



Transportation Equity Framework 2023



RPC Meeting – Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission

July 14, 2022



Welcome

Meeting Best Practices

- Hybrid meetings are difficult, but we want to try to be visible and use our non-verbal queues in these meetings
- Be mindful of the Mute button
- Speak from the "I" (I feel, I know, I think)
- Step-up, step-back (be a vocal participant, but make sure everyone has space to chime in)
- Don't let the fear of saying something wrong or a bit of discomfort prevent you from saying something
- We are all learning. Be inquisitive, interested, respectful.





Context

Genesis of the Project

The Transportation Equity Framework addresses the requests posed by the Vermont General Assembly in Section 41 of Act 55 (2021) (*An act relating to the Transportation Program and miscellaneous changes to laws related to transportation*)

The Agency of Transportation, in consultation with the State's 11 Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), shall undertake a comprehensive analysis of the State's existing transportation programs and develop a recommendation on a transportation equity framework through which the annual Transportation Program (the Agency Capital Program), and the Agency's Annual Project Prioritization Process, can be evaluated so as to advance mobility equity, which is a transportation system that increases access to mobility options, reduces air pollution, and enhances economic opportunity for Vermonters in communities that have been underserved by the State's transportation system.

In conducting the analysis required under subsection (a) of this section, the Agency, in coordination with the State's 11 RPCs, shall seek input from individuals who are underserved by the State's current transportation system or who may not have previously been consulted as part of the Agency's planning processes.

In order to aid the Agency in conducting the analysis required under subsection (a) of this section, the State's 11 RPCs shall convene regional meetings focused on achieving equity and inclusion in the transportation planning process. Meeting facilitation shall include identification of and outreach to underrepresented local communities and solicitation of input on the transportation planning process pursuant to the transportation planning efforts required under 19 V.S.A. § 10l.





We know that age, income, ability, language, race and ethnicity are predictors of health, safety and social well-being as well as resiliency in the face of climate change and economic shocks.

Social equity recognizes that we all deserve to have fair and just access to resources and opportunities to meet our needs even though we started life in different circumstances.



Transportation Equity

Transportation provides access for an individual's daily needs and quality of life. Transportation provision has been unequal in its distribution, application, benefits, and burdens. This has resulted in existing inequities that we experience today.

- Transportation equity must reduce inequities across our transportation systems and the communities they affect.
- Transportation equity enables communities and individuals' access to safe, affordable, inclusive, and multimodal means to satisfy basic needs and lead a meaningful life.
- Transportation equity will achieve resilient and sustainable access to opportunities while also reducing transportation-related disparities, adverse community impacts, systemic health inequities.
- Transportation equity is realized when these outcomes are achieved and communities are not overburdened.



RPC specific involvement

Advisory Working Group – Charlie Baker and Mike Winslow

Key areas for involvement from RPCs:

- Task 3 – Stakeholder and Public Involvement – Consultant team to attend TAC meetings
- Task 6 – Recommendations and Implementation Plan
- Task 7 – Draft and Final Transportation Equity Framework Report



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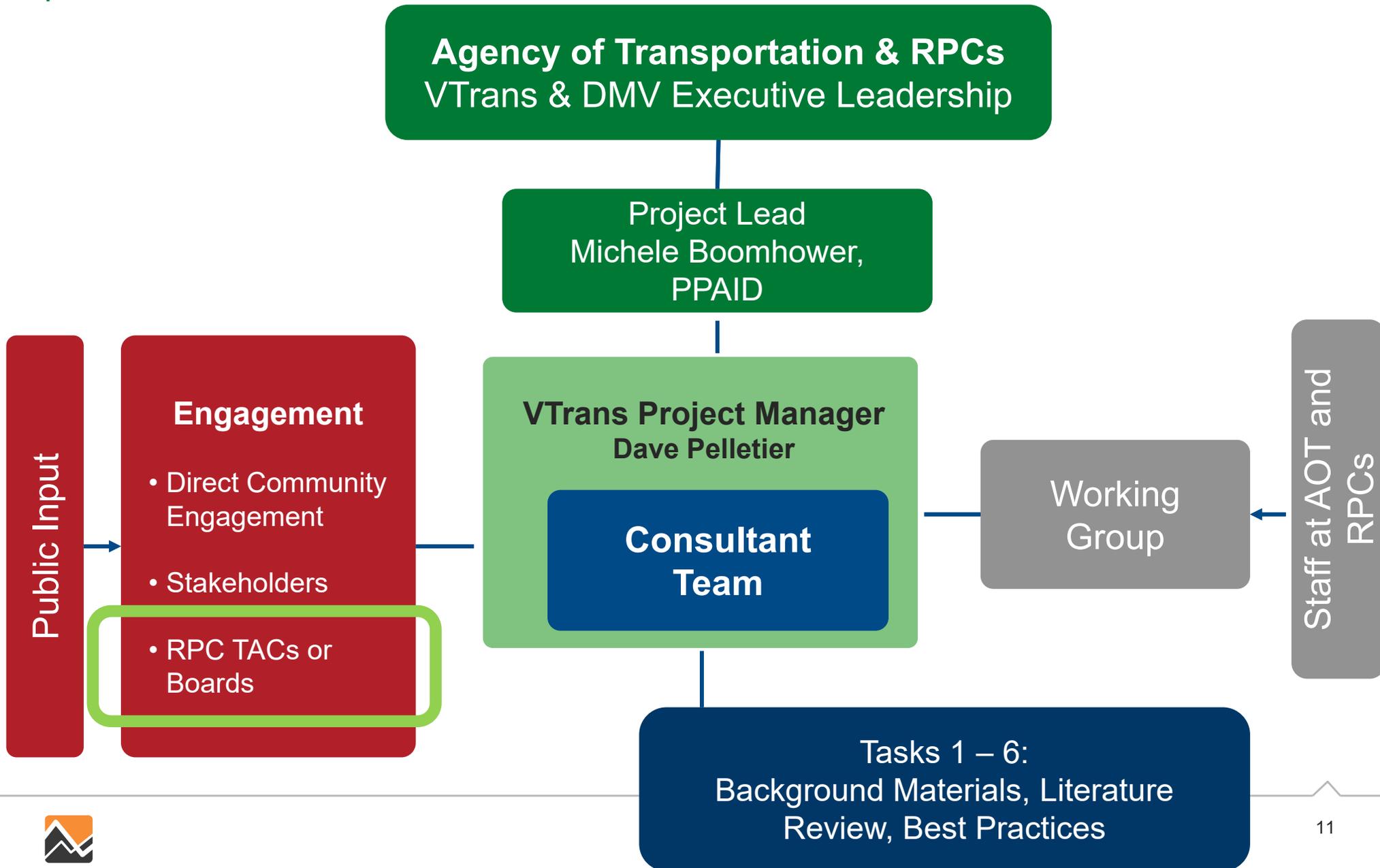
A Transportation Equity Framework is a tool to help decision makers plan for and prioritize projects, ensure accurate representation in decision making, and enhance the equitable delivery of services. The framework will help us answer questions like:

- Who may not be meeting their needs due to current inequities in the transportation system?
- What projects or programs are needed to make our transportation system more equitable?
- Which projects or programs should be funded and in what order?
- How are all Vermonters involved in the decision-making process and how are their voices and concerns heard?
- How can services and the delivery of the Agency's work be carried out in a respectful, equitable, and fair manner that respects our differences and elevates those already underserved and overburdened?

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/equity>



Project Organizational Structure



Recent Federal Actions

Per the Executive Office of the President's Executive Order 13985 from January 2021, the United States Government defines equity as follows:

“The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as and not limited to: Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.”



Recent Federal Actions

Biden-Harris Administration, as evidenced by the agency's response to the 2021 Executive Order 13895 (Advancing Racial Equity and support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government)

November 15, 2021, the President signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Public Law 117-58, also known as the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law") (BIL) into law.

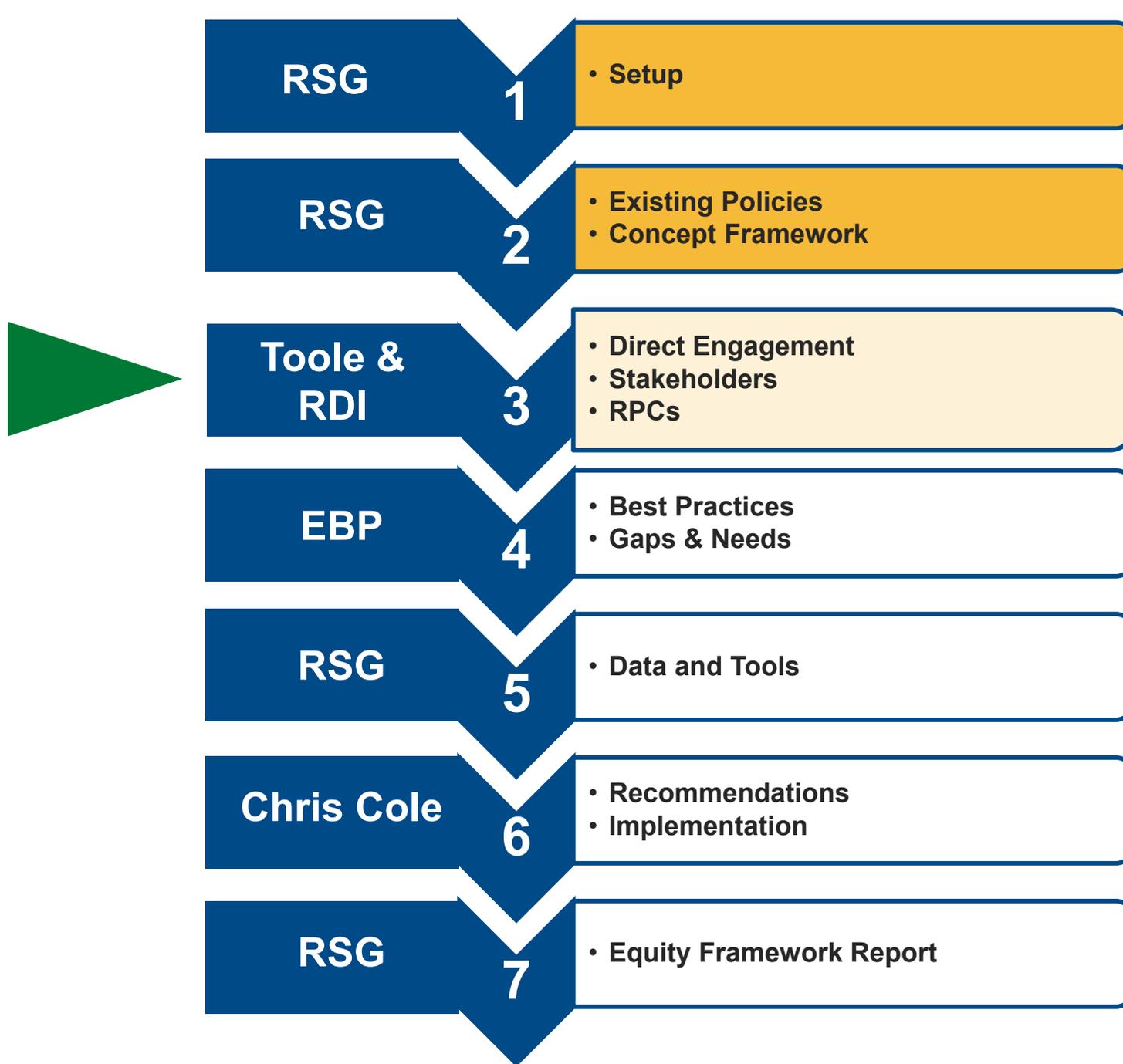
National US DOT Equity Action Plan was released in January 2022

March 28, 2022, the Biden-Harris administration released the US DOT Strategic Plan

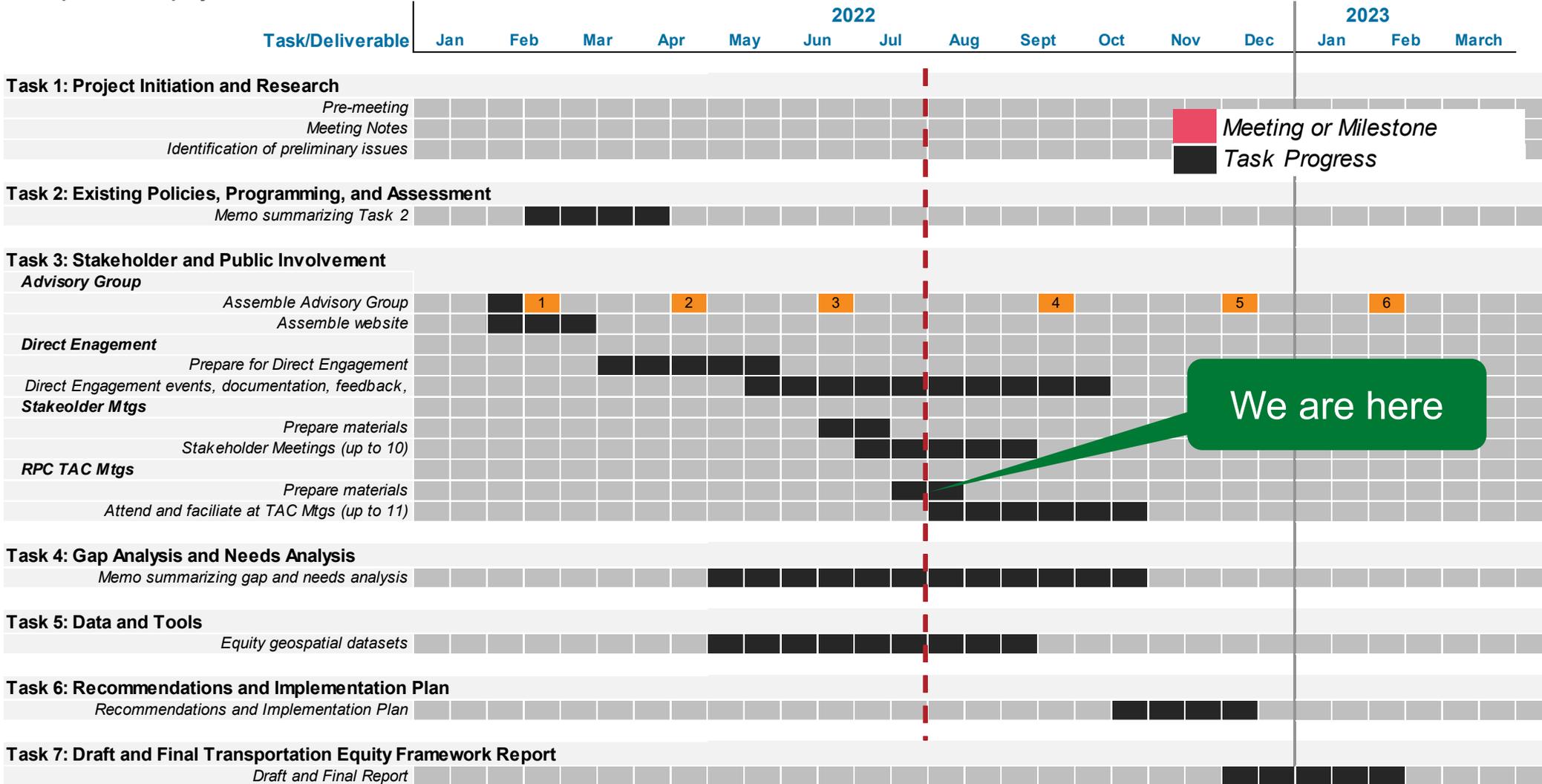




Project Tasks



Transportation Equity Framework



We are here





Task 3: Stakeholder and Public Involvement

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- We aim to bring new voices to the table and elevate those previously marginalized or underrepresented in the planning process:
 - Center **equity as a key component** in each phase of the project development process
 - Lay the groundwork for **how comprehensive public involvement should occur** in future planning processes
 - Determine tools, methods, and best practices in the **Vermont context** to fuse equity into the process
- The engagement process will serve two essential functions:
 - **Identify discrete inequities, barriers, and accountability methods** that need to be addressed in the framework.
 - **Define pathways toward implementation** to ensure the framework is actionable.
- Our partners and collaborators in this work:
 - Working Group
 - Direct Community Engagement
 - Stakeholders
 - Regional Planning Commissions



Task 3: Stakeholder and Public Involvement

What	Direct Engagement	Stakeholder Engagement	Regional Planning Commissions
Who	<p>BIPOC, Low income, and other community members</p>	<p>Implementers and service providers ----- Community organization representatives & Advocacy Groups</p>	<p>Conveners and coordinators ----- Local Decision Makers ----- Technical practitioners and planners</p>
Anticipated Insights	<p>Recommendations for community-driven decision making around initiatives which impact their lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenges to integrating equity into work - Resources needed to advance equitable outcomes - Current processes/ procedures and implementation mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information sharing - Education on equity topics - Feedback on framework, tools, and procedures



Direct Engagement – Process

Four communities:¹

- Winooski/Burlington BIPOC young adult community
- Northeast Kingdom elderly mobile home residents
- Bennington low-income housing community
- Rutland area low-income individuals

Variety of community engagement activities, including one-on-one interviews, community events, and door knocking in neighborhoods

Timeline:

- May 2022: Plan outreach with community liaisons
- June - September 2022: Conduct direct engagement activities
- October - November 2022: Review and synthesize information from the direct engagement activities for the plan

¹Qing Ren and Bindu Panikkar (2021), Vermont Environmental Disparity Index, University of Vermont





Regional Planning Commissions

RPC Engagement Update

The meetings with each RPCs between July and October. Meetings will be between 1 and 2 hrs in length. Most meetings are with the Transportation Advisory Committees, invited staff, and other invited community members (i.e., equity committees)

Context: Sharing Task 2 materials, any insights from Task 3 available at the time of the meeting, and describe overall scope and genesis for the work.

Actions: Collaboratively share and learn to better understand what transportation equity means for each RPC and each region in the state. Jointly discuss how equity can be embedded in the activities of the RPC.

Goal: Create awareness of the project. Understand the resources and process being developed. Build communication linkages between the Agency of the RPCs to foster greater community awareness and role of equity in transportation planning. Strengthen RPC voice to the process.





Preliminary Framework Materials

Preliminary Wireframe



Distributive

Accurate Population Representation



Procedural

Equitable Access to Decision-Making



Contextual

Needs Analysis

Service Provision
(e.g., Transit, DMV, Maintenance, Paving)



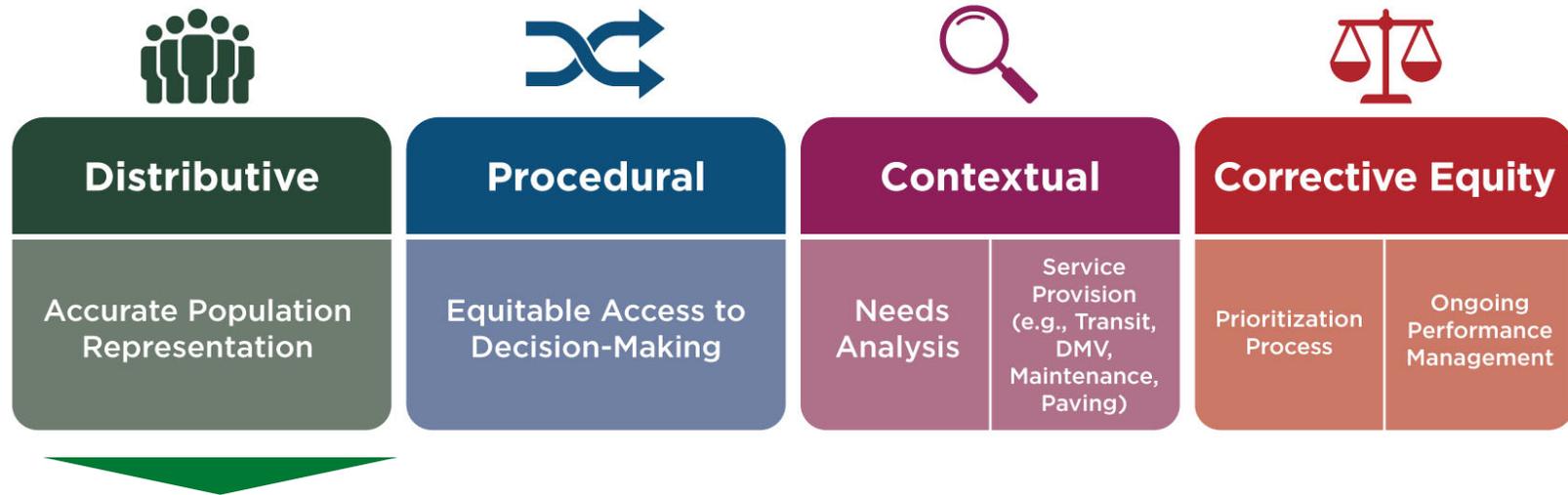
Corrective Equity

Prioritization Process

Ongoing Performance Management



Pillars of Process Equity: Distributive

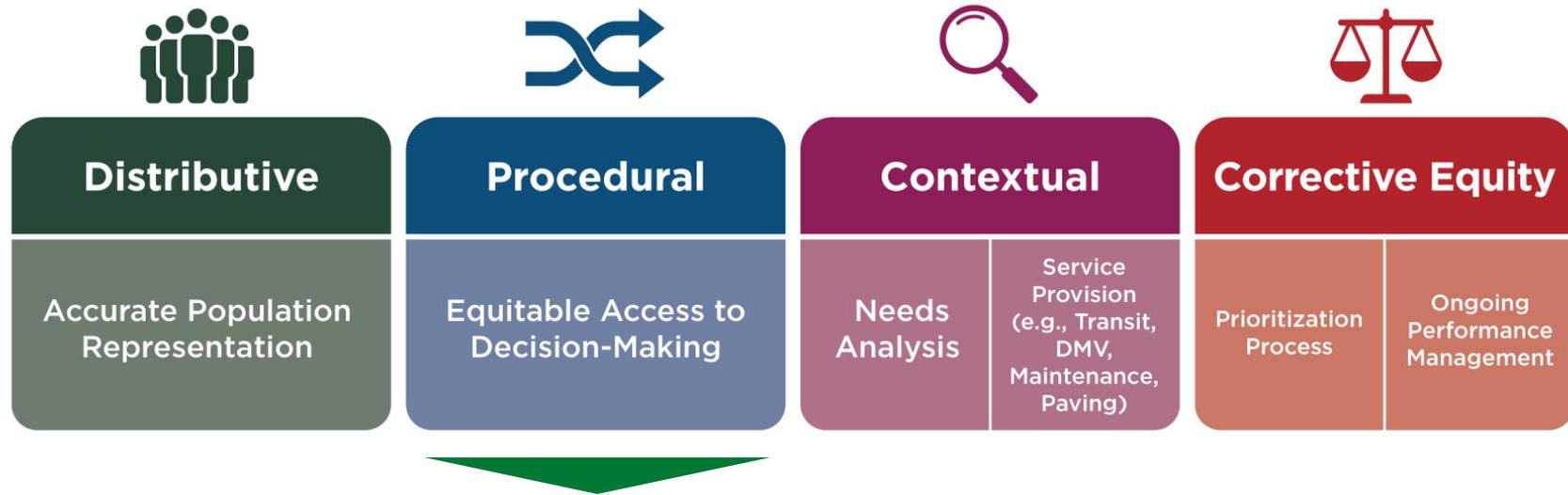


- **How can we obtain an accurate representation of the population and identify communities of concern?**
- Recognize the disparities in the allocation of resources, health outcomes, the inequities in living conditions and lack of political power place some communities in greater risk.
- It is essential that we recognize systemic underrepresentation of certain groups or individuals is common among data collection efforts and needs to be part of a proactive effort to confront these challenges.

Q: How has the RPC described or understood who lives in the region? How do we recognize, communicate, and engage with individuals and communities?



Pillars of Process Equity: Procedural

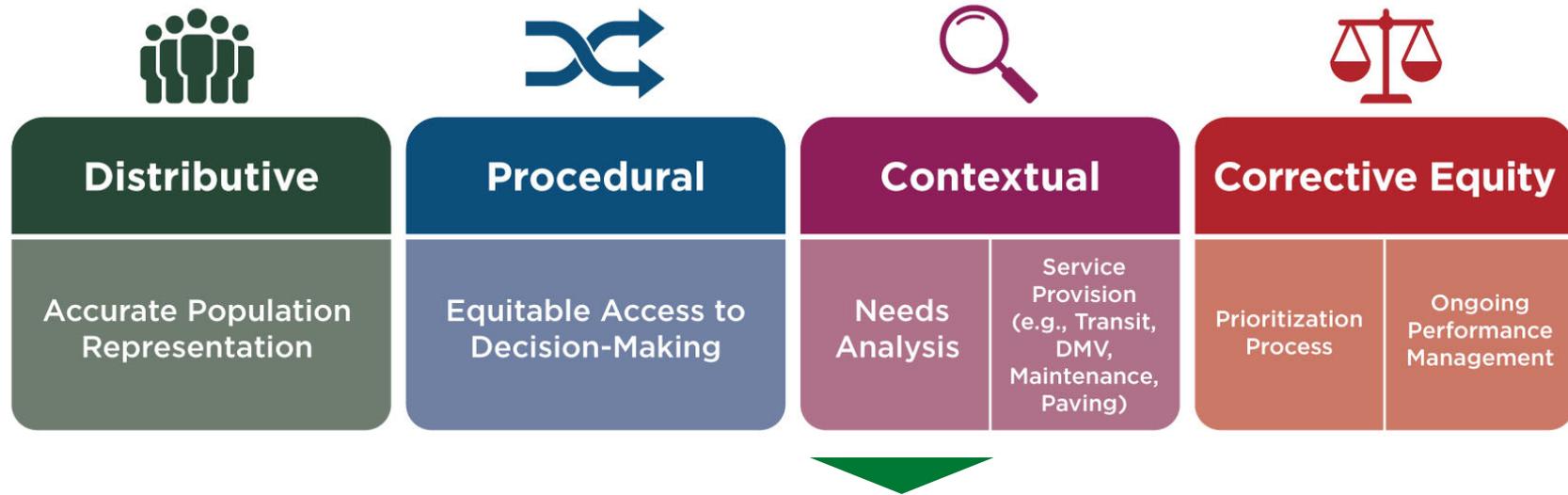


- **How can all voices be heard, participate, and engage in the planning process and create space for their involvement? Are those most burdened or affected by the plan part of the dialogue?**
- Central to this process is to bring communities to the table, particularly those who may have historically been challenged to participate, reduce barriers to involvement.
- Ask the question, “who is NOT at the table?”

Q: How has the RPC incorporated diverse, traditionally marginalized or underrepresented members of the public into the planning process?



Pillars of Process Equity: Procedural

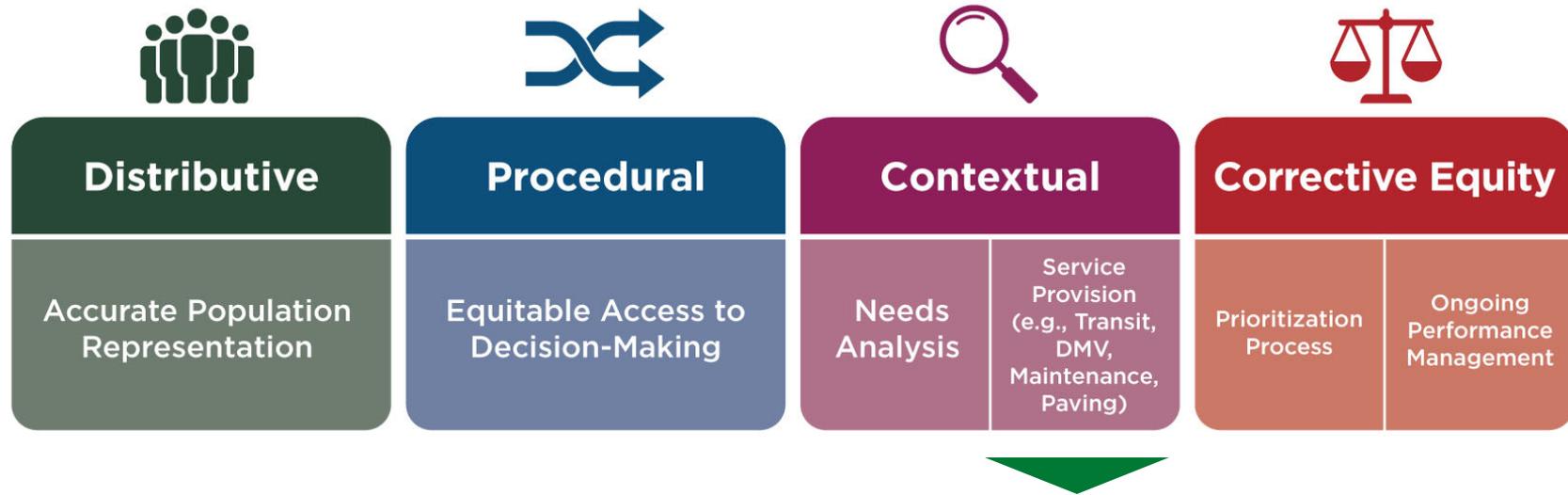


- **Are there inequities in the outcomes experienced by members of our society?**
- Realizing the context and historical perspective of our work seeks to understand the role that previous decisions may have had in determining today's conditions.
- We must strive to improve the lives of all Vermonters and identify solutions to address existing inequities and avoid future ones.

**Q: Are projects being identified to address current inequities?
What methods are used to identify these needs?**

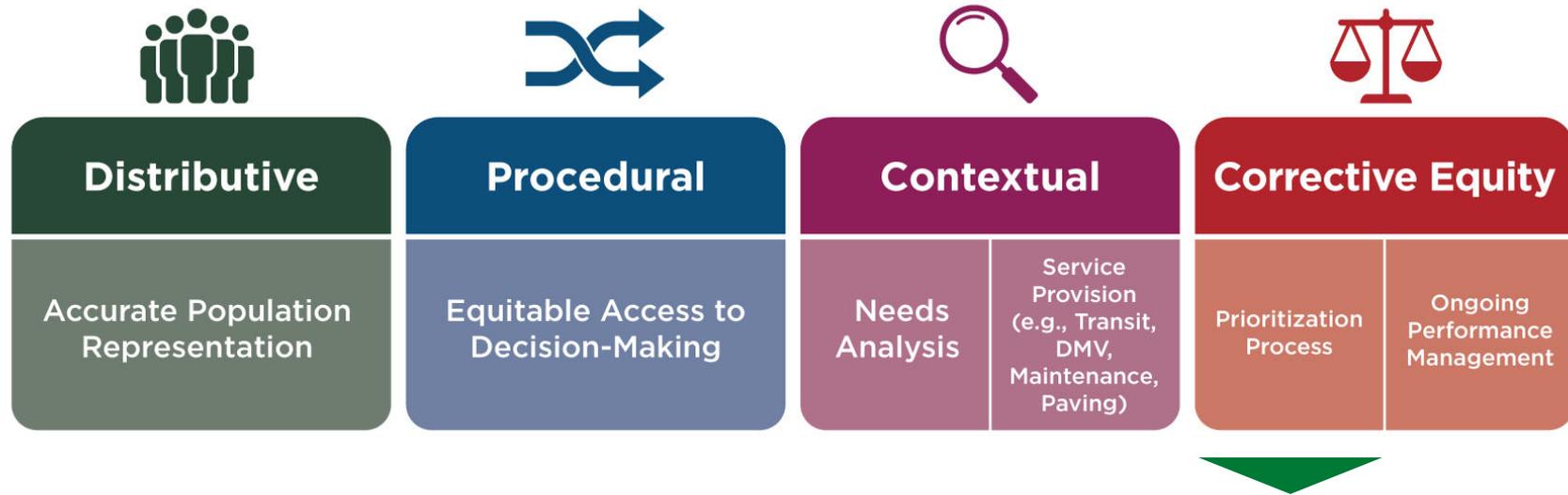


Pillars of Process Equity: Procedural



- Are the services of the RPC **done in an equitable manner**?
- Are the **services available** to all members of the population – regardless of ability, income, language, etc.?

Pillars of Process Equity: Procedural

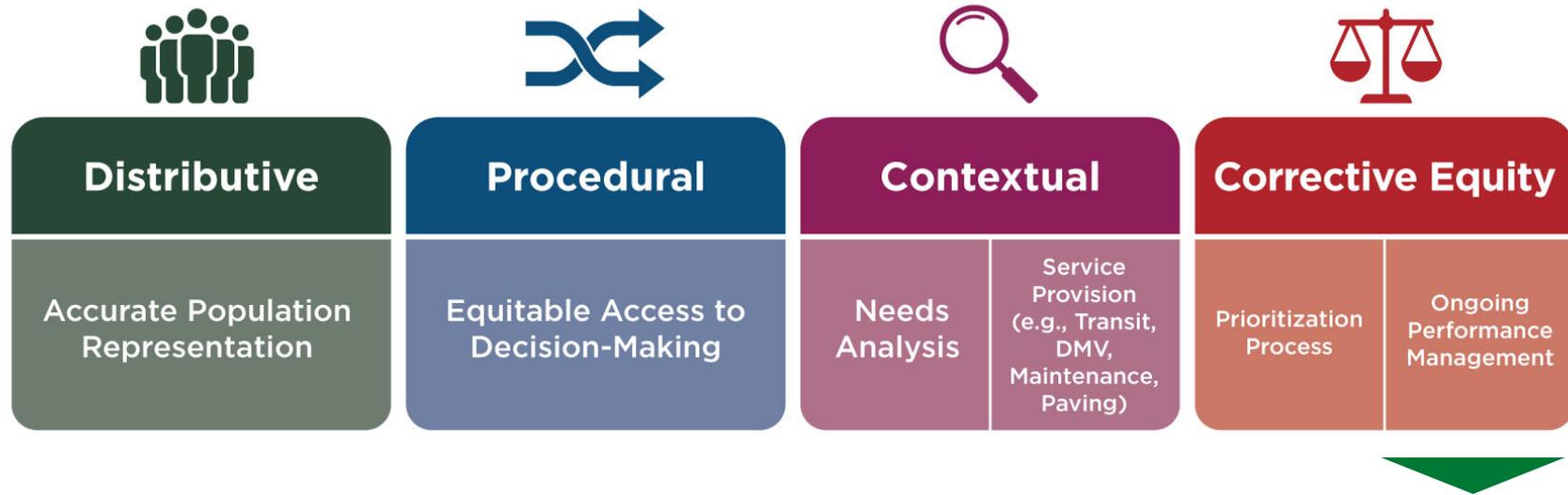


- **How will future actions (investments, policies, etc.) deliver equitable outcomes?**
- Prioritize investments including projects, policies, and services to address inequities and achieve equitable outcomes.
- Incorporating equity into the decision-making process is essential.
- Identify equity as a priority in every decision-making process.

Q: Are there any efforts to include equity based measures in project scoring and investment priorities?



Pillars of Process Equity: Procedural



- **How will progress toward equitable outcomes be monitored and measured?**
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation are essential to realize a just and equitable vision.
- Monitoring with the long-term goal in mind will allow for short term corrections as well as inform long-term adjustments in the upstream processes.

Q: What indicators are used? What is currently being done to track performance measures across communities?





RPC Questions & Discussion

Questions

- How does your organization define equity (formally or informally)?
- How do you see this framework being institutionalized?
 - What pathways could be used?
 - Are there people you'd see as champions?
 - Are there divisions that could be front leaders?
- Could you tell me about the tools, methods, and measures you use to track progress towards equitable outcomes or evaluate equitable outcomes?
 - What has been successful about this approach?
 - What has been challenging about this approach?
- What would a successful transportation equity framework for VTrans look like from your perspective?
- Other thoughts?



Thank You

How to Reach Us

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