Resilient were more closely tied to their ideal application categories.

The cards representing the TPP Goal of Climate Change were split; though almost every group agreed that EV charging should be its own category because of its specificity, they considered the other policies and objectives as possible criteria, because they should apply to many projects across a range of modes.

Policies and Objectives That Should Not Be Included

5 out of 8 groups put at least one card in the column indicating that they do not think the policy or objective should be included in the Solicitation. Three groups decided that the card Support placemaking that supports community well-being should not be included in the Solicitation. Roughly half of all groups seemed to spend a considerable amount of time debating this card, with some suggesting that placemaking was not a responsibility of the Solicitation and others unsure of how it would be measured.
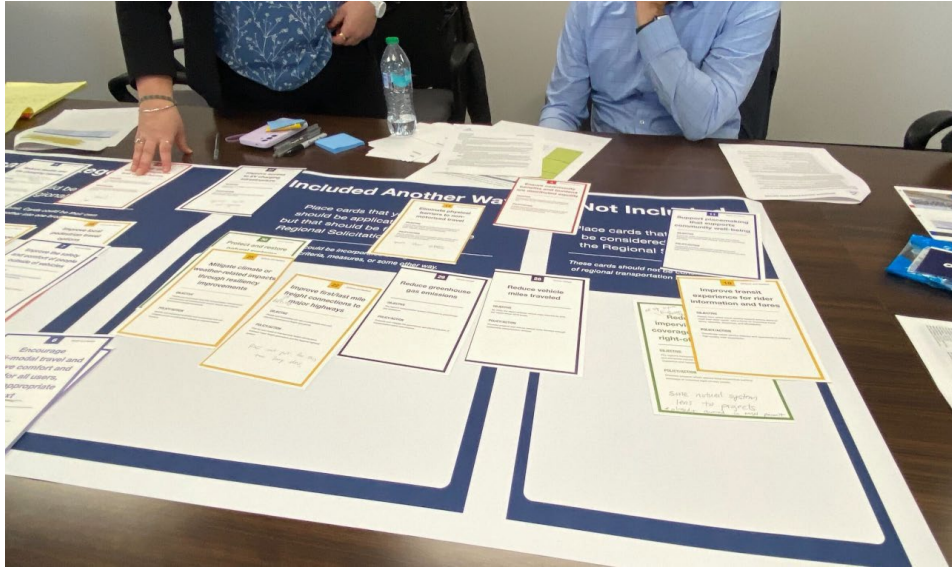
Figure 5: Table 8 placed several cards in the final column on the placemat, indicating that they do not think those policies and objectives should be considered in the Regional Solicitation.

Another card that received a lot of discussion was "Invest in asset management projects that advance as many regional goals and objectives as possible." Two groups placed this card in the not included category, while three put it in either of the other two categories, respectively. Several groups emphasized that the Solicitation should prioritize and track asset management, whereas other groups expressed confusion over what this category would entail and what a project would like if it did not fall under this category.

Appendix

Appendix A: Policymaker Workshop Results

Table 1 Results

Policies that should be application categories

- Provide safe, secure, and welcoming transit facilities (8)
- Multimodal travel (encourage multimodal travel, improve safety and comfort, provide more opportunities to bike/walk/roll) (6, 7, 10)
- Local connections (Improve local pedestrian travel options, improve local bike connections) (13, 15)
- Build out regional bicycle transportation network (RBTN) (12)
- Climate (reduce GHG, reduce VMT) (26, 28)
- Transit expansion (expand transit service including micromobility, ABRT, improve transit experience) (16, 17, 18)
- Highway mobility (improve first/last mile freight connections, improve highway mobility, improve transportation options and transit advantages) (22, 23, 24)
- Improve connections (eliminate physical barriers to nonmotorized travel, TDM, improve connections between modes) (14, 19, 20)
- Roadway modernization (Invest in asset management that advance as many goals) (31)
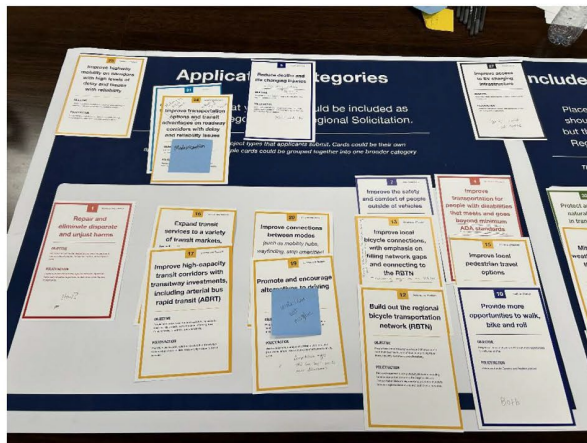- Improve access to EV charging infrastructure (27)

Table 1 Results
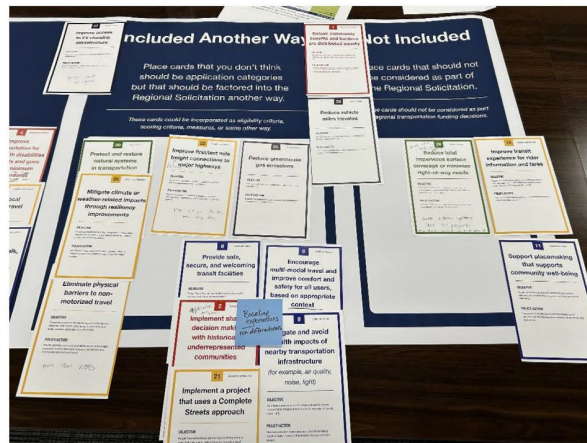
Table 2 Results

Policies that should be application categories

- Multimodal travel (improve safety and comfort, encourage multimodal travel, build out regional bicycle transportation network (RBTN), improve local bike connections) (6,12, 13)
- Provide more opportunities to bike/walk/roll (10)
- Climate (TDM, Improve access to EV charging infrastructure) (19, 27)
- Reduce deaths and injuries (5)
- Transit service (expand transit service including micromobility, improve transportation options and transit advantages) (16, 24)
- Transit facilities (improve transit experience, improve connections between modes) (18, 20)
- Improve highway mobility (23)
- Pedestrian accessibility (ADA, eliminate physical barriers to nonmotorized travel, Improve local pedestrian travel options) (4, 14, 15)
- Roadway modernization (Invest in asset management that advance as many goals) (31)
- ABRT (17)

Table 2 Results
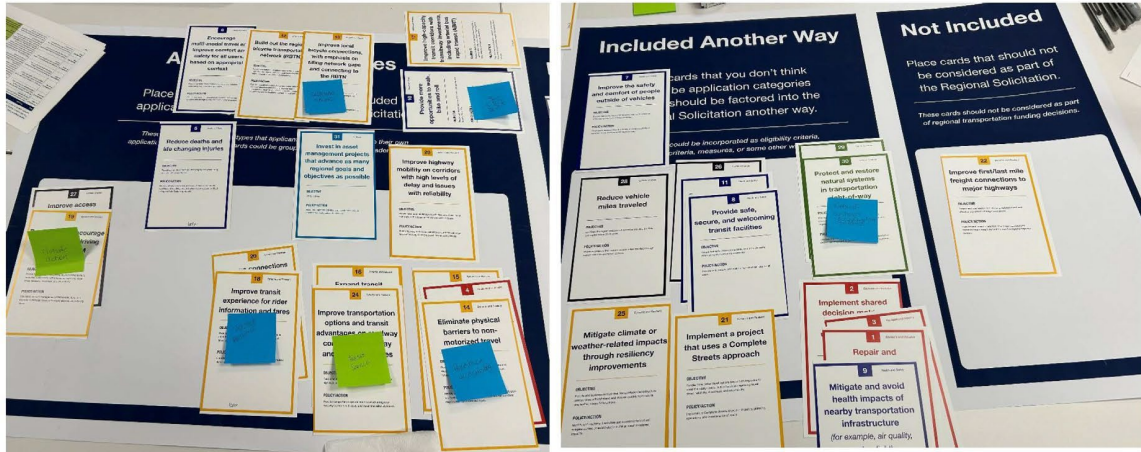
Table 3 Results

Policies that should be application categories

- Regional multimodal travel (build out regional bicycle transportation network (RBTN), eliminate physical barriers to nonmotorized travel) (12, 14)
- Local multimodal travel (improve local bike connection, improve local pedestrian travel options, improve connections between modes) (13, 15, 20)
- Corridor (complete streets, Improve transportation options and transit advantages) (21, 24)
- Mitigate climate or weather-related impacts (25)
- Reduce deaths and injuries (5)
- Expand transit service including micromobility (16)
- Highway mobility (improve first/last mile freight connections, improve highway mobility) (22, 23)
- ABRT (17)
- Improve access to EV charging infrastructure (27)
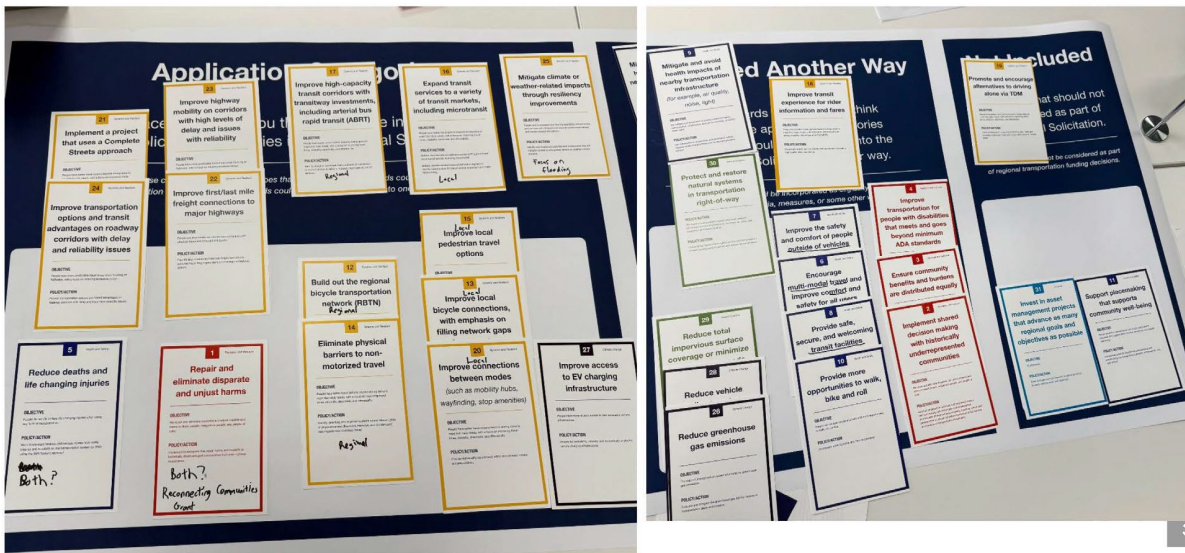- Repair and eliminate harms (1)

Table 3 Results

Table 4 Results

Policies that should be application categories

- Safety (Reduce deaths and serious injuries, improve safety and comfort outside vehicles) (5, 7)
- EV Charging (27)
- Regional Mobility (Improve highway mobility on corridors with delay, improve transportation options and transit advantages) (23, 24)
- Transit Access (Expand transit services, ABRT) (16, 17)
- Travel Options (Encourage multimodal travel, TDM, Improve connections between modes) (6, 19, 20)
- Pedestrian/Bike Travel (Walk, bike and roll, RBTN, improve local pedestrian travel, Complete Streets) (10, 12, 13, 15, 21)

Table 4 Results

Table 5 Results

Policies that should be application categories

- Reduce deaths and serious injuries (5)
- EV Charging (27)
- Regional Mobility (Improve first/last mile freight connections, Improve highway mobility on corridors with delay) (22, 23)
- Reduce GHG Emissions
  - TDM (19)
  - Active Transportation (safety and comfort, walk/bike/roll, improve local connections, RBTN, eliminate barriers, local pedestrian travel, reduce VMT) (7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 28)
  - Transit (safe transit facilities, expand transit service, ABRT, improve transit experience, connections between modes, transit advantages and travel options) (8, 16, 17, 18, 20,
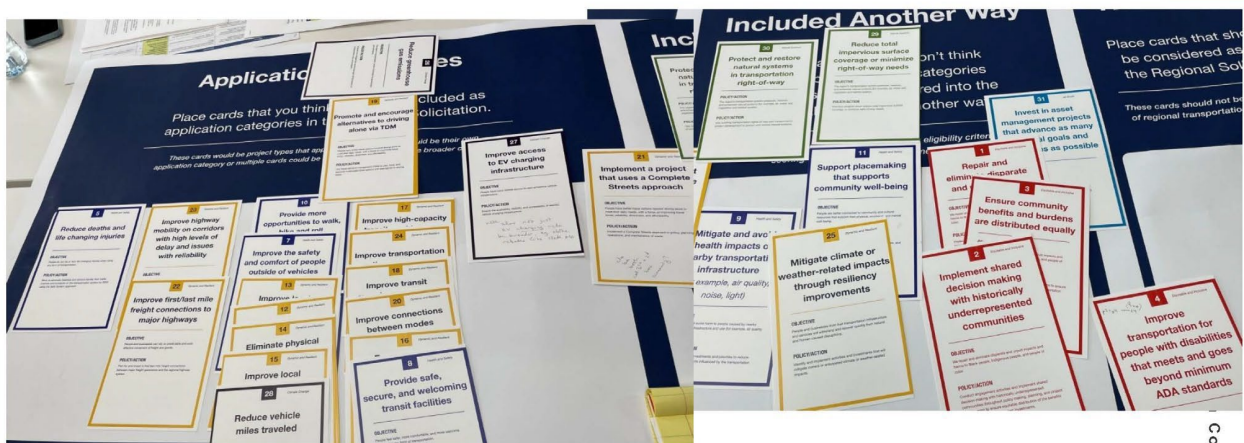- Complete Streets (21)

Table 5 Results

Table 6 Results

Policies that should be application categories

- Regional Mobility (highway mobility on corridors with delay, transit options and transit advantages) (23, 24)
- Complete Streets (local pedestrian travel, complete streets approach) (15, 21)
- Climate Change (TM, reduce GHG, EV charging) (19, 26, 27)
- Active Transportation (RBTN, improve local bicycle connections, eliminate physical barriers) (12, 13, 14)
- Safety and Comfort of people outside vehicles (7)
- Provide more opportunities to bike, walk and roll (10)
- ABRT (17)
- Expand transit services to a variety of transit markets (16)
- Equity (repair and eliminate unjust harms, ensure benefits and burdens are equitably distributed, mitigate and avoid health impacts) (1, 3, 9)
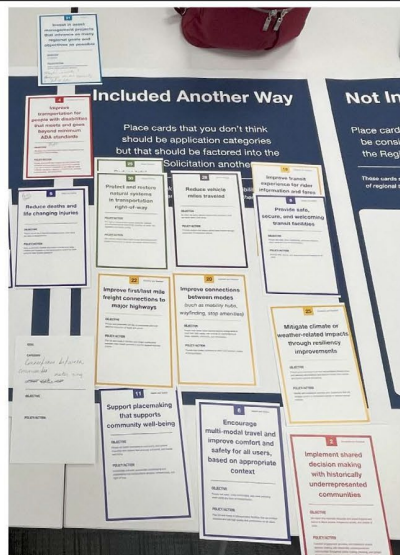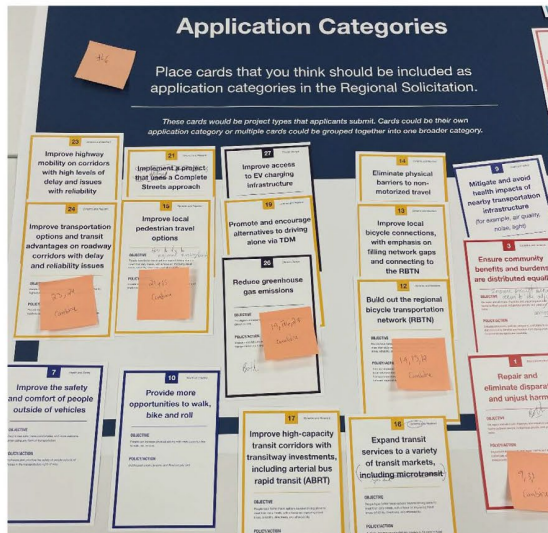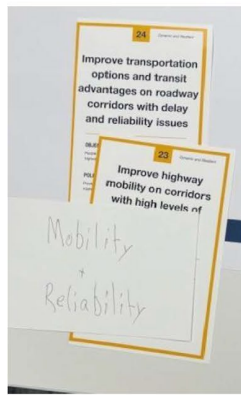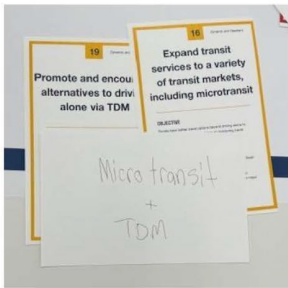
Table 6 Results

Table 7 Results

Policies that should be application categories

- Microtransit and TDM (Expand transit services, TDM) (16, 19)
- Mobility and Reliability (Improve highway mobility on corridors with delay improve transportation options and transit advantages) (23, 24)
- ABRT (17)
- Active Transportation (More opportunities to walk, bike, roll, RBTN, local bicycle connections, eliminate physical barriers, improve local pedestrian travel , improve connections) (10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20)
- Climate Change (Reduce GHG emissions, Reduce VMT, protect/restore natural systems) (26, 28, 30)
- Safety and Security (Reduce deaths, improve safety/comfort outside vehicles, provide safe and secure transit facilities) (5, 7, 8)

Table 7 Results

Safety and Security: Reduce deaths and life-changing injuries, Improve safety outside of vehicles

Climate: Reduce GHG, Protect and restore natural systems

Table 8 Results

Policies that should be application categories

- Highway Mobility (23)
- Repair and eliminate unjust harms (1)
- Modernization (Improve transportation options and transit advantages, asset management) (24, 31)
- Transit (Expand transit services, ABRT) (16, 17)
- Reduce deaths and life changing injuries (5)
- Multimodal Connections (TDM, Improve connections between modes)(19, 20)
- Active Transportation (ADA, Improve safety and comfort, more opportunities to walk/bike/roll, RBTN, local bicycle connections, local pedestrian options) (4, 7, 10, 12, 13, 15)
- EV Charging (27)

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Table 8 Results