

# Comments on PSRC's FHWA Equity Pilot

Transportation Policy Board  
January 11, 2024



Puget Sound Regional Council



*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)

# Presentation Overview

- Brief Review
- Comments and Responses
- Q&A



# Brief Review

- 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



# 2023 Equity Pilot Schedule

## Phase 1: Understanding



Jan: Project Selection Introduction

Feb: Learn from other MPOs

March: Project Evaluation Simulation

## Phase 2: Designing



April – May: Pilot Co-Creation

June – Aug: Design Pilot with EAC Subgroup

Sept: Review with Full EAC & Develop Call Materials

## Phase 3: Implementing



Sept: Release Pilot

Sept – Nov: Conduct Pilot

Nov: EAC Pilot Process Recommendations

## Phase 4: Planning



Nov – Dec: EAC Process and Project Recommendations

Dec: Board Review of EAC Recommendations

Jan 2024: Policy Framework Adoption

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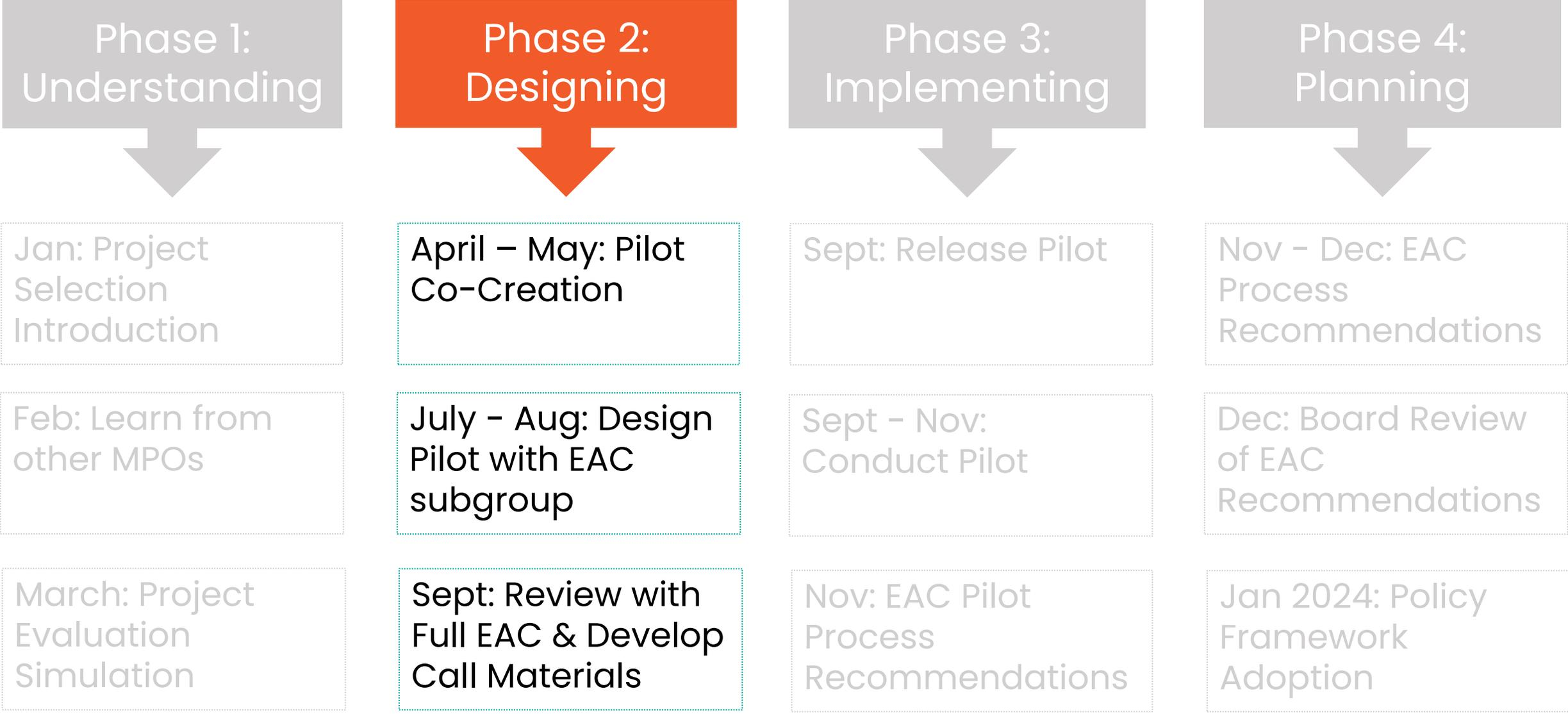


Nov – Dec: EAC Process and Project Recommendations

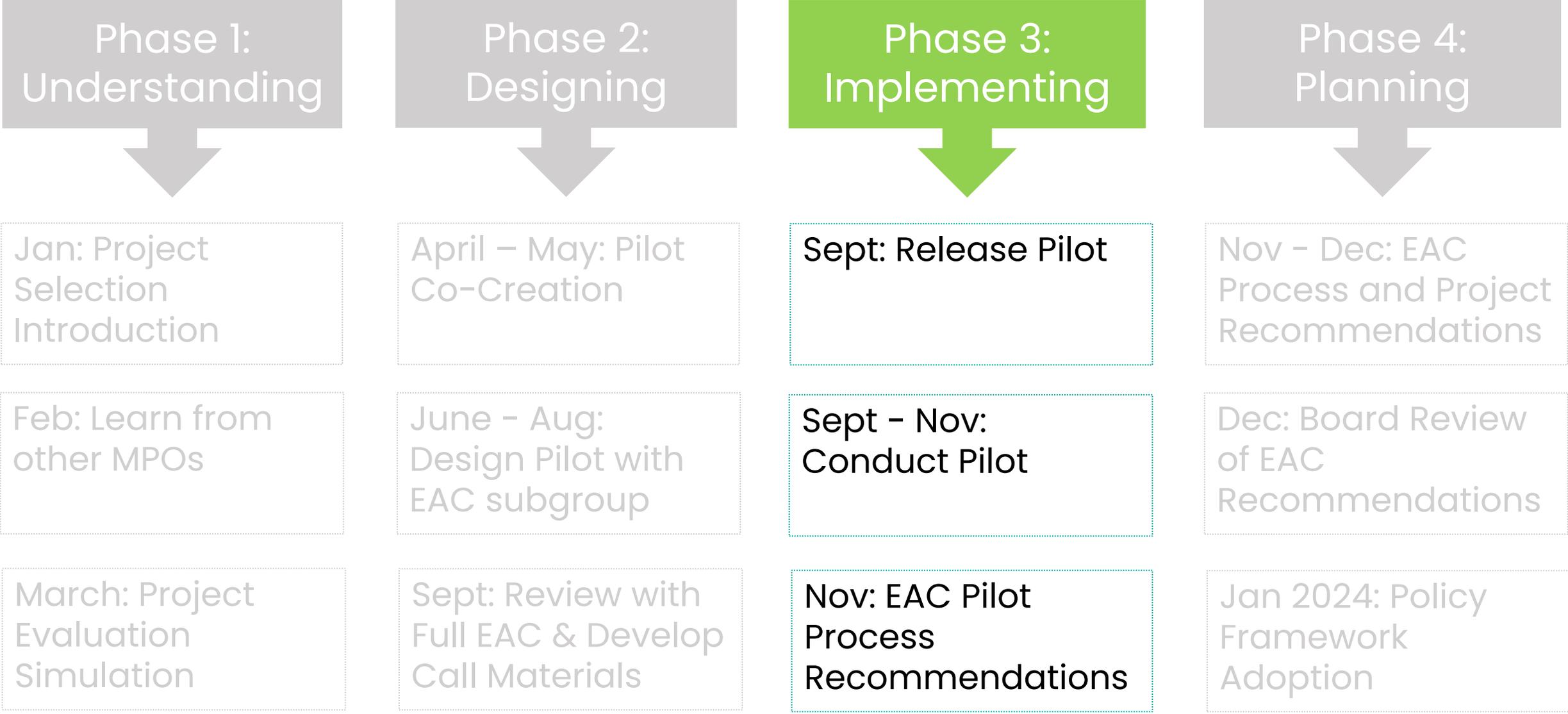
Dec: Board Review of EAC Recommendations

Jan 2024: Policy Framework Adoption

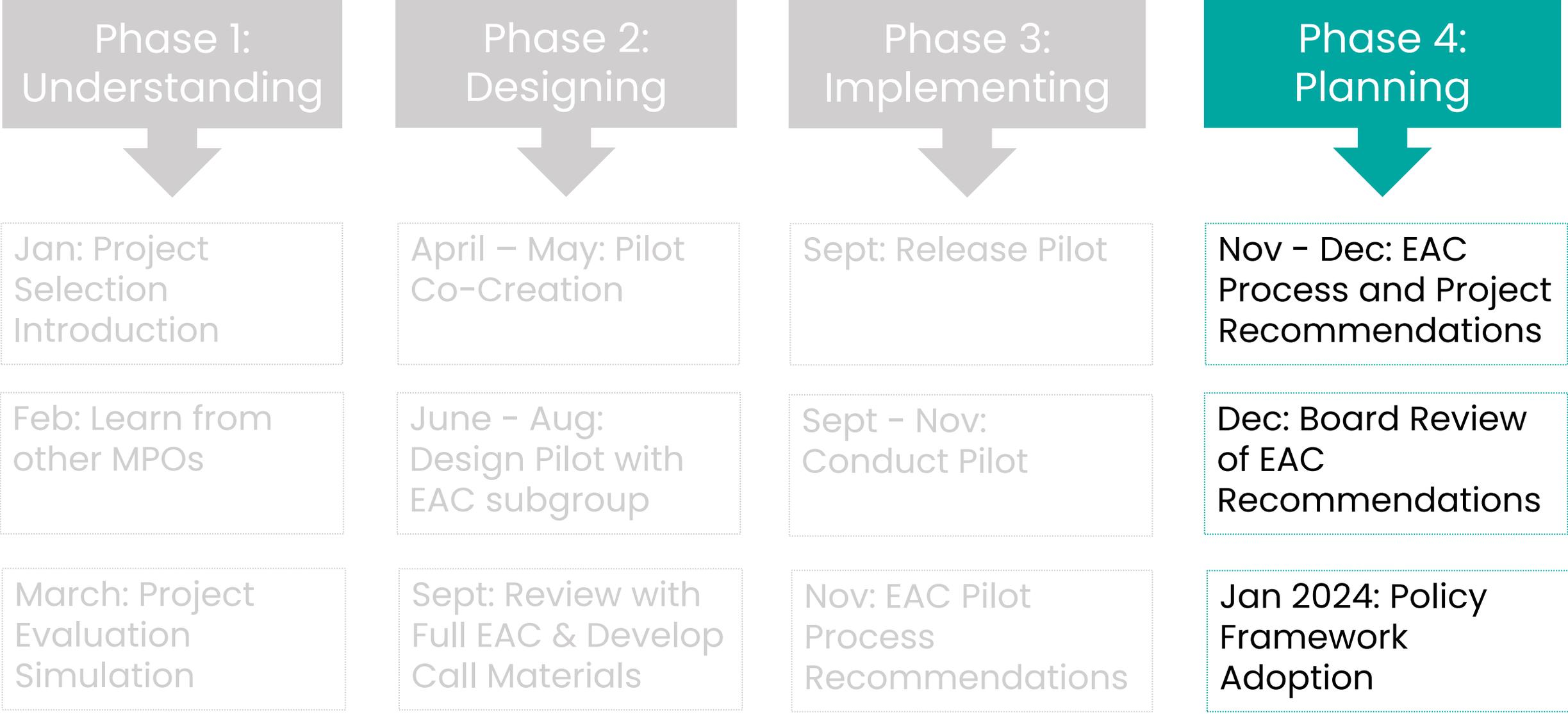
# 2023 Equity Pilot Schedule



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# Logistics

- One project per agency to be submitted
- \$6.01 million available
  - Cap funding request at \$1,000,000
    - Allowed for a diversity of project types and sizes
- Total of 8 projects submitted requesting a total of \$6,354,283



# Funding Requests

Sponsor	Project Title	Request
Tacoma	South 38th St. & South Cedar St. Pedestrian Safety Improvements	\$ 1,000,000
Seattle	Beacon Avenue South Safety Project	\$ 865,000
Federal Way	BPA Trail - City Center Extension	\$ 600,000
Snohomish County	Center Road Pedestrian Improvements	\$ 485,000
WSDOT	SR 99 Preliminary Design Study	\$ 1,000,000
Kent	Benson Corridor 20-minute Neighborhood Plan	\$ 750,000
Pierce Transit	Equitable Bus Shelter Program	\$ 1,000,000
Tulalip Tribes	Marine Drive / Hermosa Heights Safety Improvements	\$ 654,000
Total		\$ 6,354,000



# Public Comment



# Comments and Responses

## Topic: Truck Drivers

### Comments

- Please consider allocating some of these funds to small business owners in the transportation industry. **Independent drivers need newer trucks** to stay in business.

### Response

- The funds are limited to transportation infrastructure projects and equipment purchases by state and local governments. Unfortunately, it is **not permitted** to use the funds to **support individual businesses**.

# Comments and Responses

## Topic: Transparency

### Comments

- It would be helpful to know more about **how the projects were nominated / solicited** and the committee's ranking process. Aside, it might be helpful to see **more information about EAC members** on the committee webpage such as any organization/agency they are connected with.

### Response

- Please see the Equity Advisory Committee's [December 7, 2023 meeting resources](#) which includes detailed information about the evaluation criteria and project rankings.
- For more information about the committee members, please see the [current membership roster](#) which includes a short biography of each member.

# Comments and Responses

## Topic: Equity Pilot is Wrong

### Comments

- The entire premise is racist. There should be **no such program**, this is simply **affirmative action**.
- Select based on qualifications, **not race**.
- Transportation isn't racist. You waste our money and you perpetuate racism.
- Just don't understand why there is a reason to spend money on an exclusion program ... divide the population into groups, create division all in an attempt "to level the playing field" it is disgusting and **wrong**.

### Response

- The **USDOT** has directed us to address **decades of underinvestment** in disadvantaged communities.
- Consistent with federal policies, our **boards** have directed PSRC to make **targeted investments** to reduce disparities.
- Research has shown that **equitable cities** improve outcomes for **everyone**. Our hope is the Equity Pilot helps **connect communities** to opportunities, reduce disparities, and **raise our ceiling** as a region.

# Comments and Responses

## Topic: Kitsap County

### Comments

- It's too bad **Kitsap got shut out of funding**. Be great if you could look at Bremerton for these programs. 54% of Bremerton Public School students are students of color, 69% are low income. Several schools don't even have sidewalks around them. **We could use some help**.

### Response

- Please be aware that Kitsap County and all cities within it were eligible to apply for this program, as were all of PSRC's member jurisdictions. PSRC **did not receive an application from any Kitsap County jurisdiction** for this competition.
- However, Kitsap has received funds for PSRC's recent **Transportation Alternatives Program** and **Rural Town Centers and Corridors Competition**.

# Comments and Responses

## Topic: Pierce County

### Comments

- It has come to my attention that **Pierce Transit** was asked to **reduce its award**. I urge you to reconsider this proposed reduction. **Maintaining the original allocation** of funds will ensure a more **equitable** distribution of bus shelters, benefiting a broader spectrum of our community.

### Response

- Preliminary board direction is to **award funds to all of the projects** within the amount available. In order to do this, **\$344,283 must be trimmed**. PSRC is asking **each** of the **project sponsors** if they would be able to accept a **reduced award** proportional to their request and still advance their project.

# Thank You

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