Activity 3: Innovative Pilots and Policies

Pilot Evaluations Scope, Guidelines, and Criteria

What are Pilot Evaluations?

Mobilizing Justice Pilot Evaluations are rigorous experimental or quasi-experimental studies that apply equity lenses to the assessment of new transportation infrastructure, technology, and policies. Funding primarily covers the cost of the evaluations and associated deliverables (briefs, reports, media, publications, interactive webmaps and tools, data generation). It is not intended for funding to cover the infrastructure, technology deployment, or policy change being evaluated, however, for small-scale community projects this may be possible.

Successful applicants will receive up to $30,500 for two years of support for a student and funding for materials. The funds are fungible, but we anticipate a breakdown as follows:

- Up to $10,000 per year for two years to support a PhD or MA student. This funding will be adjusted to account for any matching funds. For example, if the P.I.'s institution provides a dollar-for-dollar match to tri-council funding, then WGA3 will fund $10,000 with an expectation that that the P.I. will secure the $10,000 match.
- $10,500 to cover data collection, site visits, community engagement, journal submission and open access publishing fees.

How many projects will be funded?

WGA3 has funding for 8 pilot evaluations. To ensure that evaluations advance Mobilizing Justice towards our objectives, a minimum number of projects will be funded for different regions of the country, as well as different modes. They are:

- 1 pilot from each of five regions: Ontario, Quebec, Eastern Canada, Western Canada (excluding B.C.), and British Columbia. The remaining three can be based anywhere.
- 1 pilot for each of four modal/policy categories: active travel, public transit, new mobility, and behavioural change programs or policies. The remaining four can cover any mode or type of policy.

Due to SSHRC funding limitations, distribution of pilot funding will be staggered across multiple project years. Pilot evaluations should be completed within two years funding disbursement.

What Counts as a Pilot?

A pilot evaluation can be one of two things:

1. An examination of a change in the real world (i.e. a new bus line, a new fare program or subsidy, a new bike lending library, the introduction of a new technology service or platform), or
2. Experiments gathering data that is helpful for designing a new policy or technology that a project partner is developing (i.e. surveying how low-income drivers would react to road pricing, surveying essential riders on barriers created by driverless shuttles).

While the first option excludes evaluations of long-established infrastructure, policies and technologies, changes put in effect no more than one year prior to any data collection will be considered. Proposals to evaluate a recently implemented change will need to clearly layout how the researchers will address the limitations of a retrospective experimental or quasi-experimental design.

The second criteria excludes new policies or technologies that partner agencies are not planning to adopt within the next five years. This excludes things like the adoption of privately owned driverless vehicles or policies for regulating air taxis.

Team Requirements

To be eligible, a team applying for pilot evaluation funding must include at least:

- One researcher who is willing to serve as the academic P.I. for the project.
- One local government, community organization, or NGO embedded in the community where the pilot is taking place.
- One named lead on community engagement who is responsible for ensuring all community participation adheres to our core values. This person can be a researcher or a partner staff, but must have demonstrated expertise in working with the community the pilot will engage with. Application teams new to community engagement are encouraged to reach out to the Mobilizing Justice Research Coordinator for assistance on devising equitable community engagement strategies.
- Representation of researchers or partners from other relevant working groups. For example, a team evaluating an active travel pilot should include experts from working group Theme 2, while a team evaluating a new technology pilot serving elders' mobility needs should include experts from working group Theme 1.

P.I.s are welcome to invite new government agencies, private companies, or community partners to join the partnership for a pilot evaluation. However, priority will be given to projects evaluating the pilots of our original governmental and private partners.

Application Requirements

Applications will include a research proposal that explains the following:

1. Background and Project Description (max 2 pages)

This section should include:

- A Problem Statement, or statement on how funding this pilot will assist Mobilizing Justice in advancing transportation equity across Canada.
- A Description of the Pilot, i.e. the infrastructure, policy, or technology being evaluated, including the geographic and temporal scope and the socio-demographics of communities the pilot will serve. This description should clearly specify and contextualize the magnitude of the change being studies. For example: a proposal to evaluate a subsidized bus fare pass should detail exactly how much money the program will save participants, for how long, and relative to their incomes and recent increases in bus fares in the case study area.

- A brief <u>Background</u> pointing to knowledge gaps or unresolved debates on the equity of impacts of the infrastructure, policy or technology being evaluated. If applicable, the background should also point to knowledge gaps on the needs, aspirations, and barriers of the population the pilot will serve.

2. Team Description (max 2 pages)

This section should introduce the team and explain why each member was chosen.

3. Evaluation and Analysis Plan (max 2 pages)

This section should articulate the overarching research design approach taken by the team. This includes documenting what data will be collected, when, how, and by whom, along with what methods will be deployed to analyse it to ensure rigor. A timeline of milestones, tasks, and deliverables should be provided.

4. Equitable Engagement Plan (max 1 page)

This plan will document how community engagement will be sought, by whom, and when. It will demonstrate how impacted communities are positioned to be co-creators of the evaluation, rather than just being consulted parties. If applicable, it will demonstrate how efforts will be made to centre the contributions of equity- and sovereignty-seeking, as well as situationally disadvantaged, community members. Finally, it should demonstrate adherence to Mobilizing Justice principles described in our charter.

5. Knowledge Mobilization Plan (max 1/2 page)

This section should describe the team's plan for ensuring the knowledge created by the plan reaches multiple relevant audiences This should include outputs designed to inform the local organizations helping with the pilot and a plan to share results with decisionmakers and organizations that would be able to act on the findings.

Each non-academic partner involved in the proposal must also provide a non-binding letter of intent that outlines the partner's contributions to the project (i.e., data, access to survey clients, etc., assistance with outreach, staff time, etc.)

Please reach out to Jonathan Hall (jonathan.hall@utoronto.ca) if you have questions on the application.

Evaluation Criteria

Pilots will be evaluated based on the rigor of their research design, level integration with Mobilizing Justice, and their likelihood of advancing transportation equity in Canada.

Requirements	Assessment Criteria	Weight
Rigorous Research Design	- Incorporates novel experimental designs for transportation (i.e. randomized controlled trails, pre-post designs, quasi-experimental, etc.) - Utilizes cutting-edge methods and techniques for measuring travel behaviour or activity participation. - Innovates methods of data collection for equity evaluation in transportation (i.e. new instruments, tools, etc.)	35%

Integration with MJ	• Team includes MJ researchers with the appropriate expertise for the population(s) or mode(s) involved in the pilot. • Complements or advances the objectives of other MJ working groups. • Provides a robust plan for community engagement that adheres to MJ's core principles and is led by a qualified project member.	30%
Advances Transportation Equity	• Addresses a problem facing equity- and sovereignty-seeking, or situationally disadvantaged populations across Canada. • Generates new insights, data, or methods that can deployed by governments, advocates, or industry to ensure equitable outcomes. • Addresses a gap in the literature on the equity impacts of transportation.	35%

Frequently Asked Questions

Pilot Scope

1. **Can the design of a new policy count as a pilot?**
   Yes. If a partner needs to test how different policy designs will impact equity deserving communities, that can count as a pilot. We would work with the partner to develop a rigorous experimental approach to data collection and analysis in that context. Purely theoretical analysis of a proposed policy does not count.
2. **Does innovation in process or engagement count as a possible pilot?**
   Not for this activity. There is scope to do projects on innovative processes with Theme 3.
3. **Which communities, or equity-deserving groups, are you interested in pilots serving?**
   We are interested in evaluations of pilots that may impact equity-deserving groups as defined in human rights and equity policies and legislation. We are also open to pilots focusing on groups at-risk from a lack of transportation, such as youth or low-income households without cars. All these terms are defined in our Terms of Reference.

Team/Personnel

1. **Who selects the PhD or Masters student who works on the project?**
   The lead academic (P.I., or principle investigator) on the pilot will be expected to either hire a student, or offer the opportunity to a student already under their supervision.
2. **Is it required for the lead academic to be a current member of MJ?**
   No, but preference will be given to proposals led by MJ-affiliated academics based in Canada. These academics are called 'co-applicants' by SSHRC and they are listed on our website. However, if the ideal academic is not currently an MJ co-applicant, we have a SSHRC-defined process to bring them into the project if your pilot proposal is chosen.
3. **What is meant by "one main lead" on community engagement?**

We want to ensure that at least one person on the pilot team has a track record of equitable engagement with the communities impacted by the pilot. If you cannot find someone with that competency, we can work with you to find someone to serve in that that role.

4. **Can a postdoc be funded in-lieu of a PhD or masters student?**
   Yes.

5. **Does the pilot have to be in one of MJ's partner municipalities?**
   No. However, preference will be given to pilots that involve our founding partners from any sector. These partners are listed on our website.