

# Equity Pilot

## Project and Process Recommendations

Equity Advisory Committee

November 2, 2023



*We are leaders in the region to realize equity for all. Diversity, racial equity and inclusion are integrated into how we carry out all our work.*

[psrc.org/equity](https://psrc.org/equity)



## The region's vision for equity...

All people have the means to attain the resources and opportunities that improve their quality of life and enable them to reach full potential. Differences in life outcomes cannot be predicted by race, class, or any other identity. Communities of color, historically marginalized communities, and those affected by poverty are engaged in decision-making processes, planning, and policy-making.





# Presentation Overview

- Pilot Review
- Pilot Framework
- Poll Questions



# Questions for the Equity Advisory Committee

- Were these the types of responses you were expecting?
- Which pathway do you prefer, pathway 1 or pathway 2?
- Thinking ahead to the final recommendations, what elements of the Pilot do you feel should be included in the full project selection process?
- Keeping in mind that there are two pathways, how should we distribute the funds for the Pilot?

# Steps in the Project Selection Process

## Step 1: Agency Planning

Cities, counties, ports, transit agencies, state agencies, tribal governments

- develop projects as part of a comprehensive planning process

## Step 2: Projects Submitted to PSRC

Projects meeting eligibilities for the **federal funding programs** -- and consistent with PSRC's policies and criteria -- are submitted into the competition

- Wide variety of project types -- roadway, signals, freight, transit, bike/ped, alternative fuels, etc.

## Step 3: PSRC's Competition

PSRC staff score projects based on the adopted criteria: supporting centers, mobility, accessibility, safety, equity, project readiness

- PSRC funds matched with local, other funds; projects must be able to use the federal funds within the specified time period

PSRC Boards approval all projects recommended for funding



# Brief Review: Project Selection & Pilot

- Project Selection:
  - PSRC conducts regional and countywide competitions for federal funding for transportation projects
    - Projects must first come from a local planning process
  - 2022 strengthened equity and safety criteria
    - Mixed quality of responses to date, understanding of the connection between equity and transportation
    - Lack of understanding /experience with community outreach and engagement as it relates to projects



# Brief Review: Project Selection & Pilot

- GOAL of the Equity Pilot:
  - Develop innovative ways to improve equity in PSRC's project selection process (e.g., questions and evaluation process)
  - PSRC process provides feedback loop into future planning, improving how transportation projects meet the needs of marginalized communities
    - Laying out expectations for future project submittals





# Development Schedule

**July 26** – Pilot development: overview meeting, review outline of proposed approach

**August 10** – Pilot development: review initial draft updates, dual pathway structure

**August 28** – Pilot development: review final draft updates, final dual pathway structure

**September 7** – Pilot development: review final pilot materials with EAC

**Mid-September** – Launch pilot

**November 2** – Review preliminary Pilot findings with EAC

**November–December** – EAC finalizes project and process recommendations





# Development Schedule

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# Equity Pilot Framework

From EAC feedback, January – May 2023  
Testing out two approaches for the pilot

## 1. Updating existing structure (Pathway 1)

- Update criteria
- Update guidance
- Increase equity criterion point values

## 2. Equity woven throughout all criteria (Pathway 2)

- Same criteria updates
- Same guidance updates
- Equity incorporated throughout



# Equity Pilot Framework: Point Allocation

From EAC feedback, January – May 2023  
Testing out two approaches for the pilot

CRITERIA	Point Values - Current	Point Values - Proposed Pathway 1	Point Values - Proposed Pathway 2
Development of Centers (adopted Policy Focus for PSRC funds)	30	24	25
Circulation, Mobility and Accessibility	27	21	28
Equity (Pathway 2 - Outreach and Displacement)	10	20	12
Safety	8	10	10
Air Quality / Climate Change	20	20	20
Project Readiness / Financial Plan	5	5	5
TOTAL	100	100	100





# Logistics

- \$6.01 million available
- Proposed logistics for competition:
  - Every project responds to **both pathways**
  - **One project per agency** to be submitted
  - Full regional competition, but projects may support regional or local centers
  - **Cap funding** request at **\$1,000,000**
    - Will allow for a diversity of project types and sizes



# Equity Pilot Framework

# Equity Pilot Framework – Pathway 1

## 1. Updating existing structure

- Update criteria and guidance – Circulation, mobility & accessibility:
  - Address transit improvements for all services and times of day, not just commuter lines and periods
  - Is there a way to incorporate **resilience of the system** into the criterion?
  - Emphasize access to **opportunities and destinations**
    - Connect to existing PSRC resources such as the new **Housing Opportunities by Place (HOP)** typology





# Equity Pilot Framework – Pathway 1

- Update criteria and guidance – Equity:
  - Assist sponsors in identifying the most marginalized communities impacted / improved by the project
    - Start with PSRC's 6 **equity focus population areas (EFAs)**, support identification and understanding of data
    - Incorporate the **intersection of two or more EFAs** in the project area (e.g., in an area of higher percentages of both people of color and people with low incomes)
    - Include other datasets on disparities – e.g., WA Environmental Health Disparities map, Coordinated Mobility Plan
  - Improve assessment of addressing impacts and providing benefits
    - **Provide best practices and examples**



# Equity Pilot Framework – Pathway 1

- Update criteria and guidance – Equity:
  - Address under Community Outreach and Engagement:
    - Provide **best practices and examples**, setting expectations
      - **Compensation, language, partnership practices** included in the project / agency outreach to the extent feasible
    - Include the variety of outreach strategies that could / should be conducted
  - Increase **point values** for this subsection



# Equity Pilot Framework – Pathway 1

- Update criteria and guidance – Equity:
  - Address the quality of Displacement policies
    - Connect to **Housing Opportunities by Place (HOP)** resources
    - Provide improved guidance and examples






# Equity Pilot Framework – Pathway 2

## 1. Equity woven throughout all criteria

- Include the same criteria and guidance updates
- Identify equity populations **upfront, before all criteria**
- Include **addressing impacts / benefits to EFA** populations **within all applicable criteria**
  - Additional questions related to **access to jobs** and **improved safety**, specifically for **Equity Focus Areas** (EFAs)
- Equity criterion becomes Community Outreach and Displacement
  - Identification and impacts questions now throughout all criteria



A photograph of a modern transit station. A white train with blue and green accents is stopped at a platform. Three cyclists wearing helmets and jackets are standing on the platform. The ceiling features large, colorful, abstract art installations. A sign above the platform indicates directions to Beacon Ave S and SeaTac/Airport.

# Equity Pilot

## Language Revisions & Examples Responses

# Equity Pilot: Language Revisions

## Criteria: **Development of Centers**

### Pathway 1

- *No changes*

### Pathway 2

- Describe the **support** for a **diversity of business types and sizes** within the community.
- Describe how the project will **expand access to high, middle and/or living wage jobs** for the **EFAs** identified above.





# Example Response: High Score

## Criteria: **Development of Centers**

- **Diversity of business types and sizes:** Within the project area the application references a Goodwill thrift shop and entry level job training; a family-owned grocery store; manufacturing jobs, a large service center providing skilled employment opportunities; independent restaurants; small retail shops as well as larger retail chains; and larger scale industries nearby.
- **High, middle and living wage jobs:** The applicant describes how the project is providing improved access and mobility improvements connecting to the various businesses and job opportunities identified above, including for low-income residents and those without access to personal vehicles.



# Example Response: Low Score

## Criteria: **Development of Centers**

- **Diversity of business types and sizes:** The applicant provided no specific information on the businesses or development within the area, just broad generalizations about the benefits of the project type. *"...allow residential neighborhoods to connect better into local businesses...attract workers to the local businesses...the draft plan for the center is to encourage a mix of uses..."*
- **High, middle and living wage jobs:** Similar to the above, no specific information of the project area or the specific equity populations was provided, just highly generic benefit statements. *"...promotes active transportation to business...improved access to businesses means more customers can reach local shops...can lead to the growth of local businesses and potentially create job opportunities..."*



# Staff Takeaways

## Development of Centers

- Overall felt the addition of an equity-focused question within this criterion was value add
- Encourages sponsors to think more holistically about the impact of the project on equity within this particular criterion
  - support for the center, businesses across multiple scales, and jobs across multiple scales
- Encourages more robust and specific responses in general, vs. more generic high-level potential benefits





# Poll Question

## Development of Centers



# Equity Pilot: Language Revisions

Criteria: **Circulation, Mobility and Accessibility**

## Pathway 1

- Describe how the project remedies a current or anticipated problem (e.g. congestion ... addressing **redundancies** in the system, and/or improving individual **resilience** and **adaptability** to changes or issues with the transportation system).

## Pathway 2

- Language same as Pathway 1
- **Identify the existing disparities ... for the equity populations identified above that need to be addressed. Describe how the project is addressing those disparities ... to these equity populations by improving their mobility.**





# Example Responses: Pathway 1

## Criteria: **Circulation** ... – Pathway 1

- None of the initial project submissions provided information related to resilience or redundancies / adaptability for the system or system users.
- One project referenced in a generalized way that providing nonmotorized access to transit reduces the need to rely on single occupant vehicles, thereby improving resiliency, but no supportive information was provided specific to the conditions in the project area.



# Example Response: High Score

## Criteria: **Circulation** ... – **Pathway 2**

- Sponsor identified the specific equity focus areas near the project, barriers faced by these residents and how the project would address them.
  - "...the project area has a higher proportion of residents with disabilities and low-income residents who are more likely to be nondrivers...pedestrian safety and accessibility improvement are vitally important to address access and mobility disparities."
  - "This project would help improve access to affordable transportation options that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities, increase opportunities to connect to transit, and make it easier for residents to safely access daily destinations like grocery stores, jobs, and retail."



# Example Response: Low Score

## Criteria: **Circulation** ... – Pathway 2

- Applicant did not describe any specific disparities or gaps experienced by equity focus area populations, or how the project would help address them.
- Responses were applicable to the overall project area, not specific equity populations in the project area, with general public outreach quoted.



# Staff Takeaways

## **Circulation, Mobility and Accessibility**

- Both Pathway 1 and Pathway 2 ask sponsors to describe how disparities and gaps are being addressed by the project for equity populations, but in different sections.
- For Pathway 2, given the request to identify equity populations in the project area is elsewhere in the application – and given that this question is asked more broadly in Pathway 1 – some sponsors may have had some confusion. However, they did provide some level of supporting information in other sections of their application.
- Overall, Pathway 2 encourages sponsors to more specifically identify how the project addresses barriers for equity populations, and some sponsors provided thoughtful responses.





# **Poll Question**

## **Circulation, Mobility and Accessibility**



# Equity Pilot: Language Revisions

## Criteria: **Population Groups**

### Pathway 1

- Identify the **equity populations** to be served by the project ... equity populations are: people of color, people with low incomes, etc.
  - Further identify the **most impacted** or marginalized populations ... For example, ... areas of **intersectionality** across equity populations ...

### Pathway 2

- Identification of equity populations and most marginalized moved to top of document.





# Example Response – High Score

## Criteria: **Population Groups**

- The applicant notes that several of the census tracts where this project is located are above the regional average for various EFAs.
  - “Of the twelve Census tracts: Eleven have a **higher percent People of color than the regional threshold (35.9%).**”
- Additionally, the project sponsor explore the intersectionality experienced in these communities not only between the EFAs but also with the low opportunity areas and Air Quality Focus communities
  - “All Census tracts in the study corridor have some level of **intersectionality** between the equity focus areas (EFAs) and/or other areas of intersectionality ... Of the twelve study area census tracts, **four (4) are in tracts with PSRC Low Opportunity Indexes...** Eight Census Blocks served by the Study Corridor are identified in the **top 10% of Air Quality Focus Communities.**”



# Example Response – Low Score

## Criteria: **Population Groups**

- The response was too simplistic. The applicant included data about the EFAs but **failed to explore** the topic of **intersectionality**.
  - "17.5–67.3% People of Color, 12–49% People with low incomes, 6.9–29.4% Older Adults..."
  - "This area has a **higher than regional average in all marginalized population categories.**"



# Staff Takeaways

## Population Groups

- Most of the applicants were able to explore the topic of intersectionality, the unique barriers these communities face, and how their projects were addressing these barriers, which is a step forward in our equity work.
- They were also consistently referencing regional averages, so scorers could compare apples to apples across projects.



# Poll Question Population Groups





# Equity Pilot: Language Revisions

## Criteria: **Outreach**

### Pathway 1

- **Describe the public outreach process** ... Including specific outreach ... with the equity populations ... including activities from **PSRC's Equitable Engagement Guidance**. These include, for example:
  - **Compensating** community members for their input
  - Effectively addressing **language barriers**
  - **Partnering** and co-creating with **community-based organizations**

### Pathway 2

- Language same as Pathway 1



# Example Response – High Score

## Criteria: **Outreach**

- There were several strategies from the PSRC **Equitable Engagement Guidance** that were used for this project including **meeting community where they are, outside of typical work hours**, and providing childcare to remove barriers.
  - “These events included activities at the ... **Park and Ride**. All events were **advertised in English, Spanish, Korean, and recently Vietnamese**. Additionally, event schedules were diversified, with tabling events held on **both weekdays and weekend** and **incorporating childcare to help reduce barriers** for families to participate.”





# Example Response – Low Score

## Criteria: **Outreach**

- The applicant used **traditional outreach methods** and **failed** to use **innovative strategies** to engage marginalized communities.
  - The application references **online surveys, open houses, postcard mailers, social media, blogs**, etc.
  - Several EFAs were also underrepresented in the survey responses.



# Staff Takeaways

## Outreach

- PSRC's Equitable Engagement Guidance seemed to help applicants get a better sense of our expectations related to outreach (e.g., using advisory groups, meeting people where they are, hiring interpreters).
- Applicants shared strategies more aligned with these expectations and they also did a better job articulating how this outreach influenced the project's design.



# Poll Question Outreach



# Equity Pilot: Language Revisions

## Criteria: **Displacement**

### Pathway 1

- Using PSRC's **Housing Opportunities by Place (HOP)** tool, identify the typology associated with the location of the project and **identify the strategies the jurisdiction uses to reduce the risk of displacement** that are **aligned** with those listed for the **typology**.

### Pathway 2

- Language same as Pathway 1





# Example Response – High Score

## Criteria: **Displacement**

- High scoring applications like this one not only identified the typology for their project's location but they shared multiple policies that were relevant for each category in the typology.
  - “According to PSRC’s Housing Opportunities by Place strategy for ‘**Transform and Diversify**’, the following tools and actions are supported:
    - **Supply** – Middle Density Housing: **MultiFamily Property Tax Exemption Program** ...
    - **Stability** – **Community Preference Program**: Tenant Rights Ordinance ...
    - **Subsidy** – Local Revenue Tools: 1/10th of 1 Percent Increase to **Sales Tax in Support of Affordable Housing**



# Example Response – Low Score

## Criteria: **Displacement**

- The applicant **identified** the **HOP typology** but **did not** include any relevant **anti-displacement policies** currently in place.
  - "The strategy most appropriate to this project is to improve access and housing choices."
  - "The City is particularly **interested in exploring opportunities** to ensure cultural, local, minority, and women's business enterprises continue to have storefronts and opportunities to thrive..."





# Staff Takeaways

## Displacement

- Unlike in 2022, everyone responded to the question, fewer sponsors were confused, and we received more details about policies that were appropriate for each project's location.



# Poll Question Displacement



# Equity Pilot: Language Revisions

Criteria: **Safety and Security**

## Pathway 1

- No changes

## Pathway 2

- Specific to the **equity populations identified above, describe how the project will improve safety and/or address safety issues currently being experienced by these communities.**



# Example Response: High Score

## Criteria: **Safety**

- The sponsor articulates **why** the identified equity populations are the focus of this project:
  - “...people of color – particularly Black and Hispanic/Latino individuals, low-income residents, and people with disabilities...**face disproportionate risks while walking and rolling.**”
- The sponsor then explains **how** exactly the project will mitigate those risks:
  - “The proposed project is **designed specifically to address safety disparities** and create a more complete and accessible pedestrian network.”
  - “Sidewalks, curb ramps, high visibility crosswalks, bulb outs, APS, and LPI are **proven traffic safety countermeasures** to reduce the likelihood and severity of collisions.”





# Example Response: Low Score

## Criteria: **Safety**

- The sponsor does not convey how the project will address safety issues currently being experienced by the identified equity populations:
  - “Elderly and disabled communities experience the most improvement to their mobility by providing a **shared use path for safe, comfortable access** to local and regional transit as well as services, shopping, and amenities...”
- The response alludes to a new shared use path being a better alternative than the existing sidewalk, but does not explain how or why it is better.





# Staff Takeaways

## Safety and Security

- Pathway 2 encourages a more intentional response related to safety improvements for specific equity populations
- However, the comparison of scores between Pathway 1 and Pathway 2 is inconclusive due to the limited total points available
- More points to allocate would be useful to distinguish across projects and allow higher quality responses to rise to the top
- PSRC's boards are currently discussing increasing the point values for the Safety criterion overall



# Poll Question

## Safety and Security



# Equity Pilot: Language Revisions

Criteria: **Air Quality and Climate Change**

## Pathway 1

- Is the project located in an area identified as a **7 of 10** for **diesel pollution and disproportionate impacts** in the Washington Environmental Health Disparities map?

## Pathway 2

- Language same as Pathway 1

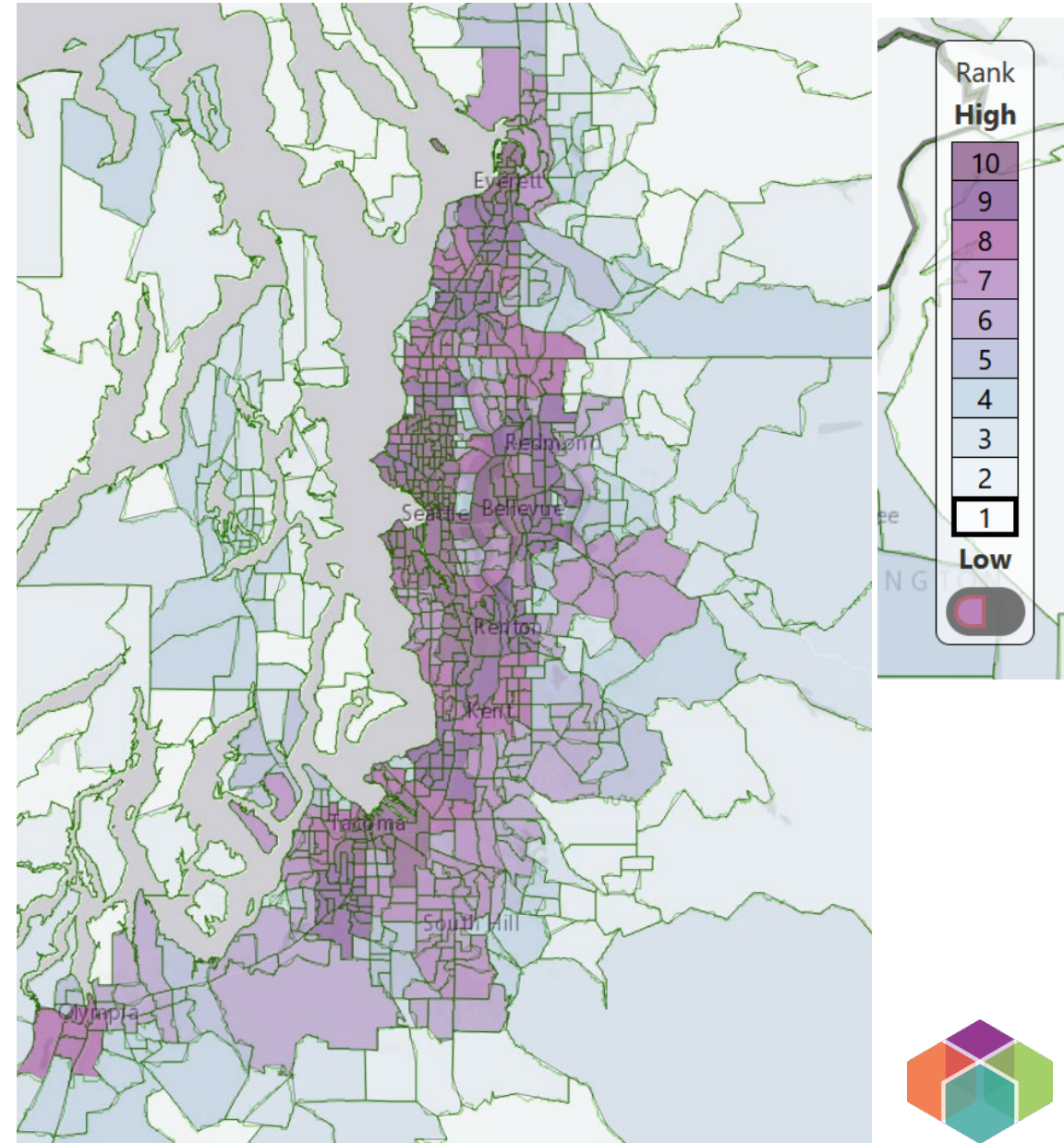




# Example Responses

## Criteria: **Air Quality** ...

- A majority of Census Tracts in the region are identified as 7 or above for this measure.
- There are Census Tracts that fall below 7, but all six of the current submittals received the available 5 points for this criterion.



# Staff Takeaways

## Air Quality and Climate Change

- There appears to be somewhat limited value in the use of the 7–10 factor from the WA Environmental Health Disparities map, although in theory projects outside these Census tracts could be submitted into the competition
- Going higher on the scale could be an option – e.g., above 8





# Poll Question

## Air Quality and Climate Change





# Questions for the Equity Advisory Committee

- Were these the types of responses you were expecting?
- Which pathway do you prefer, pathway 1 or pathway 2?
- Thinking ahead to the final recommendations, what elements of the Pilot do you feel should be included in the full project selection process?
- Keeping in mind that there are two pathways, how should we distribute the funds for the Pilot?



# Poll Question

## Pathway 1 vs 2





# Thank You

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