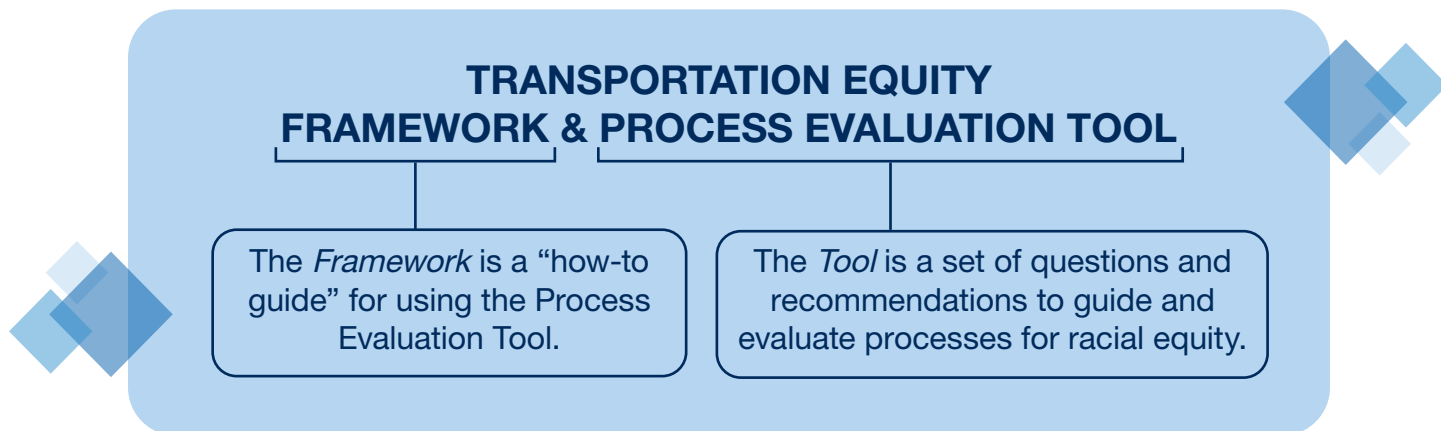# Transportation Equity Framework & Process Evaluation Tool

Draft as of September 2024

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the Metropolitan Council, in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), conducted an Equity Evaluation of regional transportation investments. This pilot study acknowledged the history of racism and inequities embedded within transportation investment processes. The work done to develop this Draft Transportation Equity Framework & Process Evaluation Tool is a collaborative step forward to overcome and reconcile the historic and ongoing racism systematically ingrained in transportation planning. This tool is a working document that will evolve as it is piloted and applied to various transportation decision-making processes.

What is the Transportation Equity Framework & Process Evaluation Tool?

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY FRAMEWORK & PROCESS EVALUATION TOOL

The *Framework* is a "how-to guide" for using the Process Evaluation Tool.

The *Tool* is a set of questions and recommendations to guide and evaluate processes for racial equity.

A team of transportation professionals and community members mapped and evaluated decision-making processes associated with transportation projects to understand how these projects are typically identified, prioritized, funded, and selected using an equity lens or perspective. This effort led to the development of the Process Evaluation Tool, which is flexible enough to support various processes, though not every question may apply to all situations.

Who Developed The Framework & Tool?

Equity Policy Group (EPG) – A group of 15 community members selected to represent the racial and geographic diversity of the communities across the metropolitan area and provide recommendations for more equitable and inclusive processes for capital investment and allocation in transportation.

Project Management Team (PMT) – A collaborative group consisting of Metropolitan Council and MnDOT staff, along with the hired consultant team, who facilitated the process and provided resources to support the EPG in making informed recommendations.

EPG Co-Chairs – Liaisons between the EPG and the Project Management Team.

This is the EPG's first draft of the Transportation Equity Framework and Process Evaluation Tool. Future phases of work will further refine the framework and tool, as well as develop guidance for how local agencies can apply it. In the next phase, pilot staff trainings will be conducted to support using these resources. The framework and tool are not prescriptive, allowing each entity to tailor their use according to their needs. Ultimately, they serve as a guide to help partners create more equitable processes for identifying, funding, developing, and constructing community projects.

Meet the Equity Policy Group (EPG)

Equity Policy Group members pictured from left to right and noting the metropolitan region each represents. Shelia Kauppi (MnDOT Ex-Officio), John Chikalla (Washington County), Husniyah Bradley (Hennepin County), Edna McKenzie (Hennepin County), Joo Hee Pomplun (Hennepin County) Gerald Bruner (Carver County), Angela Williams (Hennepin County), Tonya Long (Ramsey County). Not pictured: Hue Nguyen (Dakota County), Shelia Vang (Anoka County), Reva Chamblis (Met Council Ex-Officio).

What the Transportation Equity Framework & Process Evaluation Tool IS NOT?

Some of the tool's questions and EPG recommendations are aimed at improving community engagement within a transportation process; however, this is not intended to serve as a guide for facilitating equitable and effective community engagement.

EPG Definition of Transportation Equity

Some agencies have worked with staff, political representatives, and/or the community to develop their own definitions of equity. If your agency has not developed a definition of equity, we encourage you to consider doing so to further guide the use of this tool. The EPG developed the following definition to guide the development of this Transportation Equity Framework & Process Evaluation Tool.

"Transportation equity means benefits and burdens of transportation systems, services, and spending are fair and just, which historically has not been the case. Transportation equity requires acknowledging, addressing and repairing past harms, particularly impacting underserved Black, African, Indigenous, Latine and Asian people, including Tribal Nations. It also calls for active, intentional inclusion of underserved communities in shaping transportation decisions."

See the appendix for more definitions.

Section 1
TRANSPORTATION EQUITY FRAMEWORK

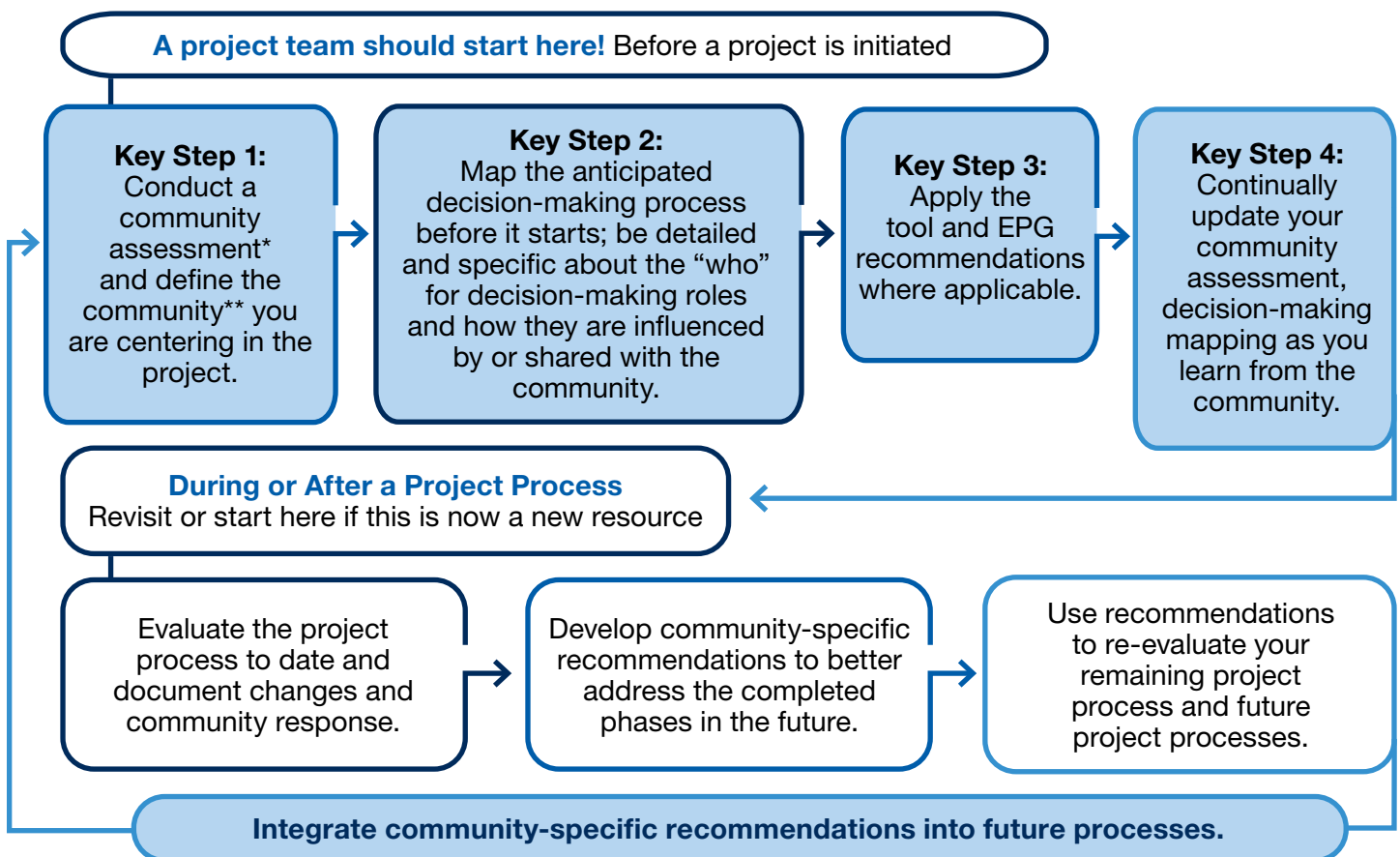The *Framework* is a "how-to guide" for using the Process Evaluation Tool.

Using the Process Evaluation Tool

Who: This tool should be used collaboratively by a project team that may include transportation planners, engineers, policymakers, and community representatives. Community-based business associations and civil rights organizations should be involved or represented on an advisory group.

What: The tool is to guide and assess agency transportation investment decision-making processes for racial equity and inclusion, while recognizing past and present harms. Ensure all questions are addressed and perspectives considered.

When: The tool should be applied at the beginning of every project process and revisited at each decision-making milestone to ensure alignment with community needs and goals. It should also be used from the outset to help plan an equitable investment decision-making process.

Project Process Evaluation Model

A project team should start here! Before a project is initiated

Key Step 1: Conduct a community assessment* and define the community** you are centering in the project.

Key Step 2: Map the anticipated decision-making process before it starts; be detailed and specific about the "who" for decision-making roles and how they are influenced by or shared with the community.

Key Step 3: Apply the tool and EPG recommendations where applicable.

Key Step 4: Continually update your community assessment, decision-making mapping as you learn from the community.

During or After a Project Process Revisit or start here if this is now a new resource

Evaluate the project process to date and document changes and community response.

Develop community-specific recommendations to better address the completed phases in the future.

Use recommendations to re-evaluate your remaining project process and future project processes.

Integrate community-specific recommendations into future processes.

*   **The Metropolitan Council will develop guidance on how to conduct a community assessment properly during the next phases of this work. For more information, see page 9.**

** **The Transportation Equity Framework & Process Evaluation Tool is explicit in its definition of community, which cannot be defined simply by geography. The community to be centered in any process must be defined by the legacy of racism and exclusion.**

The appendix provides additional resources, including:

- Instructions and a starting point for mapping your transportation process.
- Definitions for the Transportation Equity Framework & Process Evaluation Tool.
- A section for documenting your community-specific definitions.
- Other equity resources and tools.

EPG Guiding Values

The EPG developed the following values (goals) to guide development of this Transportation Equity Framework & Process Evaluation Tool. It is recommended that these values are considered and incorporated into all transportation investment decision-making processes.

- **Transparency:** Mechanisms should be in place to openly share information about the process, including clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both staff and the community. Access to community and project-related data, along with feedback systems, should be provided before and after decision-making. It is recommended that, whenever possible, the community be given the opportunity to review the findings from this tool to enhance transparency and accountability in the process.

- **Shared Decision-Making:** There should be a mutual understanding of accountability metrics, with transparent reporting of results used to adjust and adapt the process as needed.

- **Genuine Inclusion:** Public engagement must be thoughtfully planned, staffed, and regularly re-evaluated to ensure it prioritizes historically underserved and marginalized communities that have experienced disinvestment. This includes ensuring community representation within agency staff, councils, and politicians.

- **Equitable Burdens & Benefits:** The community most impacted defines the benefits and burdens of the investment. Together, the community and staff should establish shared baselines for local and regional goals. This should include investments that are preparative of past harms, where mitigation alone cannot commensurate the inequity.

- **Resources:** Public agency budgets reflect community values.

Page intentionally left blank

Transportation Investment Phases

The common project processes are described in five phases. The first three phases are interconnected and not always linear, bouncing between these phases or skipping one of the first two phases.

- **Problem & Opportunity Identification:** The establishment of a transportation need or problem.

- **Planning & Project Identification:** A methodical approach to evaluate and consider how to address the transportation problem and identify a project.

- **Budget & Funding:** Agencies allocate budget and secure outside funding.

- **Project Delivery:** The technical tasks required to deliver a project from concept to the construction phase.

- **Construction:** Construction of the designed improvement.
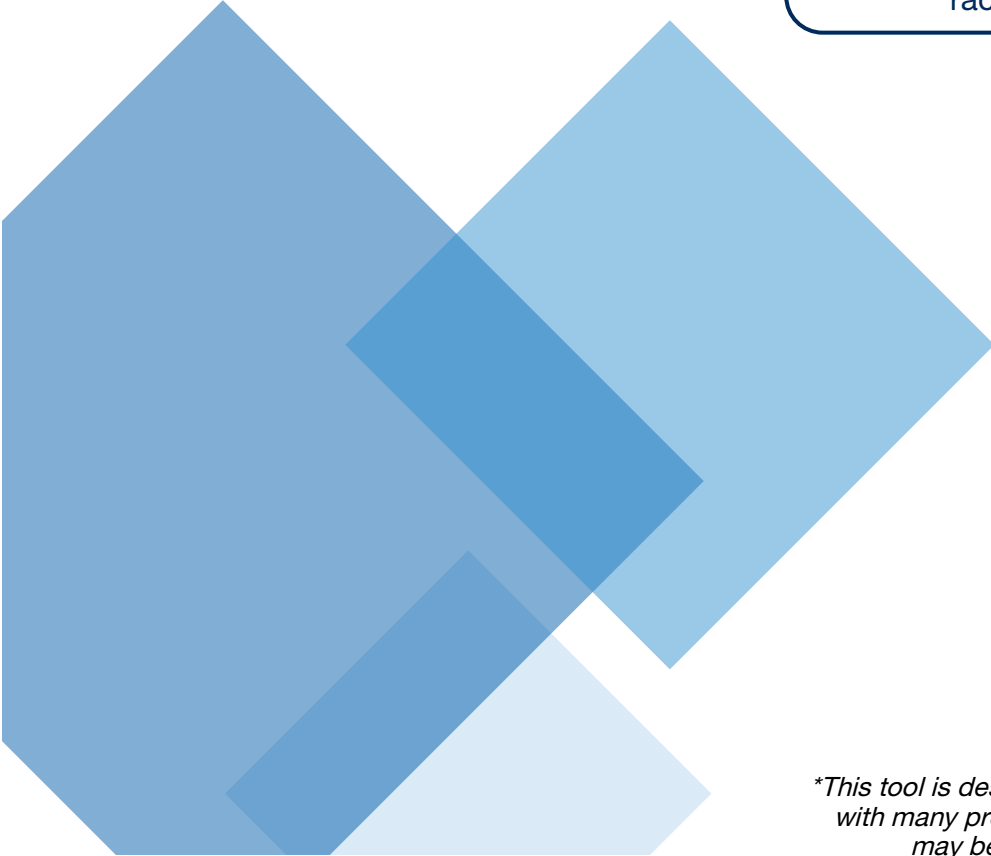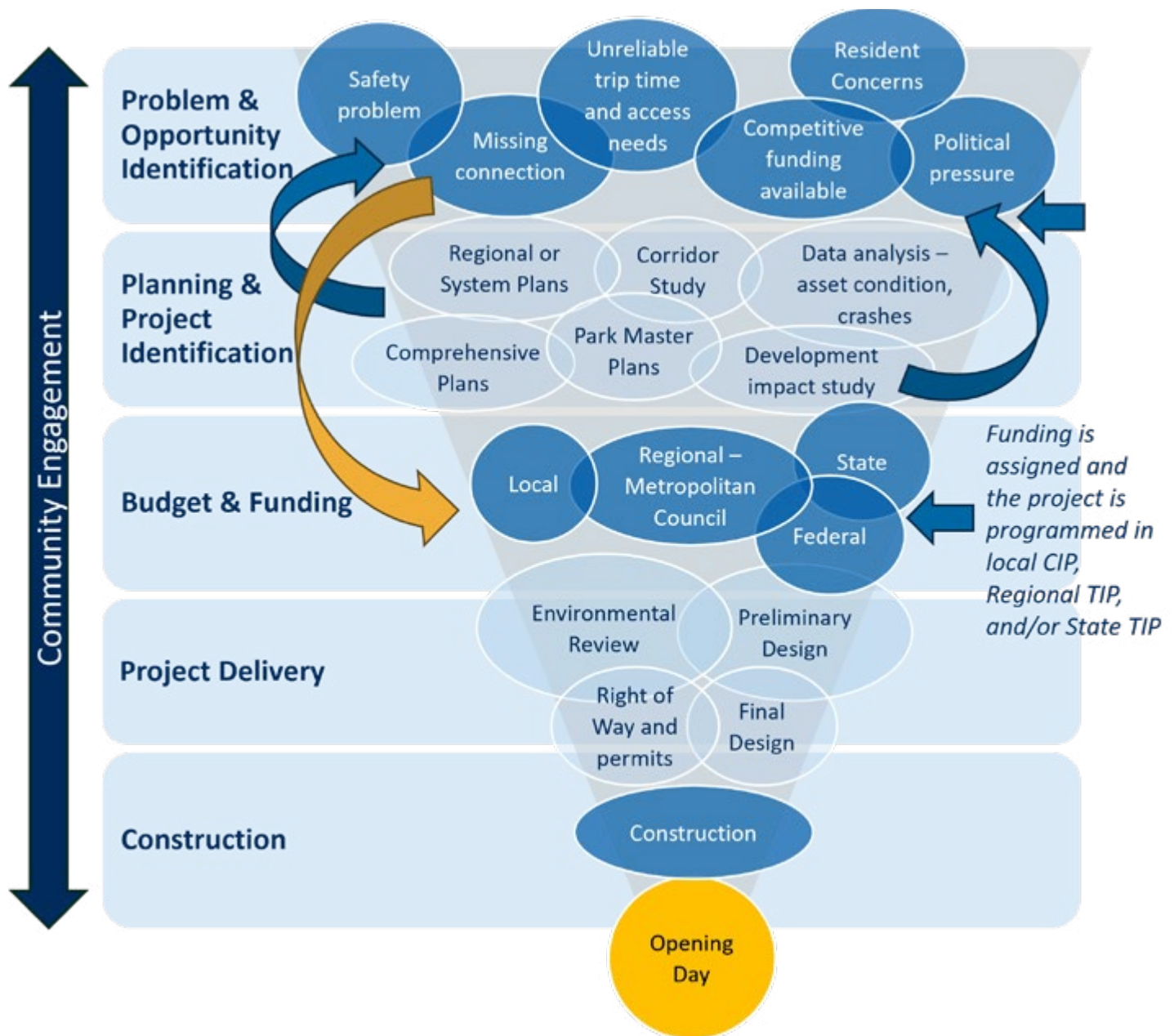
Section 2
PROCESS EVALUATION TOOL

The *Tool* is a set of questions and recommendations to guide and evaluate processes for racial equity*

This tool is designed to be general enough to assist with many processes; however, not every question may be applicable to all types of processes.

Evaluation Topic	EPG Guiding Recommendations & Answer
Name of the process or project that you are evaluating.	**Your Response:**
Type of Transportation Process Roadway reconstruction, fixed transit way, pedestrian/ bicyclist improvement, etc.	**Your Response:**
Public Agency The government agency that leads the process.	**Your Response:**
Project Area The geographic area where a potential transportation investment may be located and the communities the project serves.	*It is important to recognize all communities served and/or affected (e.g., a project or transit service that starts in one community and is meant to connect to jobs and opportunities in a different community).* **Your Response:**
Community Asset Mapping • Race/Ethnicity • Income, specifically identifying low-income housing locations • Age, specifically identifying youth and seniors • Languages • People with a disability • Households without a car • Elected officials and community leaders • Local contractors/consultants • Physical environment - Physical assets like current transportation barriers and access, tree canopy, parks and trails, bodies of water and other community and environmental health factors • Social and cultural environment - The social and cultural assets like landmarks, community centers, small/local businesses, major employers, schools, community organizations, Indian burial sites, and religious centers • Historic context - The past or ongoing transportation policies or investments that have benefited or harmed this community • Transportation data (safety, travel numbers, the existing system)	*The Metropolitan Council will develop guidance on how to properly conduct a community assessment during the next phases of this work.* *Tool users will be asked to be very specific - i.e., it is not enough to simply state that 20% of the population is of a certain race. You need to understand specific details about the community's history, their transportation needs, and barriers (physical, cultural, and social). This needs to be completed for the project area and/or the communities the project serves.* **Your Response:**

Evaluation Topic	EPG Guiding Recommendations & Answer
Project Decision-Making Milestones, Roles, and Schedule Mapping Be specific for how decisions will be made and who will make them; clearly identify community representatives with decision-making roles, where and how community input will be received and how the input will be used in the process.	*This process map document should be understandable and transparent for the community, and be used and updated throughout the process.* **Your Response:**

Team action items to address unanswered questions or meet relevant recommendations. This is your next steps list.

Phase Definition: The establishment of a transportation need, problem, or opportunity.

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendations & Answer
1. Have you started or completed a detailed community asset mapping process?	*Community asset mapping is an essential first step in conducting an equitable transportation process. We recommend you spend time in the community listening and learning. Community asset mapping should be completed in partnership with the community for collaboration, transparency, and accountability. This is not a one-size-fits-all approach.* *In the next phases of this work, the Metropolitan Council will provide guidance and best practices for conducting a thorough community assessment.* **Your Response:**

DRAFT as of September 2024. This tool will evolve as it is piloted in 2025.

11

Phase Definition: The establishment of a transportation need, problem, or opportunity.

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendations & Answer
2. If you are just starting or early in your process: Based on results from the community asset mapping, how are you defining "community" while using this tool? Are there multiple communities to consider? If so, how do they relate with one another? Who are you centering in the process? **If you are late in or through your process and using this tool for the first time:** How did you define "community?" Did you consider multiple communities? Who did you center in the process?	• *It is essential to state early and clearly what you mean by "community."* • *Communities are difficult to define because they are overlapping; any given individual is the member of many communities. A community member may not be just a resident, but also someone served by a business or non-profit in the project area.* • *Be as specific as possible. Make a list of the key communities that you seek to reach and center in the process. Equity requires us to center people and communities who have been burdened or disadvantaged in the past. Consider how you will seek to prioritize these communities' needs.* **Your Response:**

Phase Definition: The establishment of a transportation need, problem, or opportunity.

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendations & Answer
3. Before/early process: What problem or opportunity are you addressing? How does it relate to the community? **Late/after process:** What problem or opportunity did you address? How did it relate to the community?	*The problem that is defined should directly address a need of the communities that are identified in the community asset mapping. And the opportunity at hand should directly advance those communities' interests.* **Your Response:**
4. Before/early process: Who named this problem or opportunity? How was it identified? Is there community agreement that this problem or opportunity needs to be addressed? **Late/after process:** Who named this problem or opportunity? How was it identified? Was there community agreement that this problem or opportunity needed to be addressed?	*Some problems or opportunities are identified from data-driven analyses (i.e. asset management problems), while others come from a community leader or champion. If a problem or opportunity comes out of a data-driven analysis, it needs to go through engagement with community. That engagement will help to build context and understanding of the problem or opportunity and will provide the community the opportunity to validate the problem or broaden it to include community needs and issues.* **Your Response:**

Phase Definition: The establishment of a transportation need, problem, or opportunity.

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendations & Answer
5. Before/early process: Are there other community opportunities or problems that should be addressed or solved as part of this process? **Late/after process:** Were there other community opportunities or problems addressed or solved as part of this process?	*Although the process may be addressing one problem, there may be other opportunities for improvements and provision of other benefits in the project area. Engage with, ask community members, and review community feedback from previous engagement activities in the project area to identify other identified needs and opportunities that can align with the project.* **Your Response:**
6. Before/early process: Who are the intended users of the potential investment? Who benefits from the investment? Are community members the users and beneficiaries? If not, how will the process be changed to include benefits to the community? **Late/after process:** Who were the intended users of the potential investment? Who benefited from the investment? Were community members the users and beneficiaries? If not, how was the process changed to include benefits to the community?	*Build off the community assessment to answer this question. The people who use or will benefit from the future transportation investment may be the same or different than the people in its geographic area. A future project may benefit an underserved community even if it is not in an underserved area. On the other hand, a project may be built in an underserved area but is meant to benefit people who are not themselves underserved, e.g. roadway projects meant to benefit commuters who pass through a community. A project that does not benefit the adjacent community(s) should not take place. A project cannot benefit one population at the expense of the other, especially underserved communities. The process priority must be to address an underserved communities' needs and desires.* **Your Response:**

Phase Definition: The establishment of a transportation need, problem, or opportunity.

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendations & Answer
7. Before/early process: Who will be burdened by the potential investment? How and when will you consider anti-displacement? **Late/after process:** Who was burdened by the potential investment? How and when will you consider anti-displacement?	*Build off the community assessment with an early analysis of residential, business, and cultural displacement. Begin to work with the community to identify strategies to address anti-displacement.* *Burdens are the negative outcomes of a transportation investment. Burdens may include, but are not limited to:* • *Construction impacts* • *Safety impacts (i.e. wider road crossings)* • *Changes to a communities' ability to access important destinations (i.e. longer pedestrian or bicycles routes or other access limitations)* • *Property acquisition and access impacts* • *Tree removals* • *Ongoing emissions and other environmental and public health impacts* • *Community livability and visual impacts* • *Potential for gentrification or displacement* *Meaningful and inclusive public engagement can help identify who is burdened by a potential investment, define what are the burdens, and how to prevent and mitigate them.* **Your Response:**
8. Before/early process: After completing the evaluation questions for this phase, did you learn anything new that should result in updates to your community assessment and/or project decision-making mapping? **Late/after process:** After completing the evaluation questions for this phase, did you learn anything new that would have resulted in updates to your community assessment and/or project decision-making mapping?	**Your Response:**

The evaluation of benefits and burdens is not meant to replace work that should be done through a full environmental assessment process. This is a high-level assessment of the potential benefits and burdens of a proposed transportation investment that will allow the implementing agency to assess whether the project should move forward at all.

Team action items to address unanswered questions or meet relevant recommendations. This is your next steps list.

DRAFT as of September 2024. This tool will evolve as it is piloted in 2025.

16

Community Engagement & Relationship Building (Across all process phases)

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendation & Answer
1. Have you started or completed a detailed community asset mapping process?	*The community engagement plan should be designed around what you learned about the communities' demographics and culture from the asset mapping.* **Your Response:**
2. Before/early process: What community engagement staff, budget, and other resources have been or will be dedicated to engagement efforts during the process? **Late/after process:** What community engagement staff, budget, and other resources have been or were dedicated to engagement efforts during the process?	*Community engagement requires dedicated staff and resources. There should be enough resources allocated to community engagement for on the ground engagement with people in the community.* **Your Response:**
3. Before/early process: Are project engagement staff connected to and knowledgeable about the identified communities? Are there opportunities to bring in community members as staff or advisors to assist in the engagement efforts? **Late/after process:** Were project engagement staff connected to and knowledgeable about the identified communities? Were there opportunities to bring in community members as staff or advisors to assist in the engagement efforts?	• *The project consultants leading community engagement should be part of the community to have a deep understanding of community needs and how to connect with people. Likewise, staff from the project sponsor need to be involved in on the ground engagement with the community to have a deeper understanding of community wants, needs, and burdens and grow a deeper empathy for the community.* • *Study team selection should prioritize reflection of the race of the most impacted community.* • *Where possible, the community should be involved in consultant/contractor selection and/or auditing the quality of the process.* • *Additionally, consider other opportunities for people from the community to be contracted by the project, including local small businesses and workers. Look for opportunities to hire interns or students from within the community to take part in the process and construction. Engage the community at various levels of the process to identify these opportunities and local resources.* **Your Response:**

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendation & Answer
4. Before/early process: How are you engaging community organizations? What is their level of influence in the decision-making process? How does this process and potential investment affect their relationship with their community? **Late/after process:** How did you engage community organizations? What was their level of influence in the decision-making process? How did this process and potential investment affect their relationship with their community?	*Working with community organizations on a transportation process can help project staff reach communities, make project decisions that benefit the community, and increase the success of the project. Trusting and deep relationships to the community are of high value to community organizations. Consider the impacts of the project on community organizations and their relationships to community. Work to prevent and mitigate potential fallout on community organization resulting from their association with the project.* **Your Response:**
5. Before/early process: Is there a process for including/selecting community members who can play a larger role in the project? If so, will they be paid? **Late/after process:** Was there a process for including/selecting community members who played a larger role in the project? If so, were they paid?	*Communities are not monolithic, and there are many different views and perspectives within them. One person alone cannot represent all the interests of community. Because of that, it is important to consider the following when selecting representatives:* • *What organizations and/or political figures are they aligned with?* • *What subset of the community do they represent?* • *To avoid tokenism or the over-representative of one specific view, how can we bring multiple members of a given community to the table?* **Your Response:**
6. Before/early process: How will you prioritize engagement with overburdened communities? In what ways are you centering the identified communities in the engagement? **Late/after process:** How did you prioritize engagement with overburdened communities? In what ways did you center the identified communities in the engagement?	*Engagement with the identified communities must be intentional and prioritized. Since resources are limited, this may mean that not every group or subset of the community will receive the same level of attention or engagement. The most attention should be given to the underserved communities that have been identified in the community asset mapping.* **Your Response:**

DRAFT as of September 2024. This tool will evolve as it is piloted in 2025.

18

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendation & Answer
7. Before/early process: Are your engagement methods effectively reaching the communities you are centering in this process? Who is missing? Who else should be engaged? **Late/after process:** Did your engagement methods effectively reach the communities you centered in this process? Who was missing? Who else should have be engaged?	*At every step of engagement and decision-making, ensure that:* • *You are checking the demographics of participants with those of the communities you identified in your community asset mapping.* • *You are making adjustments to your engagement process, staffing and resources to ensure adequate representation of the identified communities. Different groups may need different communication and engagement methods to reach them.* • *You are meeting people where they are at. Don't expect them to come to you, even if you set up an event you think they may enjoy. Always go to where the community already gathers.* **Your Response:**
8. Before/early process: Have you mapped, identified and shared your decision-making process? What role do communities have in decision making? Do they have a clear voice and/or is it clear who in the decision-making process represents their voice? **Late/after process:** Did you map, identify and share your decision-making process? What role did communities have in decision making? Did they have a clear voice and/or was it clear who in the decision-making process represented their voice?	*It is essential to create and share a map of the decision-making process with the members of the identified communities, members of community and advisory groups, other stakeholders and the public. This decision-making map document should:* • *Be clear and easy to understand* • *Identify the decision makers and groups that advise the decision makers for each milestone* • *Show how the decisions of each phase impacts the next* • *Identify the role of the community in each decision milestone* • *Show where community members can influence, redirect or stop the process* • *Identify representatives of communities that are direct participants in the process and how they were selected* **Your Response:**

Team action items to address unanswered questions or meet relevant recommendations. This is your next steps list.

DRAFT as of September 2024. This tool will evolve as it is piloted in 2025.

20

Planning & Project Identification

Phase Definition: A methodical approach to evaluate and consider how to address the transportation problem and identify a project.

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendation & Answer
1.Before/early process: Do community leaders and representatives agree upon the need for an investment and that a planning process should move forward? Have the decision-making milestones, roles, and schedule been mapped in detail and revisited? **Late/after process:** Did community leaders and representatives agree upon the need for an investment and that a planning process should move forward? Were the decision-making milestones, roles, and schedule mapped in detail and revisited?	*There should be check-ins throughout the project development to understand the degree of public support or opposition for project decision, and why. It's important to create a culture where agencies understand that a project can pause or stop based on community input and this is not a failure. Engagement needs to be planned and paced to allow for these conversations.* **Your Response:**
2. Before/early process: How do process decisions at key milestones, considering the available budget and investment options, acknowledge and address past harms, historical disinvestments, and current disparities? **Late/after process:** How did decisions made at key milestones, including considerations of the available budget and investment options, acknowledge and address past harms, historical disinvestments, and existing disparities?	• *Project decisions must be filtered through a lens of understanding and addressing historic disinvestments, past harms, and existing disparities. Current and past policy decisions have implications for years to come on communities. Consider if your project decisions can rectify or mitigate the impacts of past actions and systemic inequalities.* • *For some communities, the way you equitably distribute benefits is going to be different. It depends on the site and project. The solution is going to depend on the context of the project and area. It's important to be willing and able to spend additional money and effort finding creative solutions to minimize burdens to a community. Additionally, institutions need to name and educate communities on what the past harms are.* **Your Response:**

Phase Definition: A methodical approach to evaluate and consider how to address the transportation problem and identify a project.

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendation & Answer
3. Before/early process: Have you considered anti-displacement? If not, how and when will you consider it? **Late/after process:** Did you consider anti-displacement? If not, why, and how and when do you think you should have consider it?	• *Build off the community assessment with an early and repetitive analysis of residential, business, and cultural displacements and work with the community to determine actions to prevent it.* • *Preventing homelessness as a result of a transportation project is a high priority and base (minimum) expectation.* **Your Response:**
4. Before/early process: Have or will you establish a community advisory group? Will the group have any clear decision-making in the selection of a project alternative? **Late/after process:** Did you establish a community advisory group? Did the group have any clear decision-making in the selection of a project alternative?	*A community advisory group provides checks and balances for transparency and alignment with community values. Ensure advisory group members understand their power or level of influence in decision making. The people selected for the advisory group should represent the makeup of the community identified in the community asset map and be compensated for their time.* **Your Response:**
5. Before/early process: How are you including and measuring equity when you evaluate all investment options? **Late/after process:** How did you include and measure equity when evaluating all investment options?	*It should be encouraged to exceed the minimum expectations for the level of effort and investment to reach an equitable investment option.* **Your Response:**

DRAFT as of September 2024. This tool will evolve as it is piloted in 2025.

22

Team action items to address unanswered questions or meet relevant recommendations. This is your next steps list.

DRAFT as of September 2024. This tool will evolve as it is piloted in 2025.

23

Budget & Funding

Phase Definition: Agencies allocate budget and secure outside funding.

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendation & Answer
1. Before/early process: How does the local capital investment plan (CIP) development process consider equity in historically harmed communities? **Late/after process:** How did the local capital investment plan (CIP) development process consider equity in historically harmed communities?	• *CIP's should be representational of the transportation needs for all communities within a community. Often qualitative data is really needed to understand this.* • *Some communities have citizen advisory boards that are formed to provide representation of all communities within a community to provide recommendations on development and management of the CIP.* **Your Response:**
2. Before/early process: Has the process to date, or the planned process been provided adequate budget for inclusive engagement? Are community liaisons or advisory groups being compensated in recognition of their time commitment and expertise? **Late/after process:** Was the process provided adequate budget for inclusive engagement? Were community liaisons or advisory groups compensated in recognition of their time commitment and expertise?	• *Process (or project) budgets need to be meaningfully planned. Inadequate budgets can lead to limitations for engagement to truly understand the burdens, opportunities, and benefits of the existing community and potential impacts of proposed investments.* • *Community liaisons, advisory groups, or other routinely involved residents or groups should be compensated for their time and value added to a process.* • *Residents and business owners that lack spare/leisure time or transportation challenged often can't overcome these barriers to consistently engage in a process. Assistance such as transit access and fares, childcare, and providing food at meetings can reduce or eliminate these barriers.* **Your Response:**

Phase Definition: Agencies allocate budget and secure outside funding.

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendation & Answer
3. Before/early process: Will the budget provide funds needed to repair past harms, and address anti-displacement and other mitigation strategies? **Late/after process:** Did the budget provide funds needed to repair past harms, and address anti-displacement and other mitigation strategies?	*If repairing past harms is a goal within your process and anti-displacement is a likely need, there needs to be adequate budget allocated to the process and the investment. This can look like construction of new connections or removing physical barriers.* **Your Response:**
4. Before/early process: Will the current and future agency budget cover maintenance of the desired project for the lifetime of the project? **Late/after process:** Does the current and future agency budget cover maintenance of the desired project for the lifetime of the project?	*Disinvestment often also looks like the lack of maintaining facilities in good repair within communities of color. This not only includes repair but routine maintenance such as fixing potholes, street sweeping, cleanliness of transit facilities, and snow removal on streets, sidewalks, and trails.* **Your Response:**

Budget & Funding

Phase Definition: Agencies allocate budget and secure outside funding.

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendation & Answer
5. Before/early process: Do the majority of involved community members and public engagement results support the project need, proposed investment, and its prioritization among other community needs before funding sources are pursued? **Late/after process:** Did the majority of involved community members and public engagement results support the project need, proposed investment, and its prioritization among other community needs before funding sources are/were pursued?	• *Competitive funding sources have deadlines in which the award must be spent on implementation of a proposed investment. This can rush a process and limit opportunity for community influence and buy in for the outcome, sometimes resulting in an investment the community doesn't even want. There should be majority community buy in before any competitive funding sources are pursued.* • *Funding should be holistic, addressing not only transportation needs and opportunities, but also community needs and opportunities for housing, community development, and complete streets.* • *Seeking competitive funds should never be prioritized over the needs and priorities of the community.* **Your Response:**
6. Before/early process: Is the funding flexible enough to allow community influence in remaining process details and outcomes of the process before an investment is implemented? **Late/after process:** Was the funding flexible enough to allow community influence in remaining process details and outcomes of the process before an investment is/was implemented?	• *Seeking funding before a process is complete is okay if the general scope of the investment is supported and there is still opportunity and time to address all remaining community needs and concerns.* • *Funding administrative agencies should allow for flexibility that allows the community to shape the remaining process details without jeopardizing the awarded funds.* **Your Response:**

Team action items to address unanswered questions or meet relevant recommendations. This is your next steps list.

Project Delivery

Phase Definition: The technical tasks required to deliver a project from concept to the construction phase.

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendation & Answer
1. Before/early process: Do the majority of involved community members and public engagement results support the project need, proposed investment, and its prioritization among other community needs before the process continues with this phase? **Late/after process:** Did the majority of involved community members and public engagement results support the project need, proposed investment, and its prioritization among other community needs before the process continued with this phase?	*Seeking competitive funds should never be prioritized over the needs and priorities of the community.* **Your Response:**
2. Before/early process: How are the community benefits and burdens established in previous process phases translated in this and future phases? **Late/after process:** How were the community benefits and burdens established in previous process phases translated in this and future phases?	• *The community must influence the development and evolution for the understanding of existing and anticipated impacts (during and after construction), and mitigation needs.* • *With any project, there will be many different views. It's important to prioritize solutions that will remove transportation barriers, and center people who have been underserved.* **Your Response:**
3. Before/early process: Are commitments to anti- displacement efforts being funded and followed through? **Late/after process:** Have commitments to anti- displacement efforts been funded and followed through?	*What actions will be taken if there is no or minimal progress to determine and meet anti-displacement needs?* **Your Response:**

Phase Definition: The technical tasks required to deliver a project from concept to the construction phase.

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendation & Answer
4. Before/early process: Are detail decisions (project elements) helping address past harms, historic disinvestments, and existing disparities? **Late/after process:** Did detail decisions (project elements) help address past harms, historic disinvestments, and existing disparities?	• *You should be able to clearly describe how project details are addressing past harms and community benefits and burdens established in previous process phases.* • *What actions will be taken if there is no or minimal progress to meet equity goals?* **Your Response:**
5. Before/early process: Have any conditions or decisions changed during the process that need to be communicated to the community (e.g., health pandemic, transit ridership, budget, etc.)? Could these changes impact community support for the project? **Late/after process:** Did any conditions or decisions changed during the process that need to be communicated to the community (e.g., health pandemic, transit ridership, budget, etc.)? Did those changes impact community support for the project?	*Change in any conditions throughout the process should result in reevaluation and necessary course corrections.* **Your Response:**
6. Before/early process: Have any conditions or decisions changed during the process that need to be shared with the community (e.g., health pandemic, transit ridership, budget, etc)? Do these changes potentially affect community support for the project? **Late/after process:** Did any conditions or decisions change during the process that needed to be shared with the community (e.g., health pandemic, transit ridership, budget, etc)? Did those changes affect community support for the project?	*Getting the word out can be challenging, and it's the responsibility of the public agency lead. Work with community partners and use best practices to ensure community members are aware.* **Your Response:**

Team action items to address unanswered questions or meet relevant recommendations. This is your next steps list.

Project Construction

Phase Definition: Construction of the designed improvement.

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendation & Answer
1. Before/early process: How will this investment provide economic opportunities for the community? **Late/after process:** How does this investment provide economic opportunities for the community?	• *To the extent possible the construction company and any subcontractors should be local.* • *Minimum hiring and procurement goals should be exceeded particularly within underserved communities.* • *Budget must be allocated for inclusive and accessible engagement (I.e. dedicated staff to quickly address issues and concerns that arise during construction, translators and translated materials available)* **Your Response:**
2. Before/early process: How will details of community needs, concerns, burdens, and desired benefits be shared with the project contractors so that field staff are aware of, share and respect the community needs and history? **Late/after process:** How were details of community needs, concerns, burdens, and desired benefits shared with the project contractors so that field staff were aware of, shared and respected the community needs and history?	• *The construction team will likely spend the most time within and interacting with the community during this final phase. This is where the community will see how much they were able to influence the process. There should be a very strategic effort to make sure that those who are in the boots on the ground are fully aware of and respecting what the project is meant to accomplish for the community. This should likely be achieved by keeping an engagement staff champion involved and included in construction team meetings. In addition, if language is a known barrier within the community a translator should be readily available.* • *There needs to be tools and practices in place to hold contractors accountable for not meeting goals and respecting the community.* **Your Response:**

Phase Definition: Construction of the designed improvement.

Evaluation Question	EPG Guiding Recommendation & Answer
3. Before/early process: How will results be measured after implementation? Will you follow up with the community to understand their satisfaction with the process and project? **Late/after process:** How were results measured after implementation? Did you follow up with the community to understand their satisfaction with the process and project?	• *A champion of this effort should be defined, and results must be publicly and transparently shared.* • *Central Corridor Funders Collaborative work can provide a road map.* • *Should not be limited to the physical community impacts of a project but also evaluation of the process (problem identification to construction).* **Your Response:**
4. Before/early process: What are the community communication protocols for the project? **Late/after process:** What were the community communication protocols for the project?	• *The public agency should establish multiple channels of communication to reach community members* • *Those businesses and residents that are most highly impacted should receive information early and often* • *Residents with direct construction impacts should be notified in advance.* • *When possible, talk with residents and businesses in the anticipated impacted project area in advance to understand their needs during construction and how to mitigate impacts.* **Your Response:**

DRAFT as of September 2024. This tool will evolve as it is piloted in 2025.

32

Team action items to address unanswered questions or meet relevant recommendations. This is your next steps list.

DRAFT as of September 2024. This tool will evolve as it is piloted in 2025.

33

Section 3
APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Definitions for the Transportation Equity Evaluation Tool

Community: Community is the people with physical, social, and economic ties in a project's geographic area. Not necessarily the commuters nor the transportation users. We recommended that you map out and document your community and specific details of all communities within.

Underserved/Disadvantaged Communities: These groups have limited or no access to resources or that are otherwise disenfranchised. They may include people who are socioeconomically disadvantaged; have limited English proficiency; are geographically isolated or educationally disenfranchised; people of color; individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs; and seniors.

We recommend working with community members early in the process to define "community" and "underserved/disadvantaged" as they relate to your specific process or project."

Transportation Equity: Transportation equity means benefits and burdens of transportation systems, services, and spending are fair and just, which historically has not been the case. Transportation equity requires acknowledging, addressing and repairing past harms, particularly impacting underserved Black, African, Indigenous, Latine and Asian people, including Tribal Nations. It also calls for active, intentional inclusion of underserved communities in shaping transportation decisions.

Transparency: Involves answering the question, "Who holds the power and how will decisions be made?" It's essential to clearly define roles and responsibilities for both staff and community stakeholders.

Community Definitions

Establish a shared understanding of the common language used within your community. Use this section to document and define the key terms that are utilized in the tool, ensuring consistency and clarity for all stakeholders.

Key Term:

Definition:

Key Term:

Definition:

Key Term:

Definition:

Key Term:

Definition:

Key Term:

Definition:

Key Term:

Definition:

Key Term:

Definition:

Key Term:

Definition:

Key Term:

Definition:

CONTACT

For more information contact:

Amy Vennewitz
Deputy Director Metropolitan Transportation Service
Metropolitan Council
amy.vennewitz@metc.state.mn.us

EPG Co-Chairs:

Edna McKenzie
edna@midwestselectcontracting.com

Husniyah Dent
gently75@gmail.com

Visit the Metropolitan Council Website
https://metrocouncil.org/

Additional Resources

The Alliance - Equitable Development Principles & Scorecard

- The Transportation Equity Tool & Framework format was inspired by the Equitable Development Principles & Scorecard

Central Corridor Funders Collaborative

- This initiative brought together partners, funders, and data to ensure that the Green Line LRT benefited the communities along the rail line.

Center for Integrative Leadership

- The Center seeks to catalyze and inform collaborative action for public good by the business, government, and non-profit sectors.