

# Project Selection Process

January 5, 2023

Equity Advisory Committee (EAC)



Puget Sound Regional Council



# Questions for the Equity Advisory Committee

- Is anything we've shared confusing or unclear?
- How do the projects we're selecting look to you? Do these seem like projects that are adding value?
- What's missing from our current process? Are there any issues with our current process?
- What transportation projects are better than others in addressing equity issues? Why are these projects important?



# PSRC Funds - Overview

PSRC receives ~\$290 Million annually in federal transportation funds:

- **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)** ~\$90m
  - Two funding programs, specific eligibility requirements for each
- **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)** ~\$200m
  - Four funding programs, specific eligibility requirements for each



# PSRC Funds - Overview

Federal Highway Administration Funds	Federal Transit Administration Funds
Regional Competition	Regional Competition
Countywide Competitions	Earned Share Distribution

Specific project selection processes:

- Regional competitions support larger scale, regional projects
- Countywide competitions support more localized improvements and communities
- *Transit funding directed both to a regional competition and to support existing services*



# PSRC Funds - Overview

All processes will:

- Follow policy direction from Board, as adopted in the *Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds*
- Follow regional policies and procedures
  - Consistent with VISION 2050 and the Regional Transportation Plan
  - Consistent with local comprehensive plans



# Planning & Programming Framework

## Pathway to a project





# Policy Framework

## *Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds*

- Funds distributed approximately every 2 years
  - *Program funds into the future*
  - *2022 process distributed FFY 2025-2026 funds*
- Based on VISION 2050 policies
  - *Support for centers and the corridors that serve them*
- Provides board direction for project selection
  - Detailed policies and procedures for conducting the process



# Project Evaluation Criteria

*Policy Framework* and evaluation criteria based on *VISION 2050* policies, addressing:

- Support for regional and local centers
- Mobility, accessibility and circulation
- Active transportation
- Safety
- Equity
- Climate and air quality
- Project readiness

Equity and Safety  
significantly  
revised and  
elevated in 2022





# Project Evaluation Criteria - Highlights

**Centers** – how the project supports:

- housing and employment densities;
- plans and activities of the center;
- jobs / businesses

**Mobility, Accessibility and Circulation** – how the project:

- completes a gap or removes a barrier;
- reduces conflicts, remedies a problem;
- improves access and circulation for multiple modes;
- provides active transportation opportunities



# Project Evaluation Criteria - Highlights

## Equity

*New:* Stand-alone criterion with increased point values

*Expanded:*

- Additional focus groups: People with limited English proficiency, immigrants and refugees and transit dependent populations
- Disparities / gaps in the transportation system
- How community outreach will / has influenced project development
- Mitigation strategies in place for potential displacement

*Expanded* guidance and resources:



# Project Evaluation Criteria - Highlights

## Equity

### Section 1 – Disparities / Gaps

- Identifying the population groups to be served by the project
  - people of color, people with low-income, older adults, people with disabilities, youth, people with Limited English Proficiency, populations located in highly impacted communities, areas experiencing high levels of unemployment or chronic underemployment, immigrants and refugees, and transit dependent populations
- Identifying the disparities or gaps for these population groups
- Describing how the project addresses those disparities or gaps



# Project Evaluation Criteria - Highlights

## Equity

### Section 2 - Outreach

- How the development of the project is informed and influenced by public outreach and engagement

### Section 3 - Displacement

- The location of the project in relation to areas of displacement risk
- Agency mitigation strategies to address displacement risks





# Project Evaluation Criteria - Highlights

## Safety

- How the project:
  - addresses safety and security;
  - helps protect vulnerable users of the transportation system;
  - reduces reliance on enforcement and/or designs for decreased speeds;
  - is informed by adopted safety policies



# Project Evaluation Criteria - Highlights

## Air Quality / Climate Change:

- Evaluating the project's potential to reduce emissions from:
  - Reducing trips and/or vehicle miles traveled
  - Improving travel flow / reducing vehicle idling
  - Converting vehicles to cleaner fuels

*Specific sub-element  
of the competition  
looks at improvements  
to areas identified the  
WA Environmental  
Health Disparities map*

## Project Readiness / Financial Plan:

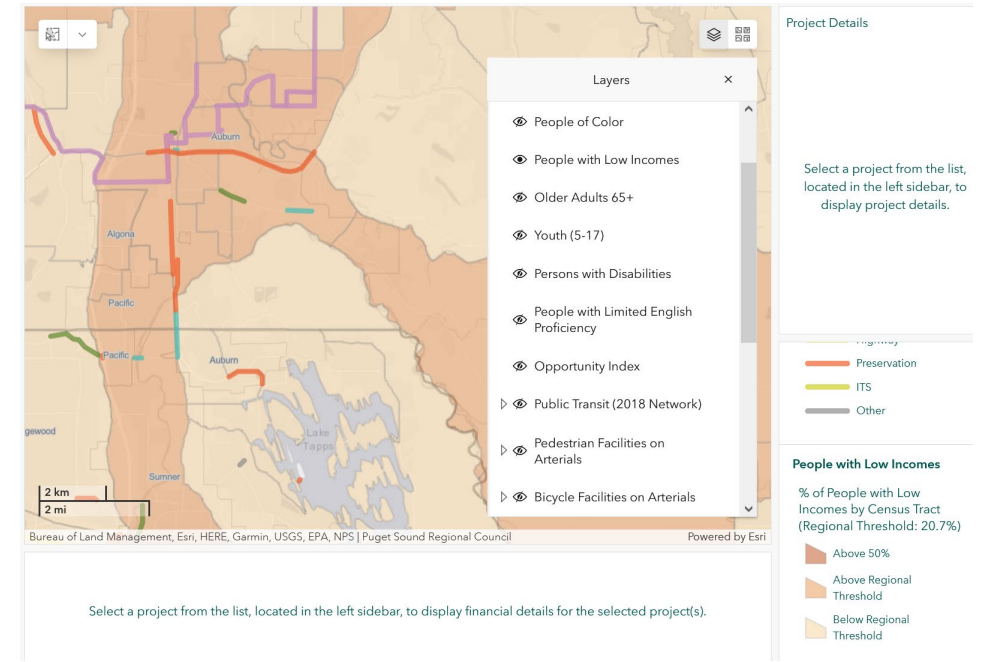
- Will the project be ready to use PSRC funds by the requested date?
  - What is the schedule of the prerequisites for obligation, project milestones
  - What is the project budget and financial plan



# Guidance and Resources

## Key resources on PSRC website:

- Policy Framework
- Eligibility information
- Resource maps
- Funding amounts available
- Guidance
  - screening form & applications checklists
  - financial constraint
  - air quality
  - equity



# 2022 Project Selection Process Highlights

## Regional and Countywide competitions for FHWA funds

### Regional competition

- \$64 million available
- 31 projects submitted totaling \$159 million
- 12 projects recommended
- Average award = \$5.4 million

### Countywide competitions

- \$123 million available
- 167 projects submitted across all four counties
- Total request of over \$334 million
- 71 projects recommended
- Average award = \$1.5 million







# 10 Minute Break





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# Project Outcomes – 2022 Project Selection Process

Highlights of the 83 recommended projects:

- 39 projects improve designated freight facilities
- 40 projects improve facilities serving transit routes
- 15 projects improve intersections
- 4 projects include decarbonization elements





# Project Outcomes – 2022 Project Selection Process

Highlights of the 83 recommended projects:

- 44 projects include bicycle and pedestrian elements (sidewalks, bicycle lanes)
- 29 projects address preservation and maintenance
- 73 projects are located / providing improvements in one or more equity focus areas
  - 57 projects in areas with higher proportions of people of color and/or people of low income, specifically





# Equity Focus Areas

*Based on foundational work in*

## **VISION 2050 & the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)**

Six demographics used to measure and track disparities

People of  
Color

People with  
Low Incomes

People with  
Disabilities

Youth  
(Ages 5-17)

Older Adults  
(Age 65+)

People with  
limited English  
proficiency  
(LEP)

Equity Focus Areas (EFAs)

have higher proportions of members of these groups



# Equity Focus Areas

EQUITY FOCUS AREAS categorize places into three groups:

Above 50%

Above the Regional Average

Not above 50% or the Regional Average

People of Color

People with Low Incomes

People with Disabilities

Youth (Ages 5-17)

Older Adults (Age 65+)

People with LEP (Limited English Proficiency)

## Example of Equity Focus Areas (People of Color)

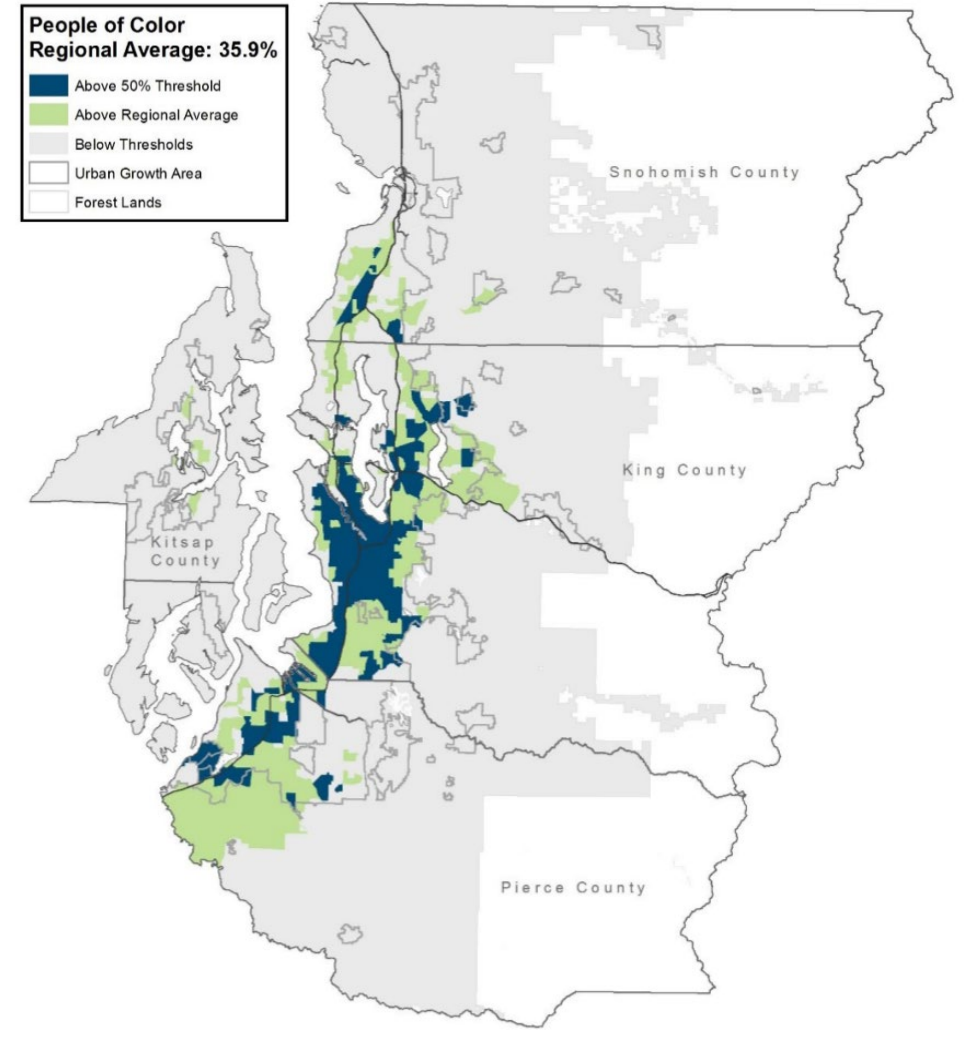


Image: PSRC Draft Regional Transportation Plan (1/13/2022);  
Figure 1, [Appendix F](#), page 13

# Project Outcomes – 2022 Project Selection Process

Key examples of safety features included in recommended projects:

- Combination of walkways, bike lanes and lighting
- Roundabouts and other reductions of left turn conflicts at intersections
- Crosswalk visibility enhancements and rectangular rapid flashing beacons
- Provision of medians, pedestrian refuge islands



# High Scoring Projects for Equity

- **High Scoring Projects: Disparities / Gaps**
- **Targeting disparities / gaps experienced by marginalized communities**
  - Creating non-motorized options, addressing missing links, building infill stations, electrifying buses, etc.
  - Increasing transit reliability, reducing travel time
  - Improving access to opportunity (e.g., employment)
  - Reducing emissions and improving health outcomes





# High Scoring Projects for Equity

- **High Scoring Projects: Disparities / Gaps**
  - **King County Metro's South Annex Base Expansion and Electrification**
  - Transit base to increase Metro's capacity to expand bus fleet by around 250 new 100% electric buses
  - Connecting diverse neighborhoods in South King County to jobs, educational opportunities, healthcare, etc.
  - Electrified buses will reduce emissions and improve air quality



# High Scoring Projects for Equity

- **High Scoring Projects: Outreach**
- **Outreach to marginalized communities clearly influenced the project**
  - Advisory groups, focus groups, CBOs, religious organizations, Tribes, etc.
  - Fairs, festivals, farmer's markets, public meetings, workshops, open houses, phone calls, surveys, etc.
  - Interpreters and translated materials
  - Staff (e.g., engineers) participate in engagement



# High Scoring Projects for Equity

- **High Scoring Projects: Outreach**
  - **Pierce County's Pacific Avenue/SR 7 Bus Rapid Transit**
  - Dedicated transit only lanes to improve reliability and transit stations with signal enhancements and sidewalks for pedestrian safety
  - 45 organizations representing environmental justice, LEP, or people with disabilities were contacted virtually and in-person.
  - Outreach teams assigned to project segments to foster trusted relationships and provide updates
  - ADA outreach shaped accommodations for wheelchairs on buses



# High Scoring Projects for Equity

- **High Scoring Projects: Displacement**
- **Considered area's level of displacement risk and jurisdictions anti-displacement strategies**
  - Projects located in areas of low displacement risk
  - Projects located areas of high / medium risk with effective displacement mitigation strategies
  - Regardless of if project responsible for displacement or not, increasing likelihood marginalized communities remain in these areas and benefit from transportation investment



# High Scoring Projects for Equity

- **High Scoring Projects: Displacement**
  - **Community Transit's Swift Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit**
  - Provides electric buses for transit connections throughout the region serving marginalized communities above the regional average
  - City of Everett's Rethink Housing Action Plan is promoting affordable housing options in Transit Oriented Development (TOD) areas.
    - Efforts include identifying surplus properties for affordable housing



# New Equity Pilot

- The new Equity Pilot Program will distribute ~\$6 million of 2025-2026 FHWA funds
  - Co-creation with EAC
    - Details of competition, criteria, process
  - Projects must be ready to utilize funding within this timeframe
  - Projects must meet broad eligibility requirements of the funding program





# New Equity Pilot

Examples of eligible project types:

- Roadway improvements – capacity, safety, intersections, signals, freight, preservation, etc.
- Transit projects – capital investments for all modes (e.g., stations, transit stop amenities, vehicles, accessibility improvements), NOT service or operations
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities and improvements, including ADA improvements (e.g., sidewalks, bicycle lanes)
- Planning activities related to surface transportation (not air or marine)
- Alternative fueled vehicles and improvements



# New Equity Pilot

## Proposed Schedule:

- January 2023 – introduction to PSRC’s federal funds and project selection process
- February 2023 – Learn from other MPOs
- March 2023 – Further details into the equity criteria, scoring process
- April to May 2023 – Identification of needs and gaps, begin development of the equity pilot
- June to August 2023 – Design pilot program
- September to October 2023 – Pilot program conducted
- November to December 2023 – Review of process and discuss recommendations for next funding process



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# Thank you

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Puget Sound Regional Council