

2024/25 BCAT Grants Network Planning Instructional Video Transcript

British Columbia Active Transportation Grants Program

Network Planning Grants

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Hello. My name is Carrie and I work on the BC Active Transportation Infrastructure Grants Program within the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. During this video, you'll learn more about what is needed to prepare an application for an active transportation network planning grant.

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I'll cover some important topics that include more details about what an active transportation network plan is and the grant itself, the application requirements and what you should have ready before you apply, a walk-through of the application and where to go if you need more information.

The online application form has been improved this year and is a more user-friendly application form. The online application is an interactive portal that prompts you to include all necessary information, allows you to save at any stage and return to complete the application, share with others in your organization, and allows uploading of necessary documentation so you don't have to email large files.

In order to use this portal, your organization must have a BCeID which gives you secure access and is unique to your organization. If your organization does not have one, you can click on a link on the BC Active Transportation website to get a BCeID.

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Just as roads can't exist without a network, active transportation infrastructure projects must also be part of an overall network plan. An active transportation network plan establishes a vision for the community with the aim of providing safe, accessible, and reliable active transportation routes and infrastructure. The long-term goal is to increase the use of active transportation for recreation and transportation and thereby improving health outcomes, providing more accessibility for more modes of transportation, and increasing the environmental and economic benefits for everyone in the community.

The B.C. Active Transportation Design Guide was created to be a resource that supports best-practice planning to help your community achieve these goals.

In fact, including the use of the Design Guide in an Infrastructure Grant application increases the possible score as that demonstrates the use of a known and tested standard for active transportation infrastructure.

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You will be required to submit a Council, Board or Band Council resolution in support of the active transportation network plan or a draft resolution if an authorizing body is unable to approve the project within the intake window. If a draft resolution is provided, it will have to be approved and submitted no later than December 1, 2024, for the project to be eligible. A cost estimate for the network plan will also be needed and this is in the application form for a guide. A reminder that your community population must be under 25,000 in order to qualify for a network planning grant.

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The following slides will be a step-by-step overview of the ATNP application. While we strongly encourage you to visit the website and view the Program Guidelines and FAQ, we've also embedded info from these documents into the new online application. I will go over contact information, eligibility requirements, project components, and more. We hope this overview will be helpful to outline what is needed for the application and give some insight into the process.

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Contact information is quite straightforward and asks for the applicant information, primary contact details and what type of government the grant will be for. The categories – Indigenous, Indigenous Economic Corporation where the Nation is the Shareholder, municipality, Islands Trust, Regional District, or electoral area of a Regional District – represent the types of governments that can apply for an ATNP grant. You will also have to provide the latest census population (as of 2021) of your community. The helps ensure the information provided is written correctly, for example, it will verify that your postal code is written correctly. A reminder that you can always save the application and return to it when you have new information, or you have the opportunity. The online portal does not allow you to proceed until you've included required information. This will help ensure there is no missing important info.

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This section confirms eligibility including a confirmation the community is under 25,000. If you select 'No' or 'N/A' in the eligibility section, then the online form will guide you with prompts to inform you of what you need to do to for your application to advance to the evaluation process.

We know, smaller communities often have minimal resources to develop active transportation network plans and, for that reason, the Province will provide up 50 per cent cost-shared funding to a maximum of \$50,000. To confirm you have assessed the cost of the plan, you will have to include a cost estimate with your application. This section asks for that confirmation. The requirement for the estimate details will come later. As I mentioned earlier, the process to develop an ATNP does require the support and endorsement of the council, board, or Band Council through an authorized resolution by no later than Dec 1, 2024.

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This next section requires a high-level description of the components that will be in the active transportation network plan.

The project title is followed by a high-level description of scope. This can be a paragraph that explains what will be reviewed and developed in the plan. You will need to identify what the plan will address such as conflict areas between active transportation users and motorists.

It also helps identify how the active transportation network will be used – for commuting or recreation or both? As well, it helps identify if the network is connecting destinations and modes such as transit ferry terminals and more.

These connections demonstrate the network will help people get to a variety of destinations making active transportation a convenient way to travel.

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As mentioned earlier, some important benefits of a robust active transportation network include improved health and economic outcomes.

In this section, we would like to know how a network plan will align with your community's goals as it relates to healthy living.

We would also like to understand any potential economic benefits including estimated number of jobs that are generated from the construction of the infrastructure. Economic benefits can also include providing better routes to shops and retail outlets, places of work, and any tourism opportunities.

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Improving safety for active transportation users is critical to encouraging more people to choose this mode over other GHG-intensive modes such as cars, which is commonly referred to as mode-shift. For that reason, this section asks for more information about how a network plan will address or improve safety issues in your community. For example, is there a high-conflict intersection that would benefit from improved cycling and pedestrian access, signage, or infrastructure? Would sidewalks make it safer for pedestrians to travel or would separated bike lanes on a busy road reduce collisions and increase use? To further ensure any network plan includes best practices for active transportation infrastructure, you will need to indicate which documents will be used to inform the plan such as the Urban Bikeway Design Guide, Bikeway Traffic Control Guidelines or, our own, BC Active Transportation Design Guide.

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This next section will confirm that the plan will be completed and approved by March the year following the grant award.

You are also asked to describe any public consultation and key stakeholder engagement including methodology and anticipated timing. This is important as consultation is required to have an approved active transportation network plan implemented and for any future active transportation infrastructure grant applications. Having community input and support will make any investment much more effective. The success of the network plan will need to be assessed early and regularly to ensure it is being used by the community.

Monitoring the use of the infrastructure is key to understanding how the community is using it well into the future.

For that reason, we would like to know how you will be assessing how the infrastructure is being used and what the plan is to monitor going forward. For example, will automatic trip counters be used, or will origin-destination studies be conducted regularly?

The ministry uses this data to determine what types of programs to support and invest in as we focus on our mandated commitment to double the percentage of active transportation trips by 2030 and to increase a shift from cars to self-propelled modes such as bikes and walking.

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The partnerships section refers to the agencies impacted by any planned infrastructure such as BC Hydro or Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure right-of-ways. You will need to indicate if affected agencies will be consulted when developing the plan as it will help identify if, for example, utilities need to be moved or permits will be required.

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This section is for the total estimated cost of the network plan and, the eligible project cost. Eligible costs are introduced on the next slide and are important parts of the application. Of the total cost, what funding will come from third-party contributions from in-kind or donations? Finally, what is the project cost less the third-party contributions? Our grant funding will be up to 50 per cent or \$50,000, whichever is less, of this final total. Once you've populated your project financials, the grant portal will perform the calculations.

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The eligible cost estimate is for those costs that are eligible under the BC Active Transportation Grants Program guidelines for eligible network plan costs. This portion of the application is a worksheet to outline these costs. Eligible costs for active transportation network plans typically include but are not limited to consultant fees (including travel, engineer assessments, etc.), printing, community engagement, and consultation. An optional eligible cost is infrastructure or cross-section design for priority projects. The program allows up to 20% contingency to be added to the detailed cost estimate to cover unanticipated project expenses to ensure the project is implemented to meet or exceed the project outcomes. The proponent is responsible for any cost overruns in excess of the total approved eligible costs. The Cost Estimate form is the same as last year, and you will need to download it from the BCAT website and then upload it to the online portal.

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In the active transportation network plan application package, please attach the completed application form, Active Transportation Network Plan Cost Estimate, Council/Board/Band Council Resolution/Approval OR draft Resolution with anticipated submission date for fully authorized

Resolution. Fully authorized resolutions are required by December 1st, 2024 or the application is deemed ineligible. Uploading files to the online portal means you no longer have to send large files over email.

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For Network Planning Grants, only communities with a maximum population size of 25,000 are eligible. Non-Indigenous applicants may apply to the Grants Program only during the annual intake period in the fall. Indigenous applicants and Indigenous applicants in partnership with local governments may apply anytime through a rolling intake option.

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I hope this video has provided some good information and insight as you begin your application. Please review the BCAT website where you will find the Program Guidelines, Frequently Asked Questions document and application questions. Please also review the B.C. Active Transportation Design Guide for guidance. If you have questions after reviewing all the program resources, I encourage you to contact us direct at BCATgrants@gov.bc.ca or call at 778 974 5469, and we'd be happy to assist.

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Your success benefits all British Columbians and we want to make sure your active transportation network planning works for your community.

Thank-you!