Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Program
– Frequently Asked Questions

Application Process

1. **What documents are required to apply?**

   Every application must include a signed, scanned Declaration and the Application Form itself at a minimum. Almost every application should also include a Project List. (Municipalities that are currently developing cycling plans and do not require OMCC assistance to complete them are exempt from the requirement to submit a Project List with the application on the understanding that they will submit one after their plans are complete and approved.)

   The Declaration, Application Form and Project List can be downloaded from the Grants Ontario website. Start from [www.grants.gov.on.ca](http://www.grants.gov.on.ca) and follow the links to the OMCC page. While you can access some of the documents from that page, some documents can only be accessed by clicking “Log In” near the upper right hand corner of the page.

   When completed, all documents should be submitted directly online to Grants Ontario, by clicking the “Log In” button on the OMCC page. Please do **not** send the documents directly to the Ministry of Transportation (the Ministry).

2. **I am logged into Grants Ontario’s ONe-key portal site, but can’t find the OMCC Application Form.**

   Please contact Grants Ontario Customer Service at 416-325-6691 or 1-855-216-3090 or GrantsOntarioCS@Ontario.ca for further assistance.

3. **Do we really have to complete the 30-page application form on the Grants Ontario website?**

   No. If you log into Grants Ontario using ONe-key and use Adobe Reader, not Adobe Reader Pro or another PDF reader, you should get the appropriate, 7-page application form. If you are using Adobe Reader Pro or another PDF reader you may see the 30-page application form intended for users that do not already have a Grants Ontario account. If you require further assistance with this, please contact Grants Ontario Customer Service at 416-325-6691 or 1-855-216-3090 or GrantsOntarioCS@Ontario.ca.

4. **Does the Declaration have to be signed by the Mayor (as per the template) or can it be signed by a Commissioner?**

   The Declaration can be signed by any person who is authorized to bind the municipality.

5. **If we don’t have a council-approved plan by September 8, are we still eligible for full funding?**
Yes. If your municipality is requesting OMCC Funds to complete a plan, please list only the plan in the Project List. There will be several opportunities to update the Project List in the future, when the new plan is complete.

If your municipality is already developing a cycling plan and does not require OMCC assistance to complete it, your municipality does not have to submit a Project List with its Declaration. A Project List can be submitted later, when the plan is complete and approved.

If your municipality has a population of less than 15,000, it does not require a cycling plan to apply for OMCC Funds; although it may apply for OMCC Funding to develop a cycling plan.

Please note that the value of your municipality’s allocation will not be related to the number or value of the projects listed (see the Funding section below for more details). Please also note that OMCC Funds do not need to be invested in the year they are received. They can be banked and invested in a future year, as long as the project(s) they support are completed by December 30, 2020.

6. Can one tier of government apply on behalf of the other tier in its area?

No. Each municipality must declare separately. However, lower and upper tier municipalities are free to combine OMCC Funds and projects if they wish. The individual projects should be on the Project Lists of all participating municipalities.

Funding

7. How much will my municipality get?

We will not know how much each municipality gets until we know which municipalities have applied. The amount each municipality gets will largely be determined based on: its population as a proportion of the population of all municipalities that apply; and its cycling commuters as a proportion of total number of cycling commuters of all municipalities that apply. Municipalities will be notified of their allocations in early fall.

In the interim, we will make available on the Grants Ontario website the population and commuter cycling data we will use to calculate allocations. With this information you will be able get an understanding of your municipality’s minimum potential allocation if all municipalities were to apply; however, an estimate done with this information may be misleading because the value of allocations will be strongly influenced by how many and which municipalities apply, which will not be known until after September 8.

8. Can a municipality with less than 15,000 residents expect to receive $25,000 per year through to 2020?
The funding available in future years is unknown. Regardless, municipalities will have to apply each year to receive any available funding in that year.

9. Will any municipality that applies get approval for funding, so long as there is at least one eligible project on their list?

Yes. Only the value of each municipality’s allocation is unknown at this time.

10. If you receive funding in year one, and you are successful in year two, does the year one funding join the year two funding, or do they operate as two individual grants with two different lists of eligible projects that can be updated?

There is flexibility in when and how OMCC Funds are invested. The allocation in a given year is not associated with any specific project. It can be spent on eligible projects on the Project List submitted that year or on eligible projects added to the Project List in other years of the program. It is up to the municipality to determine which eligible projects they wish to use the funds towards. The key limitations are that: 1) the funds can only be invested on eligible projects on the Project List; and 2) any project in which OMCC Funds are invested must be complete by December 30, 2020.

11. How is funding split in areas where there are two tiers of local government?

Upper tier governments will receive an allocation based on half the population and commuter cyclists in the upper tier municipality. Lower-tier municipalities will receive allocations based on half the population and commuter cyclists in their individual municipalities. The principle is that the population and number of commuter cyclists in areas with two tiers of local government will not be double-counted; they are on a level playing field with areas that have a single tier of local government.

12. Should a joint project between lower and upper tier municipalities be on one application?

No. Each municipality should include the project on their Project List.

13. If we break one large project into two or more smaller projects, can we use other provincial sources of funding for the parts we don’t use OMCC Funding on?

Yes. But, for any project constructed with OMCC Funds, no other provincial source of funding is allowed.

Municipalities will be fully responsible for ensuring that there is no overlap between the projects, and that the division meets the requirements of all affected parties (i.e. that by
dividing the project you do not breach any other agreements with other provincial funding sources).

14. Are partnerships with private investors allowed?

Yes. However, at least 20% of funding for each project must be provided by the municipality directly and cannot include funding from third parties.

Acceptable Cycling Plans

15. What constitutes an acceptable council-approved plan?

We are looking for a council-approved document that indicates the intention to install cycling infrastructure in specific locations, including those in the Project List. It can be a Transportation Master Plan, an Active Transportation plan, a trails strategy, or another kind of document; the key requirement is that it shows a clear, pre-existing intention to invest in cycling infrastructure in the locations specified in the Project List.

16. Is a trails master plan that includes on-road (cycling) routes acceptable?

Yes, but you will need to make the case that the projects you include in your Project List will serve commuters.

Eligible Projects

17. What kinds of projects are acceptable?

The Program Guide provides good general guidance on this. Please note that design decisions will be left to the municipalities; however the design of OMCC-funded projects must be consistent with the guidelines in Ontario Traffic Manual – Book 18 – Cycling Facilities.

When developing your Project List, keep in mind that OMCC Funds are intended for commuter cycling infrastructure that supports shifting daily or frequent trips from motor vehicles to bicycles. This would include daily or very frequent trips to work, school, shopping or other businesses.

Infrastructure that would primarily support recreational or tourism cycling — in other words, cycling for the sake of cycling — is not eligible for funding through this program.

18. What evidence should we provide to make the case that a specific project is more commuter-oriented than recreation-oriented?
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Where applicable, a count of cyclists using the current infrastructure would be ideal. The Program Guide provides more details about this, but we require a minimum of two 2-hour counts: one on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday between 5 and 7 p.m., and the other on the previous or following Saturday between noon and 2 p.m. Assuming the weather on both days is comparable, higher ridership on a Saturday than on a weekday is an indication of a project that may be more recreational in nature than commuter-oriented.

If your weekday peak occurs at a different time than 5 to 7 p.m., feel free to conduct the weekday count at a time of day that is more appropriate in your area.

Further information on counting cyclists is available from the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project.

If your municipality is unable to complete a count before applying, please tell us why you think your project(s) will support commuter cycling. What major destinations will it connect, for example, and to what other bike routes does it connect?

19. Would an Active Transportation (both cycling and pedestrian) plan be eligible for funding?

Yes, to a degree. OMCC support is available for 40% of an Active Transportation plan if the plan includes cycling. (In other words, half of the 80% available for a cycling-only plan).

20. If we are putting out a RFP for a Transportation Master Plan, could we use this funding to add in a cycling (commuter) part?

Yes – although the commuter cycling part must be a separate bid item and be on the Project List.

21. Will an update of our existing cycling plan to identify commuter cycling routes qualify as our first project?

Yes, an update of an existing cycling plan to identify commuter cycling routes would be eligible as a first project.

22. Can we list projects from our existing plan on the Project List, while also requesting OMCC Funds to support the development of a new plan?

You may list projects from an existing plan, as long as the existing plan is council-approved. Before doing so, consider that:

- the value of your municipality’s allocation is not affected by the number or value of projects on your Project List;
- OMCC Funds do not have to be spent in the year they are received; and,
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- there will be opportunities annually to propose new projects to be considered for addition to the Project List.

If you decide to list projects from an old plan on the Project List you must select the option on the Declaration that affirms that these projects will also be supported in your new plan.

23. We would like to use OMCC Funds to develop a cycling plan, but we already have some council-approved cycling projects in the works. Should we list those on the Project List?

You may include such projects on your Project List for consideration. If you wish to do so, you should select the option on the Declaration that affirms that these projects will be supported in the new plan.

24. Does a road diet including bike lanes qualify for funding if project is identified in the transportation master plan?

Yes, but only the elements of the project that support commuter cycling would be eligible for funding.

25. We want to install bicycle parking with OMCC support, but we don’t have a council-approved plan that specifies where bicycle parking is to be installed. Is this kind of project still eligible?

Yes. Locations for bicycle parking do not need to be specified in a council-approved plan to be eligible for OMCC Funding. Please specify in your Project List the locations where you propose to install bicycle parking and tell us why you think those locations will support commuter cycling.

26. Are on-street bike parking/bicycle corrals appropriate?

Yes, on-street bike parking/bicycle corrals are appropriate but only if they are permanent. In other words, they can be removed every winter if necessary, but must be redeployed every spring. Temporary, event parking is not eligible for funding.

27. Are bike racks on the outside of buses eligible for OMCC Funding?

No; however funds from the Gas Tax Program for transit may be used for bike racks on buses.

28. Can we apply for the same list of projects in more than one year?

Yes, the same list of projects can be submitted in more than one year.
29. If one project is rejected during the review, does it affect the eligibility of the other projects on the list?

No. The eligibility of each project is considered separately.

30. If projects submitted in year one are deemed ineligible, can they be resubmitted in year two for funding consideration?

No, projects deemed ineligible in year one cannot be resubmitted in year two.

31. Can an applicant appeal a project that the province deems ineligible?

Yes. You can appeal by sending an email to cycling@ontario.ca expanding on your initial rationale for why the project should be considered eligible for funding.

Eligible Costs

32. Are in-house expenses for work performed by existing municipal staff eligible?

No, in-house expenses for work performed by existing municipal staff are not eligible.

33. Can the Project List include feasibility studies?

No, the project list cannot include feasibility studies.

34. Are costs for regulatory approvals, public consultations and communications eligible?

No. Costs for regulatory approvals, consultations or communications are not eligible for OMCC support.

35. Are costs for land acquisition eligible?

No, costs for land acquisition are not eligible.

Project Lists

36. What constitutes a “project” for the purposes of the Project List?

A “project” is a discrete piece of work that could be tendered. Please note that the value of your municipality’s allocation will not be affected by the number or value of projects on your Project List.
37. **How many projects should we put on the Project List?**

We recommend listing multiple projects if your municipality has them, so that if one can’t be completed by December 30, 2020 or cannot proceed, there is an alternative project to initiate. Remember, a municipality doesn’t have to complete all of the projects on the list, but any project it completes using OMCC Funds must be on an approved Project List. Remember as well that there will be several opportunities to apply to change the Project List.

38. **Can we submit projects for future years in our initial Project List, or should we limit the initial list to just those that are planned to be constructed in 2018?**

Either approach is fine. Any project you can complete by December 30, 2020 can be included on the list. Bear in mind that you will be able to update your Project List at least twice a year, with the first opportunity to do so in January 2018.

39. **What is the relationship between the value of the projects on the Project List and the amount allocated by OMCC?**

There is no direct relationship between the value of the projects on the Project List and the amount allocated by OMCC. The amount each municipality gets will primarily be determined by:

- Its population as a proportion of the total population of all municipalities that apply;
- Its number of cycling commuters as a proportion of the total number of cycling commuters of all municipalities that apply; and
- Whether it is an upper or lower tier municipality (each receives 50% of the proportional-based funding if both tiers participate in the program).

The program was designed in this fashion to select the projects that will best support commuter cycling and maximize the amount of time that participating municipalities have to plan their OMCC projects.

40. **Can we use street names/intersections instead of street addresses to identify the limits of the project locations?**

Yes, street names/intersections can be used instead of street addresses to identify the limits of project locations.

41. **Do you have a resource to provide municipalities for standardized costs for cycling infrastructure?**
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The website of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Centre provides this kind of information, though the prices are in US dollars.

42. The Project List document asks us to categorize projects as "New" "Rehabilitation" or "Expansion." How are these defined?

A new project would introduce cycling infrastructure in a corridor where it does not already exist. An expansion would increase the footprint of existing cycling infrastructure, such as making a path wider. Rehabilitation is considered reconstruction and would include replacement of stone dust with asphalt, for example. Maintenance activities, such as repainting existing lines or repaving existing pavement, are not eligible projects.

43. How do we estimate the ridership potential of the projects?

If your municipality does not have experience estimating ridership, please provide other information, such as how many people live and work within 5 km of the project (preferably), or what major trip origins and destinations would be connected by the project (acceptable), as well as what other cycling infrastructure it would directly connect to. Attaching maps of the projects in context would be helpful.

44. Will the fact that smaller municipalities have fewer resources and data available to estimate potential ridership for projects than larger municipalities be taken into account when projects are evaluated?

Yes. Tell us why you think your project(s) will serve commuter or other frequent cyclists. Does it connect to other cycling infrastructure? Would it provide a connection to busy destinations like shopping areas, office buildings or apartment buildings? Make the case that there is or will be demand for the project using the info you have at hand.

45. How accurate does the Project List need to be regarding start date, project costs and other details?

Reasonable estimates are fine. As details are firmed up, the Project List can be updated.

46. Can we add a Requested Funding column to the Project List? It’s mentioned in the instruction, but not part of the table.

Yes. You can add the Requested Funding column yourself or you can download the corrected version of the Project List from Grants Ontario.
47. Can we insert a column into our Project List to provide other kinds of information?

Yes, you can insert columns into the Project List to provide additional information as long as the existing columns are also completed.

48. For the maps that are requested, would it be easier to include them in the Project List Excel sheet as a new column, or include them separately?

Maps may be attached separately or included in the Project List Excel sheet but separate attachments are preferred.

Enabling By-law

49. When is the enabling by-law due?

The enabling by-law is due after the funding announcement in early fall and prior to receiving OMCC Funds. The municipality must also execute a Transfer Payment Agreement prior to receiving funds.

50. Do you have an enabling by-law template that you would prefer?

Yes. A template is provided on the Grants Ontario website for municipalities to consider. If you choose to change the template, please ensure that all required elements are included. If you are unsure, please contact the Ministry for clarification.

51. Is Council required to commit to providing at least 20% of the costs for each of the projects on the approved Project List?

No. Council is committing to provide at least 20% of the costs of any project on the list it decides to construct with the support of OMCC Funds. The decision about which of the eligible project(s) to construct with the support of OMCC Funds is left to the municipality.

Miscellaneous

52. If a municipality declares participation in a given year are they committed to completing a project(s)

The decision of whether to complete a project is left to the municipalities; however unused OMCC Funding must be returned by January 15, 2021.
53. If a project is located on third party lands (e.g. a hydro corridor or a provincial highway corridor), does an agreement or letter of understanding with the third party need to be in hand today?

No. It is the responsibility of the municipality to obtain the necessary agreements before the start of construction, but these do not need to be in place to apply to the OMCC. The Ministry may request proof at its discretion.

54. How will GHG reductions be estimated?

Municipalities must demonstrate usage impacts and GHG reduction benefits for each project for which OMCC Funding was used. To this end, counts of cyclists using the current infrastructure will be required for each project, where applicable. Post-construction data about cyclist use of the new infrastructure will also be required. The method of collecting these and any other required data (e.g. intercept surveys) will be specified in the Transfer Payment Agreement that is executed after the application period. Requirements may vary depending on project characteristics, but will be modest.

55. Is there a format or template for the final report that is required?

Yes. The Transfer Payment Agreement will include further details on the format of the final report.

56. Is there a requirement for signage saying this project was funded by OMCC?

Yes. The Transfer Payment Agreement will include further details on signage requirements.