



## Membership Charter

### Extending and Sharing Benefits of Strategic Planning Models

#### Pooled Fund TPF-5(528)

May 17, 2024

## 1. Introduction

The “Extending and Sharing Benefits of Strategic Planning Models” pooled fund, TPF-5(528) was launched at PooledFund.org on March 6, 2024. Work performed through the former pooled fund (TPF-5(369)) was substantially completed late 2023. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) renewed the pooled fund for a third phase in 2024. This document updates the previous charter documenting the activities of the pooled fund and defines roles and responsibilities for member organizations.

### 1.1 Pooled Fund Background

Using strategic tools for long range performance-based planning is becoming increasingly valuable. These tools are helping state and metropolitan area governments select policies and actions to address pressing issues that are fraught with uncertainty. Strategic tools are designed to explore efficiently the joint effects of a wide range of trends and policies in order to equip decision makers and the public with a clearer understanding of possible outcomes.

Strategic models can be used to assess the long-range impacts of changes to the transportation system, such as increased telework, rapid electrification, and autonomous vehicle technologies. Strategic models can accommodate the assessment of emerging technologies and policy considerations that decision makers would consider, in ways more flexible than traditional travel demand modeling tools.

The VisionEval system of strategic planning models has been supported by a previous Pooled Fund, ‘Collaborative Development of New Strategic Planning Models’, since 2017. These models include the Regional Strategic Planning Model (VERSPM), the Rapid Policy Assessment Model (VERPAT), and the state-wide VisionEval model (VE-State). The earlier pooled fund greatly increased the usability of the VisionEval system and added important extensions, including integration of the Regional Strategic Planning Model with the PopulationSim population synthesizer to increase support for equity analysis.

VisionEval models have been deployed by numerous state departments of transportation and metropolitan planning organizations to assess possible future economic development, technology change, and policy implementation scenarios. The success of VisionEval presents an opportunity to further develop modules to include assessment of health impacts of transportation, equity analysis, and access to destinations. This new pooled fund will increase the range of applications supported by VisionEval models, reduce the barrier to implementation of the models, and enhance the interactive visualization of scenario results. These developments will enhance the abilities of planners, advocates, the public, and decision makers to reason about complex systems, and to support sound decisions in response to new challenges whose full impact is still unclear.

The development of the VisionEval framework has addressed many technical challenges to implementing scenario planning models, and has facilitated efficient development of new strategic models and enhancements that can be shared across models.

This new pooled fund will further those previous efforts and extend their benefits to the agencies who choose to participate. While it is feasible in principle for agencies to perform such work on their own, many agencies are facing similar challenges, and work done on behalf of one agency is likely to be useful to others. The pooled fund will allow participating agencies to realize an economy of scale by engaging in joint development and support activities for new strategic modeling tools, thus ensuring that each agency has timely access to usable tools that will support their emerging planning needs.

## 1.2 Pooled Fund Objectives

This pooled fund, “Extending and Sharing Benefits of New Strategic Planning Models”, will make strategic tools affordably available to members. The pooled fund will support efficient investment in new and upgraded tools, avoiding duplicative expense of public funds on similar efforts, and facilitating efficient development of innovations built on the basis of existing working tools.

The pooled fund will allow participating agencies to have access to:

- Models to assess new planning challenges including areas such as equity analysis, electric vehicle deployment, pricing strategies, and emissions;
- Tools to set up and run these models very rapidly for a large number of policy and scenario combinations;
- Flexible interactive visualization tools to display results;
- Cost-effective technical support for the implementation, customization and application of these tools to each agency’s needs;
- Increased interoperability with other modeling systems, including support for outputs from the UrbanSim land use model and use of the PopulationSim population synthesizer with the VE-State model;
- Credible, maintained, documented tools adhering to clear standards and development guidelines, with thorough quality control; and
- A community of active users and developers, which will reduce the likelihood that models will become obsolete, fall under the control of a single developer, or be abandoned by their developer while there is still interest in using them.

## 2. Membership and Technical Advisory Committee

### 2.1 Definitions

A pooled fund **Member** is an agency that has contributed funds or in-kind contributions<sup>1</sup> to the VisionEval pooled fund led by FHWA<sup>2</sup>. The pooled fund shall be managed by a **Technical Advisory**

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<sup>1</sup> Recommended cash contributions to the pooled fund are \$25,000 per year for State Transportation Agencies, and \$15,000 per year for MPOs. Agencies can propose a different amount or an in-kind contribution. Requests to join the pooled fund made by agencies that are not making the recommended cash contribution or that offer an in-kind contribution must be reviewed and approved by majority TAC vote.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pooledfund.org/Details/Study/760>

**Committee (TAC)** defined below. The **Lead Agency** is the Federal Highway Administration.

## **2.2 TAC Representation**

The TAC shall consist of a single representative from each member agency. Each TAC member will have one vote when the TAC conducts official business. Agencies may appoint a primary TAC member, as well as one or more alternates who may attend TAC meetings. The TAC shall be chaired by the Lead Agency representative.

## **2.3 New Members**

New members of the pooled fund may be added by the Lead Agency throughout the duration of pooled fund activity. New members shall become members upon making a financial or in-kind commitment at a level approved by the TAC. New members will appoint a TAC representative who will participate in subsequent pooled fund decision making.

## **2.4 TAC Responsibilities**

### *TAC Responsibilities*

The TAC shall be responsible for establishing operating rules, which are documented in this charter (see *TAC Operating Rules* below). The TAC shall be responsible for identifying priorities and goals for the pooled fund, providing feedback on procurement and fiscal procedures to be implemented by the Lead Agency (consistent with policies in place at the Lead Agency), and reviewing the work program, status reports, deliverables and other products. Details on expectations for pooled fund administration are described below in Section 3, *Administration*.

### *Lead Agency Responsibilities*

The Lead Agency will have the same responsibilities as other TAC members. In addition, the Lead Agency and its delegated support staff (together referred to as the Administrator) shall be responsible for convening the TAC, and for developing documents, reports and other materials related to fiscal and program management of the pooled fund. Procurement of services sought by the TAC shall be performed by the Lead Agency after approval by the TAC.

## **2.5 TAC Meetings**

The TAC shall meet in person at least once per year at a location to be agreed upon. The membership may also convene virtually to receive progress reports, review products of the pooled fund, and to conduct other business as necessary.

## **2.6 TAC Operating Rules**

TAC business shall be conducted by a quorum of the TAC, consisting of representatives from at least half of the pooled fund participants. TAC business shall be decided by majority vote, except that revisions to this Charter shall require votes totaling at least three quarters of the entire membership. Business of the TAC shall be conducted whenever possible at meetings announced to all members at least two weeks ahead of time. In rare cases requiring more rapid decision, a request for a vote by email may be placed before the membership by the Lead Agency; such email votes will not be required to be completed in less than one week. Email votes must be received from a quorum of TAC members

to be ratified. The Chair (Lead Agency) shall vote only to break a tie.

### **3. Administration**

#### **3.1 Organization**

The **Administrator** of the pooled fund conducts the administrative work of the pooled fund and shall consist of staff from the Lead Agency and also, at the Lead Agency's discretion, staff delegated through formal agreement with another organization, institution or agency. The Administrator shall coordinate activities of the membership and the pooled fund budget, including tasks such as meeting organization, preparing minutes, developing reports on pooled fund activities, maintaining a repository of pooled fund products, and other activities as agreed upon with the Lead Agency and approved by the TAC.

#### **3.2 Pooled Fund Contracting**

The Lead Agency is responsible for distributing requests for proposals (RFPs), preparing contract documents, and performing other functions related to contract administration and management, consistent with lead agency rules. The Lead Agency shall assure that contracts, work plans, and schedules are adhered to.

#### **3.3 Pooled Fund Scope of Work**

Procurement of services on behalf of the Pooled Fund shall include specifying tasks and deliverables. The procurement is expected to occur in phases as funds become available from pooled fund members. The TAC shall approve scopes of work and task descriptions consistent with the objectives and priorities of the pooled fund and following Lead Agency procurement rules. As feasible under the rules of the procurement made by the Lead Agency, modifications to the tasks and deliverables may be made during the pooled fund period of activity, possibly including exercise of optional tasks contracted but not initially funded. All such decisions regarding work program tasks and deliverables shall be made by the TAC, using procedures described above.

#### **3.4 Pooled Fund Products**

Any Pooled Fund contract shall allow unlimited rights to the products of the pooled fund for all members<sup>3</sup>. The Administrator shall maintain a repository of code and documentation that contains all VisionEval materials managed by the Pooled Fund, based on the VisionEval products developed under prior contracts (see the *Background* section above), along with approved changes and additions produced under pooled fund contracts and approved by the TAC. At its discretion, the TAC may specify technical review procedures for such products that the Administrator shall coordinate. Through exercise of the rights in data, all such code and documentation shall be made available to the public by the Administrator through a liberal open-source license to be specified by the TAC.

#### **3.5 Outside Products**

Outside products contributed by independent developers (i.e. code or documentation not generated through contracts issued by the Lead Agency) may be added to the pooled fund repository by the

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<sup>3</sup> These rights will include unlimited "rights in data" as defined in Federal Acquisition Regulation 27.401, specifically the rights to "use, disclose, reproduce, prepare derivative works, distribute copies to the public, and perform publicly and display publicly, in any manner and for any purpose, and to have or permit others to do so".

Administrator at the direction of the TAC. The owner of any such contributed products must formally grant to the pooled fund members full rights in data consistent with those specified in the pooled fund development contracts issued by the Lead Agency. Any such code included in the pooled fund repository shall be made available to the public under the same terms as products of the pooled fund itself (see the previous item, *Pooled Fund Products*).