



Polycymaker Working Group

metro council.org



November 20, 2024



Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Setup and Decision Process | 2 |
| Meeting Overview | 6 |
| Base Structure Discussion | 10 |
| Goal-Focused Structure Options | 14 |
| Discussion | 26 |
| Policymaker Survey Results | 33 |
| Next Steps | 39 |

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

Listening session feedback on the Regional Solicitation

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:

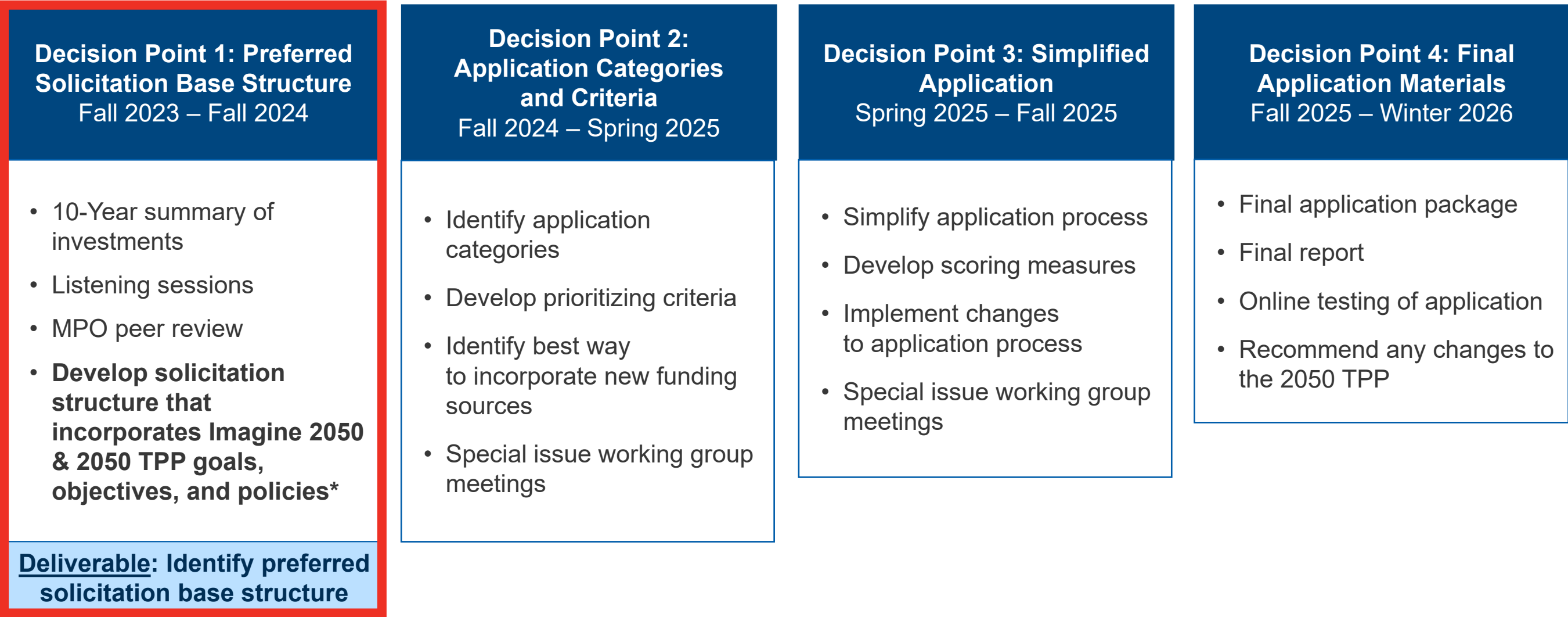
- **Projects should better align with regional policy goals.**
- Make the application easier to complete.
- Projects in more suburban and rural areas do not compete well in bike/ped categories.
- Current structure does not consider nuance of local government context.
- Make it easier/create more opportunities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

Today's Focus

Future Topics

Evaluation Decisions Timeline

Stakeholder Groups, Public Engagement, Equity Engagement



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

Today's discussion

Goal: Discuss preferred structure level to incorporate TPP goals and objectives

| September | November | December | Jan/Feb |
|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate concept structures: incorporating goals/objectives at different levels Insights from peer reviews and listening sessions woven throughout | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss examples of a goal-focused structure Discuss advantages/disadvantages of goal-focused vs. modal-focused structure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop on goal and objective priorities Confirm preferred level to incorporate goals/objectives Develop examples of application category structures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop application categories Feb TAB approval of identified structure Gather input from Technical Steering Committee on criteria and measures |
| <p>Is there a preferred option to include goals/objectives?</p> | <p>Recommend preferred application structure</p> | <p>Discuss application categories.</p> | <p>Recommend application categories for TAB to consider.</p> |

Meeting Overview



Recap: September Discussion

What We Heard

- Policymakers discussed a goal-focused structure but had additional questions and wanted to see more details.
 - How will specific project types fit in?
 - How will projects be evaluated?
 - How will funding be distributed among modes?
 - How will the process consider geographic balance?
- Some policymakers were supportive of a goal-focused structure

Meeting Overview

Today's Discussion Will Include

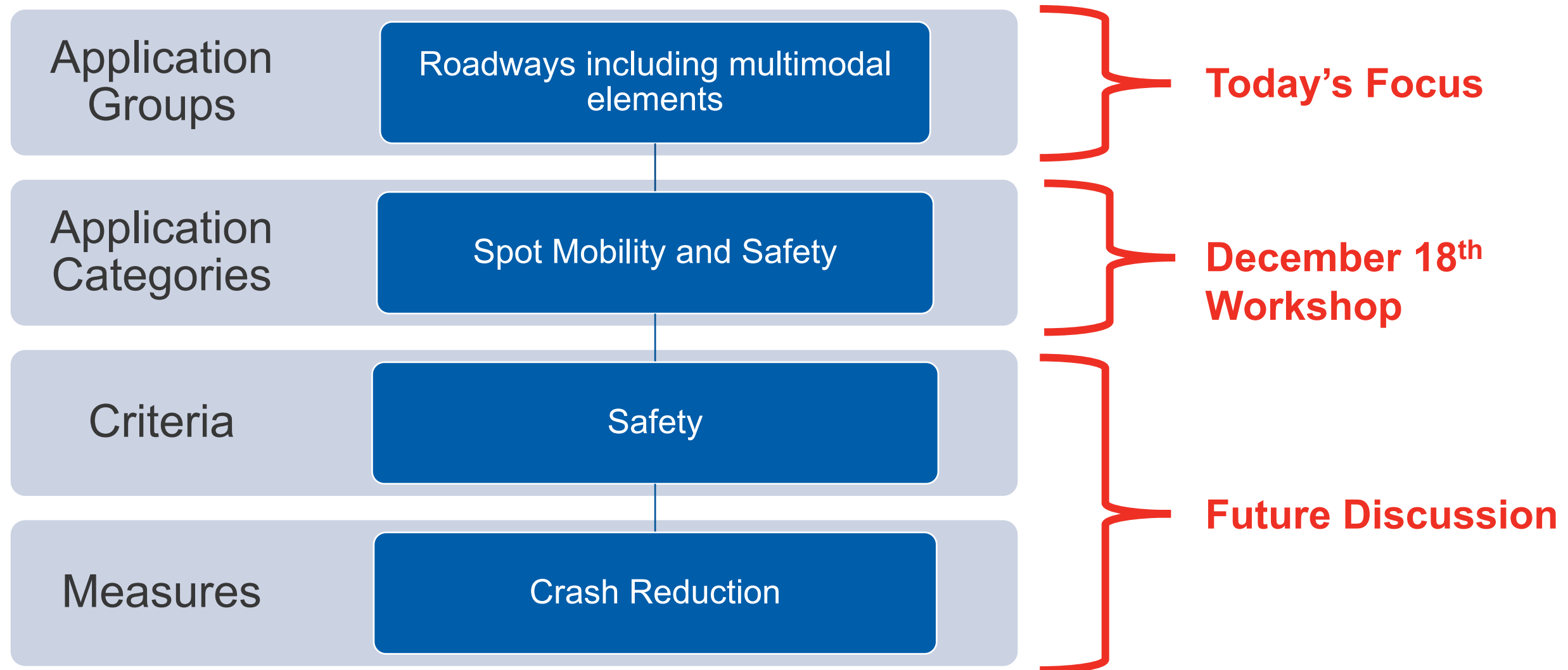
- Today's discussion will center on **base solicitation structure**:
 - Should we **update and improve the current modal-focused structure**?
 - OR should we **change to a goal-focused structure**?
- **Goal of today's meeting: Recommend a preferred base structure – modal-focused vs. goal-focused**

Future Discussion Will Include

- Refine specific application categories and project types
- Criteria, measures and scoring guidance
- Funding targets
- Qualifying requirements and eligibility

Anatomy of an Application

Current Regional Solicitation Application Structure



Modal-Focused Structure Discussion (Current Structure)



Current Solicitation Structure Approach

Application Groups

Application Categories

Roadways

Bridges

Roadway Modernization

Spot Mobility and Safety

Strategic Capacity

Traffic Management Tech

Transit & TDM

ABRT Project

Transit Expansion

Transit Modernization

Travel Demand Management

Bike/Ped

Bicycle Facilities and Multiuse Trails

Pedestrian

Safe Routes to School

Scoring Criteria

Role in the Region

Usage

Safety

Congestion/Air Quality

Infrastructure Age

Equity

Multimodal

Risk

Cost Effectiveness

Current Solicitation Structure Approach – UPDATED for 2050 TPP

Application Groups

Application Categories
(may be updated to reflect 2050 TPP)

Roadways

Bridges

Roadway Modernization

Spot Mobility and Safety

Strategic Capacity

Traffic Management Tech

Transit & TDM

ABRT Project

Transit Expansion

Transit Modernization

Travel Demand Management

Bike/Ped

Bicycle Facilities and Multiuse Trails

Pedestrian

Safe Routes to School

Scoring Criteria

Updated based on 2050 TPP Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Actions

Current Solicitation Structure

Advantages

- Facilitates apples-to-apples comparisons by similar project types
- Requires projects to address many goals and objectives
- Applicant familiarity with modal structure and application type
- History of modal structure provides input into range setting

Disadvantages

- Funding ranges tied to mode and not outcomes
- Outcomes are less clear and more difficult to track
- Policy priorities are established at criteria/scoring measure level, requiring policymaker involvement in application details
- Complex application structure, which many stakeholders feel should be simplified
- Limits the ability to encourage multimodal projects and unique projects (e.g., electrification, shared mobility) that aren't modal based

What would happen if we select this structure?

- Application categories could be changed based on priorities identified in the 2050 TPP and desire to simplify application process
- Criteria and measures would be crafted to reflect the 2050 TPP

Goal-Focused Structure Option



Relationship of TPP Goals to Application Groups



Imagine 2050 has 5 goals:

1. Equitable and Inclusive
2. Healthy and Safe
3. Dynamic and Resilient
4. Climate
5. Protect and Restore Natural Systems

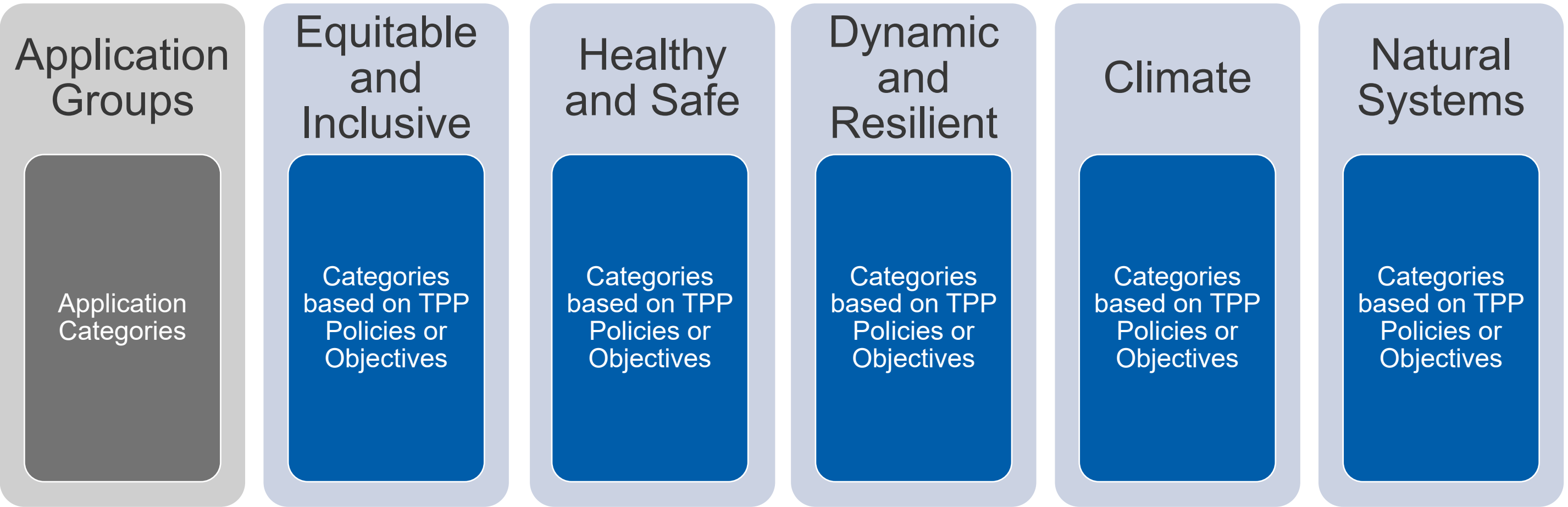
- Some goals could be application groups, while others could be integrated into the scoring or qualifying requirements for some or all projects to address.
- Should Equitable and Inclusive be an application group or built into the scoring or qualifying requirements?
 - Do we have “equity projects” or are all projects scored on equity in some way?
- Protect and Restore Natural Systems is another goal area to be discussed regarding if it should be an application group?

2050 TPP Structure

Translating the TPP into Regional Solicitation

| | Definition | Example | Option for Regional Solicitation |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| Goals | Broad Directional Statements | Our communities are healthy and safe | Application groups |
| Objectives | Achievable Results | People do not die or face life-changing injuries when using any form of transportation | Potential application categories and/or Scoring Criteria and Measures |
| Policies | Approach to regional issues or topics | Work to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries using the Safe System approach | Potential application categories and/or Scoring Criteria and Measures |
| Actions | Specific activities to implement policies | Prioritize projects that improve safety for all modes of travel | Provide direction to craft Scoring Criteria and Measures |

Goal-Focused Example Structure



Scoring Criteria

Based on 2050 TPP polices and actions

Example: Our Region is Dynamic and Resilient

Investment Priority Policies in 2050 TPP

- Focus highway investments on corridors with delay and reliability issues
- Implement a Complete Streets approach at all levels
- Implement a network of high-capacity transitways
- Invest in first/last mile freight connections
- Minimize disruption and non-recurring delays
- Mitigate current or anticipated weather-related impacts
- Plan and implement a complete bicycle system
- Prioritize filling network gaps or improving physical barriers
- Provide a high-quality transit rider experience
- Provide high-quality connections between modes
- Provide transit service delivery types that meet resident needs
- Provide transportation options and transit advantage on corridors with delay and reliability issues
- Support pedestrian travel at the local level
- Use TDM to promote alternatives to driving alone

Invest Priority Policies provide direction to regional investment processes (e.g., Regional Solicitation). They can be included as qualifying requirements, application categories, or scoring measures.

Example: Our Region is Dynamic and Resilient

Application Groups

Application Categories

Scoring Criteria

Dynamic and Resilient

Draft application categories for illustrative purposes

Active Transportation Investments

Freight Connections

System Mobility Investments

Transit Capital Investments

Travel Demand Management

Based on 2050 TPP polices and actions

Example: We lead on addressing Climate Change

Investment Priority Policies in 2050 TPP

- Ensure the accessibility of EV charging infrastructure
- Evaluate and mitigate GHG impacts
- Prioritize projects that reduce VMT

Example: We lead on addressing Climate Change

Application Groups

Application Categories

Scoring Criteria

Climate Change

Draft application categories for illustrative purposes

EV Charging

VMT/GHG Reduction

Based on 2050 TPP polices and actions, apply to all projects

Example: Goal-Focused Structure: Intersection Safety Project



Scoring Criteria

Answers questions based on Healthy and Safe Policies (e.g., Safe Systems Approach, Vulnerable Road User protection, reduce negative health impacts)

Goal-Focused Structure

Advantages

- Clear alignment with 2050 TPP goals and objectives
- Outcomes-based categories, following planning best practices
- Application categories reflect TPP policy priorities
- Simplified application structure emphasizes small set of criteria, rather than all projects addressing all criteria
- Allows maximum flexibility for project types that are not mode-based (i.e., electric vehicle charging and new mobility options, and multimodal projects)

Disadvantages

- Focus on individual goal may not emphasize projects that address all or multiple goals
- Unfamiliar to applicants in determining where projects fit and where to apply (requires communication)
- Setting funding ranges will not have a history to learn from for the first few rounds of funding

What Would Happen if we select this structure?

- Specific application categories and project types will be determined by January/February based on additional conversations
- Criteria and measures would be crafted to reflect 2050 TPP Policies

Two Application Group Options

Which structure (mode-based or goal-based) do you feel best addresses the project's goals?

Modal-Focused
Application
Groups

Roadways

Transit & TDM

Bike/Ped

Goal-Focused
Application
Groups

Equitable
and
Inclusive

Healthy
and Safe

Dynamic
and
Resilient

Climate

Natural
Systems

Base Structure Discussion



Starting Questions

- Which structure (modal-focused or goal-focused) do you feel best addresses the project's goals?
 - *Projects should better align with regional policy goals*
- What concerns or questions do you have about the structures?
- Which of the two approaches would you like to recommend?
 - Having a recommendation will help us in preparing materials for the December 18th workshop.

Policymaker Survey Results



Policies as Solicitation Categories

- Survey open Oct. 14 – Nov. 11, 2024
- 10 participants
- 28 TPP policies that were tagged as Investment Priorities

| Should the policy be considered as a potential application category in the Regional Solicitation process? | Scoring |
|---|-----------|
| Yes, should be an application category | +1 |
| Unsure at this time | 0 |
| No, should not be an application category, but used in a different way | -1 |

| Goal |
|--|
| Equity and inclusion |
| Healthy and safe communities |
| Dynamic and resilient |
| Addressing climate change |
| Protecting and restoring natural systems |

| Policy | Score |
|---|-------|
| Provide high-quality connections within and between modes of transportation. | 8 |
| Work to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries from traffic crashes and incidents on the transportation system by 2050 using the Safe System approach. | 7 |
| Identify, prioritize, and improve locations where network gaps or physical barriers (like rivers, freeways, and rail corridors) may impede non-motorized travel. | 7 |
| Implement a Complete Streets approach in policy, planning, operations, and maintenance of roads. | 7 |
| Provide transportation options and transit advantages on roadway corridors with delay and travel time reliability issues. | 6 |
| Focus highway mobility investments on corridors with high levels of existing delay and travel time reliability issues. | 6 |
| Ensure the availability, visibility, and accessibility of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. | 5 |
| Emphasize and prioritize the safety of people outside of vehicles in the transportation right-of-way. | 4 |
| Plan and implement a complete bicycle system including local networks that connect to the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network alignments to provide connections between regional destinations and local bicycle networks. | 4 |
| Plan for, invest in, and implement a network of transitways to expand access to reliable, frequent, high-capacity transit services. | 4 |
| Use travel demand management (TDM) to plan, fund, and promote multimodal travel options and alternatives to driving alone. - 1 | 4 |

Policies as Solicitation Categories

- Survey open Oct. 14 – Nov. 11, 2024
- 10 participants
- 28 TPP policies that were tagged as Investment Priorities

| Should the policy be considered as a potential application category in the Regional Solicitation process? | Scoring |
|---|-----------|
| Yes, should be an application category | +1 |
| Unsure at this time | 0 |
| No, should not be an application category, but used in a different way | -1 |

| Goal |
|--|
| Equity and inclusion |
| Healthy and safe communities |
| Dynamic and resilient |
| Addressing climate change |
| Protecting and restoring natural systems |

| Policy | Score |
|---|-------|
| Plan for and invest in transportation facilities that are context-sensitive and are high quality and comfortable for all users. | 3 |
| Use transportation investments and priorities to reduce negative health impacts influenced by the transportation system. | 3 |
| Use a variety of transit service types to match transit service delivery to residents' daily needs based on transit markets. | 3 |
| Plan for and invest in first/last-mile freight connections between major freight generators and the regional highway system. | 3 |
| Identify and implement activities and investments that will mitigate current or anticipated climate or weather-related impacts. | 3 |
| Implement investments that repair harms and impacts to historically disadvantaged communities from past highway investments. | 2 |
| Prioritize projects that reduce vehicle miles traveled through sustainable transportation options. | 2 |
| Provide safe, secure, and welcoming transit facilities for all users. | 1 |
| Provide regional funding and tools to support planning and implementation for pedestrian travel at the local level. | 1 |
| Coordinate transit service delivery and operations to create a high-quality rider experience. | 1 |
| Pursue opportunities to minimize disruption and non-recurring delay from weather, security, and traffic incidents. | 1 |
| Use existing transportation rights-of-way and transportation project development to protect and restore natural systems. | 1 |

Policies as Solicitation Categories

- Survey open Oct. 14 – Nov. 11, 2024
- 10 participants
- 28 TPP policies that were tagged as Investment Priorities

| Should the policy be considered as a potential application category in the Regional Solicitation process? | Scoring |
|---|-----------|
| Yes, should be an application category | +1 |
| Unsure at this time | 0 |
| No, should not be an application category, but used in a different way | -1 |

| Goal |
|--|
| Equity and inclusion |
| Healthy and safe communities |
| Dynamic and resilient |
| Addressing climate change |
| Protecting and restoring natural systems |

| Policy | Score |
|---|-------|
| Evaluate and mitigate the greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts of transportation plans and projects. | 0 |
| Ensure communities and investments meet federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and encourage partner government agencies to go above minimum standards to fully meet the needs of people who have a disability in infrastructure, services, communication, and engagement. | -1 |
| Evaluate processes, policies, programs, and plans to ensure that community benefits and burdens from transportation investments are distributed equitably. | -1 |
| Conduct engagement activities and implement shared decision making with historically underrepresented communities throughout policy making, planning, and project development to ensure equitable distribution of the benefits and burdens of transportation investments. | -4 |
| Incorporate culturally appropriate placekeeping and placemaking into transportation projects, infrastructure, and right-of-way. | -4 |

General Feedback (1)

I'm in favor of using the five TPP goals as the primary framing used to ask applicants to submit on, though one can imagine it being difficult to treat them strictly categorically. I imagine that many (most?) applications will speak to more than one of these goals, and that shouldn't necessarily be seen as a problem. Applicants could be directed to identify which of the TPP goals (check all that apply) their submission is responsive to. Then the scoring criteria specific to all identified goals would form the content the applicant would be asked to complete.

I was interested in the potential for broad plan funding, like Complete Streets, as I'd expect more funding sources to be tied to having a policy on file. These cost money and staff time, so it could be a barrier to many cities and townships to even applying to these sources or the Regional Solicitation at all.

We've only heard from a small number of cities that do NOT apply to the RS. I'd like to explore further with non-applicant cities how to reduce those barriers so more potential applicants feel it's worthwhile to spend their resources to do so.

If the RS moves away from modal categories, it opens up a lot of possibilities to achieve specific goals. However, **there are considerations about how many categories there are, the size of the projects** (roadways are pricier than pedestrian facilities for instance, but could both be applying in the same category), and how to create scoring measures that are inclusive of the range of projects that may come through.

On demand, **shared autonomous electric vehicle transit service should have its own funding category.**

General Feedback (2)

The largest change I think that should be done is **blind funding by TAB**. We should not know the applicant, nor the location of the project, prior to choosing the final funding amounts for the entire solicitation.

If studies were to be considered as viable applicants they should be limited for funding and **should not be able to exceed what is spent on the TBI per cycle**. However, I think this could further expand the requirement to allow for costs like preliminary engineering or other "pre-project" costs for "regular" projects and thus would not be a recommendation from me.

Tighter funding targets should be set prior to application submittal. (i.e. +/- one maximum cost project per application). Prior to scoring projects, TAB could revise the funding targets based on application desire if required. e.g. Allocated 75 MM for transit but only 60 MM applied, would TAB like to rebalance based on "demand" for project dollars? This could then set the funding lines in a further adjustment.

Shift scores away from a rigid forced rank and establish a benchmark scoring system. We have more than enough longitudinal scoring history to establish what a "good, average, and poor" project looks like for any given scoring metric. This should also come with outlier analysis where if we find the benchmark was materially off, it can be adjusted and ALL impacted projects would get re-balanced. i.e. if no project achieved 50% of the points, the benchmark is too high and should be adjusted.

Discussion regarding potential goal-focused approach



Our Region is Equitable and Inclusive



Investment Priority Policies in 2050 TPP

- Ensure community benefits and burdens are distributed equitably
- Ensure communities meet ADA standards
- Implement investments that repair highway harms
- Implement shared decision making with historically underrepresented communities

Equitable and Inclusive Discussion

- Do you agree that these policies should be criteria that apply to most/all projects?
- How do you feel about not having a specific “Equity” project category?

We protect and restore Natural Systems

Investment Priority Policies in 2050 TPP

- Prioritize projects which reduce total impervious surface coverage or minimize ROW needs
- Use existing transportation ROW to protect and restore natural systems

Natural Systems Discussion

- Do you agree that these policies should be criteria that apply to most/all projects?
- How do you feel about not having a specific “Natural Systems” project category?



Discussion (Geographic Balance)



How is federal funding generated?

Most of the federal funds are earned by population

- Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and the Transportation Alternatives set-aside within this program are earned **by population**. \$81M/year
- Carbon Reduction Program is a new program that is earned **by population**. \$7M/year
- PROTECT Resiliency Program is given to the state and MnDOT is giving a portion of this new funding source to locals in Minnesota based **on population**. \$3.5M/year
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) is for air quality improvement projects and is **not generated by population**. \$33.5M/year
 - Most of the CMAQ funding in this region has gone to transit and TDM projects. Since it is not earned by population, this funding source (i.e., transit and TDM funding) is not included in the table on the next slide.

Geographic Balance

Rules Currently in Place that Encourage Geographic Balance

- Fund at least one roadway project of each of the five eligible functional classifications (4 minor arterial types and one non-freeway principal arterial)
- Transit New Market Guarantee: Fund at least one project that serve areas outside of Transit Market Areas 1 and 2

Guidelines Currently in Place that Encourage Geographic Balance

- Retain a lower maximum award amount to encourage smaller projects and help distribute funding to more parts of the region (rather than funding a few, larger projects, particularly for multiuse trail projects)
- The final funding scenario often selected by TAB is, in part, based on geographic balance discussions related to one part of the metro not receiving funding
- In a future system, geographic balance could be included into the rules, scoring, or project selection

Example: Geographic Balance Incorporated

- One option is to create sub-categories for certain project types such as Active Transportation regional sales tax projects or federal bike/ped projects. This approach would require separate sub-application categories .
- Or create a rule (e.g., at least X% of the funding or \$X for rural areas) like is currently done for the minor arterial rule and this implies a willingness to jump down to lower scoring projects to satisfy these rules.

2014-2024 Funding Distribution for Federal Funds Generated by Population (excludes CMAQ):

| | Percent of Regional Population | Roadway Funding | Bike/Ped Funding | Total Bike/Ped & Roadway Funding |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Inside Beltway (I-494/694) | 38% | 42% | 41% | 41% |
| Urban Area Outside Beltway | 54% | 51% | 57% | 53% |
| Rural Area | 8% | 7% | 3% | 6% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Next steps



Next steps:

1. Technical Advisory Committee presentation – December 4
2. Policymaker Workshop for TAB and Council Members – December 18
1:30-3:30 p.m. on the 16th floor of the US Bank Building (next door to Robert St)
3. January/February –Action item on a base structure recommendation
 - TAC F&P – January 23
 - TAC – February 5
 - TAB – February 19
4. Policymaker Work Group next meeting – January 15
5. Technical Steering Committee – January 28

Thank You

Steve Peterson

Senior Manager of Highway Planning and TAB/TAC Process
Steven.Peterson@metc.state.mn.us

Molly Stewart, PE, PTOE

Project Manager, SRF Consulting Group
MStewart@srfconsulting.com

Katie Caskey, AICP

Stakeholder & Community Engagement Lead, HDR
Katie.Caskey@hdrinc.com

