

Report to Civic Works Committee

To: Chair and Members
Civic Works Committee

From: Kelly Scherr, P. Eng., MBA, FEC, Deputy City Manager,
Environment & Infrastructure

Subject: Active Transportation Fund

Date: March 1, 2022

Recommendation

That on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Environment & Infrastructure, the Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to submit the projects identified herein to the Government of Canada's Active Transportation Fund.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

The following report supports the 2019–2023 Strategic Plan through the strategic focus areas of Building a Sustainable City, Growing Our Economy and Leading in Customer Service by contributing to improved active transportation and mobility options with a lens and a focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation. This funding program and report recommendation promotes projects that create an efficient, inclusive, and connected active transportation network that encourage a modal shift away from cars.

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

- Civic Works Committee – June 19, 2012 – London 2030 Transportation Master Plan
- Planning and Environment Committee – June 13, 2016 – The London Plan
- Civic Works Committee – September 7, 2016 – London ON Bikes Cycling Master Plan
- Civic Works Committee – March 10, 2020 – Cycling Master Plan Technical Amendments
- Civic Works Committee - Active Transportation Infrastructure Plan - Nov 17, 2020

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

2.1 Purpose

This report outlines the program objectives, design, merit considerations and recommends a list of projects for submission to the Federal Active Transportation Fund program.

2.2 Program Overview

On February 10, 2021, the Government of Canada created a new Active Transportation Fund (the Fund), a \$400 million, 5-year investment to expand and enhance active transportation networks in communities of all types and sizes. The objective of the Fund is to increase the size, quality and use of Canada's active transportation infrastructure network.

Active transportation refers to the movement of people or goods powered by human activity. Active transportation includes walking, cycling and the use of human-powered or hybrid devices such as wheelchairs, scooters, e-bikes, rollerblades, snowshoes and cross-country skis, and more.

Applications will be accepted through a combination of timed intakes and rolling intakes. Project selection will be merit-based and will be undertaken with a view to balancing factors like regional distribution, the type of project, and equitable access.

There are two streams of projects eligible for funding: capital projects and planning projects:

- **Capital Projects** - Contributions of up to \$50 million are available for capital projects that build new or enhance existing active transportation infrastructure or which provide new features and facilities to promote active transportation or enhance user safety and security. The maximum federal contribution rate for municipal projects located in provinces is 60%.
- **Planning Projects** - Grants of up to \$50,000 to undertake planning, design, or stakeholder engagement activities. Funding can cover up to 100% of eligible costs. 3% of the Active Transportation Fund has been notionally allocated for planning projects.

Funding decisions will be merit-based, with consideration given to balancing regional distribution, project type, and equitable access. Eligible capital projects will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- **Improved Community Connectivity and Accessibility** - The project strategically improves active transportation connectivity and enhances accessibility within and/or to other communities, particularly for vulnerable populations.
- **Economic Benefits** - The project provides economic value to the community through increased construction, tourism and/or active transportation access to business districts.
- **Environmental and Climate Benefits** - The project results in environmental benefits, such as GHG reductions, land use intensification, protection of green spaces, and/or the use of green technologies.
- **Improved User Mobility and supports a Safe and Secure Environment** - The project provides enhancements in non-automotive mobility and contains measures to ensure a safe and a secure environment, including for vulnerable populations.
- **Project Viability** - The project is part of an active transportation strategy, has significant community support, and planning work is in an advanced state (e.g. design, permits, matching funds secured).

2.3 Proposed Projects

At the current time, the following active transportation infrastructure projects are the most “shovel-ready” and suitable for this funding. The funding requires the projects to be completed by March 2026. The projects identified below are anticipated to be considered eligible under the Active Transportation Fund and are recommended for submission.

Table 1: Projects Recommended for Submission

Project Name	Description	Estimated Capital Value (\$)
Stoney Creek Pathway Connection to the TVP	Extend the active transportation system from Windermere Road to the Thames Valley Corridor and the City's Core.	2,000,000
South Branch TVP Extension	Extend the TVP from the Meadowlilly Road pedestrian bridge to link with the City Wide Sports Park and surrounding growth areas. This will complete the highest priority gap on the south branch of the TVP.	1,500,000
Hyde Park Rotary Trail Extension	Extend the trail north to the City Limits linking growth areas to the Thames Valley Corridor and transit systems.	750,000
Mudd Creek Trail Connection Improvements	Improve the trail connection along Mudd Creek to provide an effective route from Oxford Street to Riverside Drive	250,000
Total		4,500,000

2.4 Financial Considerations

In the absence of an allocation formula, as is the case for the new Active Transportation Fund, staff benchmark London's anticipated allocation by assessing London's population share as a percentage of the total program dollars available. Civic Administration has identified a total submission value that is both commensurate with London's "fair share" based on its population as well as aligned with the Fund priorities described by the Government of Canada.

The projects recommended for submission will result in additional operating costs due primarily to increased maintenance required for operations like snow plowing, sweeping and asphalt repairs. Preliminary estimates indicate the combined total operating costs for all identified projects will be in the order of \$50,000 annually, however the costs will be refined upon completion of design of each individual project. Based on the ensuing growth of the active transportation network, these costs could likely be addressed through annual assessment growth requests made at the appropriate time depending on the timing of project completion. It should be noted that assessment growth allocations are subject to availability of assessment growth revenues. Assessment growth allocations are also a highly competitive process and are reviewed relative to the merits of other business cases submitted at that time.

City staff have identified capital projects in the Parks capital budgets that could fund the City's 40% capital contribution.

Conclusion

The Active Transportation Fund presents an opportunity to construct infrastructure that supports Council's Strategic Plan and indicates more support for active transportation projects. The current intake is open until March 31, 2022. The projects identified in this report for near-term submission would provide economic and equity benefits to the transportation system by improving multi-modal connectivity, giving London residents more transportation choices across a variety of neighbourhoods.

The projects identified are deliverable with current resources and have matching funding identified in the relevant capital budgets. There will be increased operating costs associated with these projects to be addressed through future assessment growth requests.

Submitted by: **Scott Stafford, Director, Parks and Forestry**

Recommended by: **Kelly Scherr, P. Eng., MBA, FEC, Deputy City Manager,
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cc: Anna Lisa Barbon, Finance Supports
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