

# I-35W Solutions Alliance

Regional Solicitation Evaluation Update

[metro council.org](http://metro council.org)



June 12, 2025

# Regional Solicitation Evaluation Background



# Regional Solicitation

## What is the Regional Solicitation?

- The Regional Solicitation is a **competitive process** to award federal transportation funding to projects that **meet regional transportation needs**.
- Part of the Metropolitan Council's **federally required continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process** for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.
- In 2024, applications were grouped into **three primary modal categories, plus Unique Projects**:

**1. Roadways Including Multimodal Elements**

**2. Transit and Travel Demand Management (TDM) Projects**

**3. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

- Since 1993 and approximately every two years thereafter, the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) with the assistance of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), solicits, evaluates, ranks, and recommends projects.

# Regional Solicitation

## How is the Regional Solicitation Funded?

The Council receives \$125M/per year of federal funding as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization. Project selection is delegated to the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) to comply with federal requirements.

- **Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) \$67M/year-** Provides flexible funding to states and localities for projects to preserve and improve...any Federal-aid highway, public bridge and tunnel projects, ped and bike infrastructure, and transit capital projects.
- **Transportation Alternatives (TA) \$14M/year** - A set aside of the STBG, these funds are dedicated to smaller-scale projects including, but not limited to, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, and SRTS.
- **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) \$33M/year** - Provides a flexible funding source to State and local governments for transportation projects and programs to help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act.
- **Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) \$4M/year-** Provides funding to improve surface transportation's resiliency to natural hazards through support of planning activities, resilience improvements, community resilience and evacuation routes, and at-risk coastal infrastructure.
- **Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) \$7M/year-** Provides funds for projects designed to reduce transportation emissions, defined as carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from on-road highway sources.

# Examples of Projects Funded in the I-35W Corridor

## Relevant Highlights of Past Regional Solicitation Funding

- \$36M of Regional Solicitation funds awarded to 11 projects over the past 20 years within the City of Richfield's border, including 3 projects in the last funding cycle. Some notable projects over the last 20 years include:
  - 66<sup>th</sup> St Reconstruction
  - D Line
  - 77<sup>th</sup> St Underpass of Highway 77
- Other I-35W Corridor Improvements:
  - I-35W/Cliff Rd improvements
  - 2 pedestrian bridges over I-35W
  - Orange Line Connector Bus Service (MVTA)
  - Burnsville Transit Station improvements (MVTA)
  - Highway 13/Nicollet interchange

# Federal Rules

## The solicitation must include:

- Projects must be selected by the MPO Board.
  - Must be a competitive process.
  - Funds cannot be suballocated to individual jurisdictions by pre-determined percentages.
- Must align with the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan.
- Selected project must be shown in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Selection must involve other stakeholders and the public, including traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations.

# Evaluation

## Regional Solicitation Evaluation

- Comprehensive evaluation of the Regional Solicitation process, completed every 10 years
- Overall goal is 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 (TPP) and Imagine 2050.
- Study tasks:
  - Examine the processes and impacts of the 2014-2024 application cycles
  - Solicit feedback from the general public and a wide variety of stakeholders
  - Develop recommendations for funding structure, application categories, project selection criteria
  - Develop new applications for the 2026 funding cycle
- For more information visit the project website:  
<https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Funding/Regional-Solicitation/Regional-Solicitation-Evaluation-Active-Transporta.aspx>



# Investment Summary

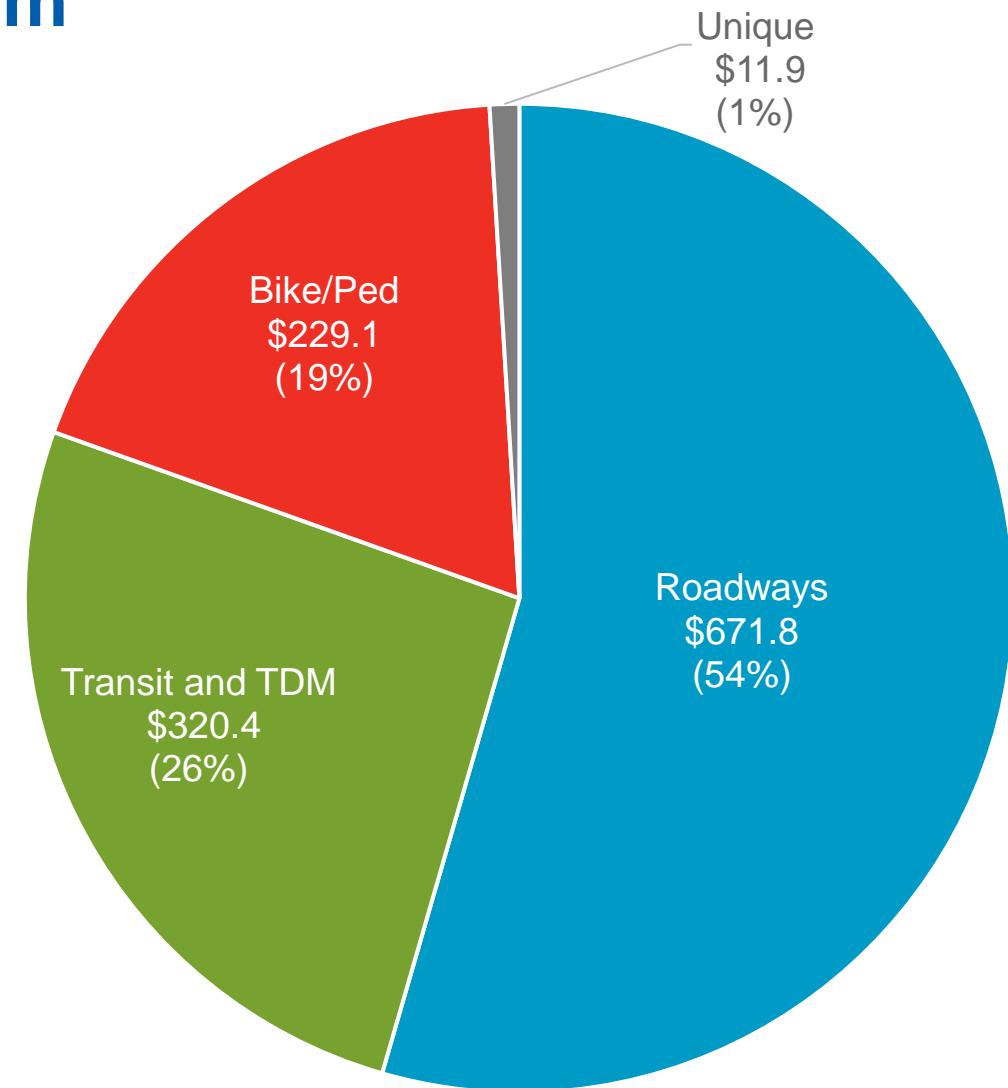


# Investment Summary Findings

## Summary of Projects Federal Funding from 2014 – 2022

Over the evaluated period, **\$1.2 billion** in federal funds were distributed to 344 projects across three modal categories.

The Regional Solicitation funding leveraged **\$1.3 billion** from other sources, bringing the total regional investment to **\$2.5 billion**.



Share of Total Federal Funding From the Regional Solicitation (2014 – 2022) (Shown in \$ millions)

# Investment Summary Findings

## Safety Benefits

Safety is a key component of the Regional Solicitation and is one of the key determinants in project scoring and selection. **The safety benefits of selected roadway projects were monetized as one measure of effectiveness.**

This table also shows a large jump in total benefits in 2020. This was the same year that **Spot Mobility and Safety Roadway** category was added to the application.

Cycle	Total Safety Benefit
2014	\$142.2
2016	\$160.1
2018	\$200.8
2020	\$395.0
2022	\$410.8
Total	\$1,308.7

*Monetized Safety Benefits as Reported by Applicants by Solicitation Year (Shown in \$ millions)*

# Investment Summary Findings

## Funding awards on or impacting MnDOT system (\$350 million total)

- 29% of the total regional solicitation funding over the past 10 years directly improved the state system.
- 48% (\$322.5 million) of all funding distributed in the Roadways Including Multimodal Elements category went to projects directly on or significantly improving the state system.
- 70% (\$198.8 million) of all funding distributed in the Strategic Capacity category went to projects (mostly interchanges) on the state system.
- 11% (\$25.1 million) of all funding distributed in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities category went to state trail projects and crossings or trails along the trunk highway system

# Investment Summary Findings

## Multimodal Investments

- 200 miles of trails and sidewalks
  - 116 miles of trail and sidewalk constructed as separate bike/ped projects and
  - 108 miles of trail and sidewalk constructed as part of roadway projects
- Several bike/ped projects selected that connect to major transitways (Gold, Blue, Green Lines, etc.) or major roadway projects (Hwy 36, Hwy 5, etc.).
- Investment in 6 Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Lines and modernization of existing transitway and transit stations.
- 29 TDM awards, including 17 to non-government applicants

# Investment Summary Findings

## Application Success Trends

- The total applicant **success rate was 49%**.
  - Roadways including Multimodal Elements: 46%
  - Transit and TDM: 61%
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian Elements: 45%
  - Unique Projects: 83%
- Counties as applicants had a success rate of 39%, however the success rate varied between 27% (Anoka) to 63% (Hennepin).
- Cities as applicants had an average success rate of 50%.

# Listening Session Feedback



# 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:

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

# Policymaker Workshop December 18



# Policymaker Workshop Overview

44 policymakers and 9 TAC members in attendance.

Attendees worked in groups to determine **how** each TPP Policy or Objective flagged as an investment priority could fit in the application. A total of 31 cards were provided to participants.

Should the policy or objective:

- Become an **application category**?
- Be included in **some other way such as a scoring measure or qualifying requirement**?
- **Not be included** in the solicitation?

# Policymaker Workshop Activity

## Example Cards

*Climate Change*

### Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

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#### OBJECTIVE

The region's transportation system minimizes its greenhouse gas emissions.

#### POLICY/ACTION

Evaluate and mitigate the greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts of transportation plans and projects.

*Dynamic and Resilient*

### Build out the regional bicycle transportation network (RBTN)

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#### OBJECTIVE

People have better travel options beyond driving alone to meet their daily needs, with a focus on improving travel times, reliability, directness, and affordability.

#### POLICY/ACTION

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.

*Health and Safety*

### Reduce deaths and life changing injuries

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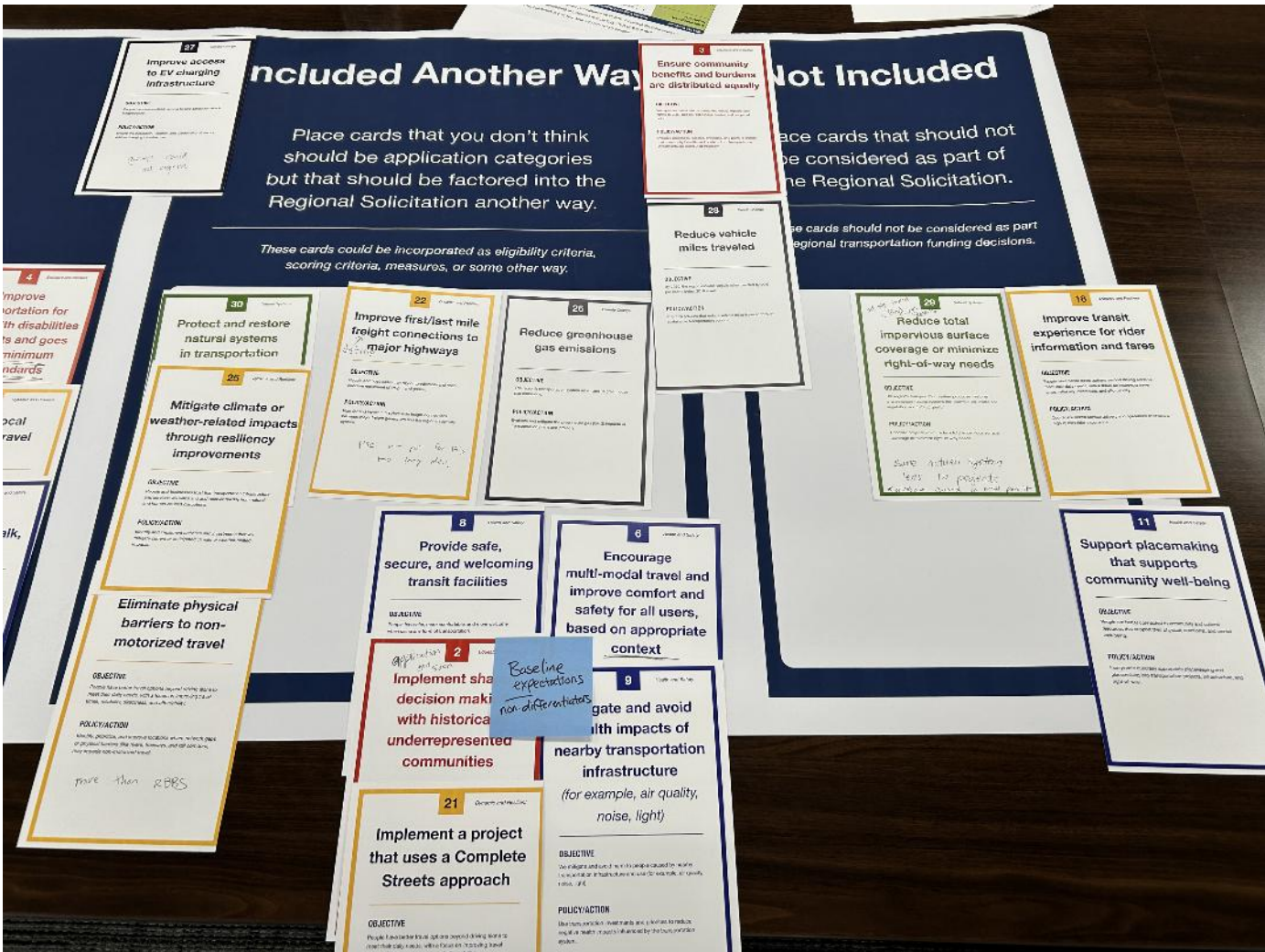
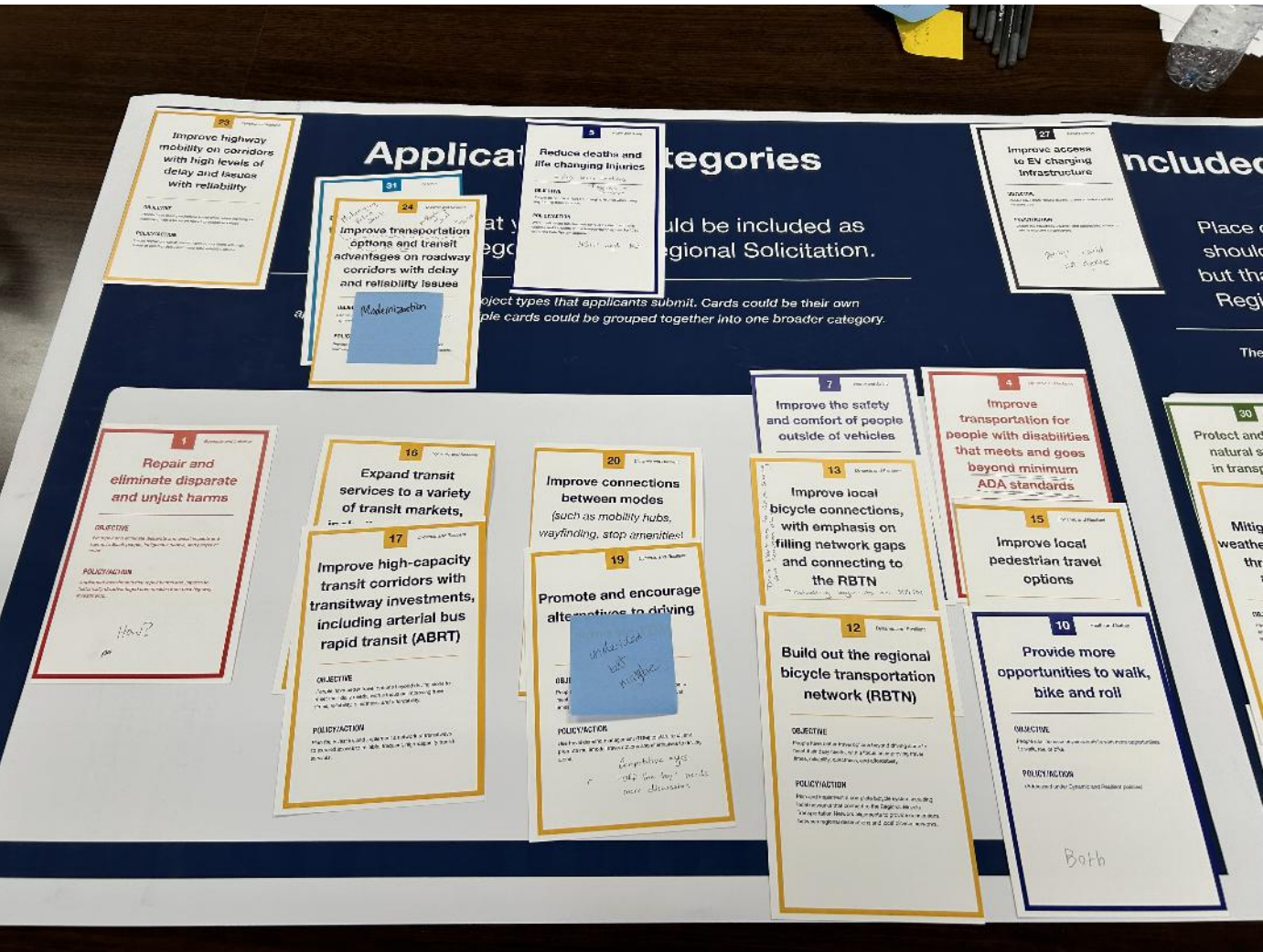
#### OBJECTIVE

People do not die or face life-changing injuries when using any form of transportation.

#### POLICY/ACTION

Work to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries from traffic crashes and incidents on the transportation system by 2050 using the Safe System approach.

# Polcymaker Workshop Activity - Placemat



# Role of the Special Issue Working Groups



# Role and Structure

## Technical Recommendations

For each application category, working groups will recommend:

- Eligible project types
- Scoring criteria and measures
- Potential project funding minimums and maximums
- If/how to incorporate geographic considerations within relevant application categories

### *Special Issue Working Groups:*

Safety

Bike/Ped

Transit

Roadway

Climate/GHG/EV

TDM

Community Considerations

# Working Group Process

## Work Plan

### **Early April – Kickoff Meeting with each group**

- Follow-up survey to collect initial feedback on criteria and priorities

### **April 25 – Workshop 1**

- Full day agenda with "open house" format, and separate group meetings
- Develop consensus on criteria, initial discussion on measures, eligibility requirements and funding min/max ranges

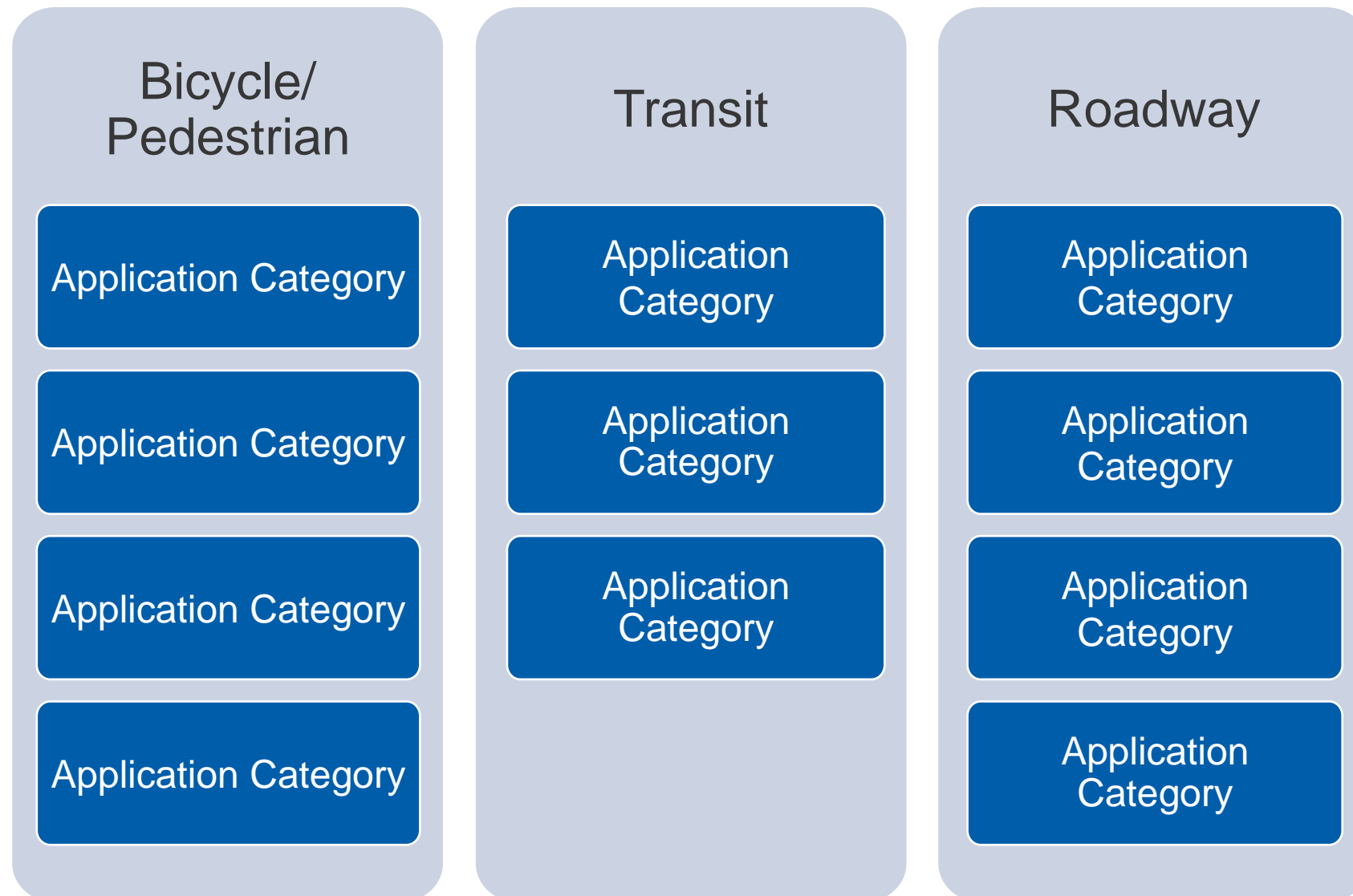
### **May 30 – Workshop 2**

- Develop consensus on previous topics, discuss scoring guidance and geographic considerations

### **TBD – Virtual meetings**

- Issue resolution meetings as-needed
- May involve policymakers or technical groups as relevant

# Example Modal Structure



*Categories similar to current solicitation, but tweaked to align with 2050 TPP*

*How do we incorporate other priorities?*

- *EV Charging*
- *Travel Demand Management (TDM)*

*How do we specifically focus on safety, which is often asked by policymakers?*

# Current Proposed Modal+ Hybrid Structure

## Safety

### Proactive Safety (All Modes):

Small Projects (HSIP)  
Large Project  
(Reg Sol Federal  
Funding)

### Reactive Safety (All Modes):

Small Projects (HSIP)  
Large Projects  
(Reg Sol Federal  
Funding)

## Dynamic and Resilient

### Bicycle/Pedestrian

*Federal Reg Sol Funding*

Regional Bike Facilities

*Regional AT Funding*

Local Bike Facilities

Local Pedestrian  
Facilities

AT Planning

### Transit

Transit Expansion  
(Including  
Microtransit)

Arterial Bus Rapid  
Transit

Transit Customer  
Experience

### Roadway

Roadway  
Modernization

Congestion  
Management  
Process Strategies

Interchanges

Bridge Connections

## Environment

EV Charging  
Infrastructure

TDM

## Regional Data

Regional Modeling/Travel Behavior Inventory

# Next steps



## Next steps:

1. Technical Steering Committee – June 24
2. Policymaker Working Group – July 16
3. Active Transportation Working Group – July TBD
4. Action Items to Committees – late July to November
5. Public Comment Period on Application – Late Fall
6. Call for Projects – Spring 2026

[Website: Regional Solicitation Evaluation - Metropolitan Council](#)

# Thank You

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