

Equity Pilot Status Report and 2024 Transportation Updates

Equity Advisory Committee

February 1, 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

Presentation Overview

- Brief Review of Equity Pilot
- EAC Recommendations and Board Response
- Public Comments and Responses
- 2024 PSRC Transportation Work Program
- 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



Equity Pilot Framework

EAC feedback: Test out two approaches for the pilot

1. Updating existing structure (Pathway 1)

- Update criteria and guidance
 - EFAs | Outreach | Displacement
- Increase equity criterion point values

2. Equity woven throughout all criteria (Pathway 2)

- Same criteria and guidance updates
- Equity incorporated throughout
 - Jobs | Safety



Equity Pilot Logistics

- Every project responded to **both pathways**
- **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**



Equity Pilot

EAC Recommendations



EAC Recommendations

Pathway 2

- Identification of **equity populations** and **most marginalized** now front and center
- Description of how the project will expand **access to jobs** for the Equity Focus Areas (EFAs)
- Description of how the project addresses **redundancies** and improves **resiliency**
- Identification of the **existing disparities** for the EFAs and most marginalized
- Description of public **outreach** process reflected in PSRC's **Equitable Engagement Guidance**
- Identification of **anti-displacement strategies** reflected in the Housing Opportunities by Place (HOP) tool
- Description of **safety issues** experienced by EFAs addressed by the project and more points
- 7• Identification of **diesel pollution and disproportionate impacts**



EAC Recommendations

Equity Pilot Funding Process

- 8 projects: helped us learn and refine recommendations
- EAC had conversations around funding low scoring projects
 - Moving forward, expect sponsors address the criteria in full and submit projects that meet regional policies
- Recognize larger, more well-resourced agencies may have more resources for grant writing and participation, than tribes and small agencies
- Recommend funding all projects
- PSRC encouraged to continue to work to provide assistance and guidance to small agencies



Funding Requests

Total Available: \$6.01 million

Sponsor	Project Title	Request	Recommended
Tacoma	South 38th St. & South Cedar St. Pedestrian Safety Improvements	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 945,819
Seattle	Beacon Avenue South Safety Project	\$ 865,000	\$ 818,133
Federal Way	BPA Trail - City Center Extension	\$ 600,000	\$ 567,491
Snohomish County	Center Road Pedestrian Improvements	\$ 485,000	\$ 458,722
WSDOT	SR 99 Preliminary Design Study	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 945,819
Kent	Benson Corridor 20-minute Neighborhood Plan	\$ 750,000	\$ 709,364
Pierce Transit	Equitable Bus Shelter Program	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 945,819
Tulalip Tribes	Marine Drive / Hermosa Heights Safety Improvements	\$ 654,000	\$ 618,833
Total		\$ 6,354,000	\$ 6,010,000



Public Comment



Comments and Responses

Topic: Independent 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.

Next Steps for Project Selection

- **Guidance Revisions**
 - More example responses
 - Clearer instructions with less text
 - Links to relevant information within the application
- **Workshops**
 - February 14th and 15th
- **The next full project selection process will be conducted this year**



2024 Transportation Work Program

- 2024 Project Selection Process:
 - Call for projects to be released early February
 - Project recommendations to board in July
 - Public review and comment in September
 - Final action in October



2024 Transportation Work Program

- **Regional Transportation Plan:**
 - Required 4-year update to launch in February
 - Adoption scheduled for May 2026
 - 2024 activities = outreach and engagement, identification of priorities
- **Regional Safety Action Plan:** technical work underway; selecting engagement consultant
- **Climate Planning:**
 - Comprehensive regional climate action plan due to EPA mid-2025
 - Led by PSCAA, PSRC partnered
 - Outreach and engagement process planned



Thank You

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