

BCAT Grants Infrastructure Instructional Video Transcript

British Columbia Active Transportation Grants Program

Infrastructure Grants

Slide 1

Hello. My name is Maryanna and I work on the BC Active Transportation Grants Program within the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

During this presentation, you'll learn more about what is needed to prepare an infrastructure grant application.

Slide 2

I'll cover some important topics that include more details about active transportation infrastructure, any updates to the 2023/24 grant program, 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.

This year we have taken many steps to make the online application process more user-friendly including replacing the former PDF application with a more interactive interface that will walk you through the application process, prompt you to include necessary information and allow you to save your place so you can pause and return at a later time. It will also allow for others in your organization to review the application before it's submitted as through the use of the BCeID – which is secure electronic ID unique to your organization.

If your organization doesn't already have a BCeID, there is a link on the BC Active Transportation Program site that will allow you to register your organization.

This is the first iteration of the online portal, and we look forward to your feedback in the spirit of continuous improvement later this year.

This presentation will go over the Infrastructure grants including any updates, application requirements, a quick walk-through of the application and resources that may be helpful.

Slide 3

Active transportation is a term we use for all human-powered transportation. That includes biking, e-biking, walking and wheeling.

To promote the use of active transportation, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure understands it's important to support Indigenous and local governments in their work to expand active transportation infrastructure through the use of network planning as well as the creation of multi-use paths, separated bike lanes and sidewalks, pedestrian overpasses, and other amenities such as secure bike parking.

We know that safe and accessible infrastructure for all ages and abilities supports travel to and from work, school, transit or other destinations. By supporting people to choose a transportation mode that is more active, communities and people will benefit from improved health outcomes, greater environmental and economic benefits and enhanced network connections throughout the community. As well, improving access to active transportation helps the province meet its CleanBC goals to reduce GHG emissions and increase the percentage of trips take by active transportation.

BC active transportation grant funding is based on a cost-shared model which funds up to 50 percent or \$500,000 for infrastructure. Indigenous or Indigenous partner projects can qualify for up to 80 per cent of a project and it's still capped at \$500,000.

A reminder that these grants are 'stackable' which means, you can apply for other provincial, federal or regional grants to support the funding of the project.

Slide 4

New this year is an improved online application process. We have worked hard to make the online application more user friendly, intuitive and help ensure you provide the necessary information and documentation for your application.

The new online portal will guide you through the application step by step.

To access the new portal, your organization will need a BCeID which gives you secure access unique to your organization. If you don't have one, there is a link on the BC Active Transportation Program website that will take you to the site and allow you to set one up. "Other" business types includes Indigenous and local governments.

This presentation is one of the many resources that have been available to governments to review in early August in preparation for when the grant portal opens on September 1st.

Regarding eligible expenses, once a grant applicant has been approved for funding by the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, they can start construction or incur other eligible expenses. This update is consistent with other provincial funding programs.

Another update that is in alignment with other provincial grants is the signage requirement, where signage must remain installed 30 days after construction is completed.

A reminder that Indigenous governments and Indigenous partner projects have a rolling intake available throughout the year for application, review and funding. Indigenous governments are encouraged to contact the BC Active Transportation team with any questions or concerns.

Slide 5

In order to be considered for infrastructure grant funding and before you complete the online application, you will have to prepare a number of documents to demonstrate the project is shovel-ready.

The updated online portal will prompt you to upload the documents as part of the application process and within the portal itself.

A detailed checklist is available as part of the application and will be reviewed again near the end of this information video. Some of the highlights include a detailed cost estimate, detailed design drawings, project specific maps, and 'before' photos of the project site. Regarding 'before' photos, if your project is approved for funding, after photos will be required once the project is complete, so please be prepared to do so at the same vantage point of the before photos to highlight the built infrastructure. You will be required to submit a summary of community or Indigenous consultations to show community support, and a Council, Board or Band Council resolution in support of the project or draft resolution if an authorizing body is unable to approve the project within the intake window. If in the case, a draft resolution is provided, it will have to be approved and submitted no later than December 1, 2023, for the project to be eligible.

Slide 6

You will also need any permits, approvals or authorizations such as right of way approvals from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, or BC Hydro. Please provide any partnership agreements, if any. Provide environmental approvals that could be required by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change or Agriculture Land Commission. As part of the consultation process, include any endorsement from large vehicle operators who operate on the proposed route, such as BC Transit or Emergency Services to ensure that the infrastructure does not impede large vehicle movement. We encourage other letters of support that reflect community consultation which also assists your application score. Please also report on active transportation use at the proposed infrastructure site. There is a PDF form available on the website that you may download for collecting data in the field on people walking, cycling or using other mobility devices during peak commuting hours. Please enter this information into the online application. If your project is successful for grant funding, you will be required to do a post count within one year of project completion. This data is useful in quantifying the mode-shift impact of the investment.

Slide 7

To reiterate the application requirements - all projects must be shovel ready before they can be considered for grant funding. Shovel ready means that the applicant must have all funding secured to execute the project. The project design work must be complete and included in the application. All land purchases or exchanges must be complete before construction starts. To emphasize and recap the document requirements, permits and access for right-of-ways must be in place and approved - if this applies. Any applicable environmental approvals must be complete. Consultation and community engagement is key to the success of any active transportation project. The application will require evidence of the consultation which may have been part of the development of a network plan, transportation master plan, OCP or other process. Please ensure that consultation with large vehicle operators on the proposed site is complete.

Slide 8

Now I will go through a step-by-step overview of the active transportation Infrastructure grant 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, funding availability, eligibility requirements, project types, project overview, safety, project alignment with provincial priorities, cost information, fiscal year breakdown and required attachments.

Slide 9

This section – contact information – is quite straightforward and asks for the applicant information, primary contact details and the type of Indigenous or local government. The types of B.C. governments that can apply are: Indigenous government, Indigenous Economic Corporation where the Nation is the Shareholder, municipality, Islands Trust, Regional District or electoral area of a Regional District. You will also have to provide the latest census population (as of 2021) of your community.

The form has quality control embedded through-out, for example, it will verify that your postal code is input correctly and that you have included necessary information.

You can also save the form so you can go back to it at any time. While you can view all sections, you can only proceed filling in content once the previous section is complete. We have done this to ensure your application has all required information.

Slide 10

The B.C. Active Transportation Infrastructure grant provides funding of up to \$500,000 per project. Depending on your community, you may be eligible for up to between 50 and 80 per cent of your project funded.

Indigenous governments or Indigenous governments that partner with local governments can receive up to 80 per cent of total eligible project costs and will be required to cover the remaining 20%.

Communities with a population less than 15 thousand may receive up to 70 per cent.

Communities with a population between 15 thousand and 25 thousand may receive up to 60 per cent, and,

Communities over 25 thousand can have up to 50 per cent of their project funded.

These are all up to a maximum of \$500,000.

Our goal is to have an equitable distribution of funding around the province of B.C.

Slide 11

The Eligibility section will help determine if your project is eligible for consideration for this year's intake of the B.C. active transportation Infrastructure Grant program. These questions help determine early if the project is at a qualifying stage. 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 be eligible for final evaluation. Communities may make up to two applications for separate projects in one intake period.

If your community has received any previous funding through the BC Active Transportation Grants program prior to 2021/22 then these projects must be completed before any new applications are made. You are still eligible for this year's intake if you have an outstanding 2022/23 BCAT funded project. This section references this requirement for now and for consideration in the future in 3.1 and 3.3.

The project must also be part of a larger plan such as an Active Transportation Network Plan, Cycling Network Plan, Transportation Plan, Greenways Plan, Sustainability Plan or Official Community Plan. If your community does not have an Active Transportation Network Plan (or ATNP) and if your population is under 25,000, please refer to the Network Planning informational video and related resources to apply for an active transportation network plan grant.

Is the project shovel-ready? These requirements were covered earlier in this information video.

Do you have all necessary project funding secured?

Remember, this includes any cost-shared funding.

Is the detailed design work complete? These designs will be required for submission with your application and must be done by engineer or engineer tech.

A reminder that the BC Active Transportation Design Guide provides best-practice design support for active transportation infrastructure and its use is a consideration when applying for an infrastructure grant.

Is the project for the public? This funding is for public facilities only.

Slide 12

Section 4 identifies the type of project and a note that if you are submitting applications for two different projects for your community, please rank which one is the priority.

There are links provided to sections of the B.C. Active Transportation Design Guide that further elaborates on the various types of active transportation facilities. If your application requires a usage count form based on the information selected in this section, then you will be automatically prompted to do so later in the form. The active transportation uptake resulting in infrastructure is invaluable for provincial progress to reduce GHG emissions and increase active transportation use.

Slide 13

Section 5 is the project overview.

Please summarize the project type, the location and the total length if applicable. Also include the latitude and longitude coordinates of your project start and end points if known. The province is mapping active transportation projects in B.C. for an inventory and for future funding purposes. Some of the other things that will be required include what types of physical works such as lighting or automated counters, baseline data such as number and types of users including cyclists, walkers or e-mobility.

This data really helps us understand the impact of the infrastructure including how much the investment increases use, what the estimated GHG emission reductions are and how we are achieving broader mode shift goals. As well, it supports future funding requests.

Let us know about the types of physical works to be undertaken for this project such as lighting, automated counters or fencing will be part of the project.

Usage count data is not required for end-of-trip facilities.

Slide 14

Section 6 is all about safety improvements which is critical to encouraging more people to choose active transportation over other GHG-intensive modes such as cars.

The B.C. active transportation Design Guide focuses on safety and should be used for project design.

It includes a number of options and guidelines for projects that support safety improvements.

We also want to understand if the project is responding to existing safety concerns and how it will be monitored after the completion of the project.

Physical separation of active transportation such as separated bike lanes greatly increases safety and encourages use. New in this online portal is the ability to provide more fulsome responses as there is a higher character limit compared to the PDF version.

Links are also embedded through-out the online application to assist answering the questions.

Slide 15

Section 7 asks you to highlight how your project aligns with broader provincial priorities, such as economic and environmental benefits, and land use and connectivity. For example, economic benefits of the project that may be linked to tourism, local businesses and new businesses. Questions include - how will the project impact the environment? Will your project have any elements of environmental innovation or consider how the infrastructure is prepared for climate impacts such as flooding or heat waves?

We also ask for details regarding how this project will connect with an overall active transportation network plan and how that plan connects with community locations, transit hub and if it's part of a larger federal or municipal plan. As we know, active transportation works best when it's part of a connected, safe network. While these questions are optional, we do take this into consideration when scoring the project. We are available to answer any questions you may have regarding this or any other section.

Slide 16

Section 7 also includes questions that gauge how the project works with accessibility and intersectionality as well as the promotion and education will be part of the roll-out of the project.

Universal design and inclusion for people of differing abilities and genders is important when designing any active transportation infrastructure. For example, improved lighting can make active transportation safer for those who feel less safe traveling at night. Ramps, audible walk signals and flashing lights help people with different physical abilities access active transportation.

There are resources to learn more about the Provincial considerations for GBA+ (Gender Based Analysis Plus) or the B.C. Active Transportation Design Guide accessibility requirements.

Slide 17

The BC active transportation website provides a detailed cost estimate worksheet that must be submitted with the Grant Application. Cost estimates must be Class A, B, or C and current or forecasted to proposed construction date. A 20 per cent contingency is allowed.

A reminder that Class A costs are defined as the detailed estimates based on final drawings and specifications.

Class B costs are based on the project brief and preliminary design for project approvals and budget.

Class C costs are based on probable site conditions and are prepared with limited site information.

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.

Slide 18

Once the cost estimates are done, the project costs can be provided. Section 8 is used to determine the maximum grant amount you can request.

In Section (A), enter the dollar amount of your total estimated project costs. Section (B) is for the total eligible costs and Section (C) is for any third-party or in-kind contributions – other than the province.

The next slide provides more detail on eligible expenses. This may be the same or lower than your total Estimated Project Cost.

In-kind or donated contributions includes volunteer labour, services, space or materials that are provided for free or below market value.

Note that the Federal Gas Tax - Community Works Fund is not considered a third-party contribution because it is part of local government's general revenue. Once you've populated your project financials, the grant portal will perform the calculations.

Slide 19

We also want to understand how your project costs will be spent over the current and next fiscal year. Please enter that information in Section 9.

Since projects with total eligible costs over \$1 million dollars can take up to two years to complete, Section 9 covers the breakdown of costs for each fiscal year starting April 1 until March 31. If your project has total eligible costs under \$1 million and is only a 1-year project, please include your costs for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 fiscal years as shown above, recognizing that some eligible costs may be incurred in 2024, which is the 2023-24 fiscal year. For projects with total eligible costs over \$ 1 million, you will need to also populate the 2025-26 fiscal year. Eligible costs may be incurred once the project is approved by the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. We anticipate this approval to occur between February – April of 2024. The online portal will ensure that the total eligible cost listed here matches the total estimate project cost in the previous section to reduce errors.

Slide 20

Eligible expenditures are those costs incurred starting when the ministry approves the project and ends on the project completion date. These dates are established in the Conditional Grant Agreement which is prepared and signed by both parties after project approval. The grant program funds specific eligible expenses and may include active transportation amenities like washrooms and end of trip facilities like bike parking. Please refer to Section 2.1 and 2.2 in the BC active transportation Grant Program Guidelines for a complete list of eligible expenses.

Slide 21

Section 10 is where you are to upload your required documents as part of the application. These include your cost estimate form, design drawings, project specific map, before photos, consultation summary, council/board/band resolution or draft. If the resolution is a draft, it is your responsibility to submit the approved resolution by December 1, 2023. Uploading files to the online portal means you don't have to email these large files. By uploading them, they will be on government servers ready for review with your application.

Slide 22

In addition to the required documents, other documents may need to be submitted, depending on your project context. Examples of these includes permits, approvals, authorization letters, partnership agreements, environmental approvals, endorsement from large vehicle operators and letters of support. Letters of support will help the scoring of your application.

Slide 23

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.

Slide 24

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

Thank you!