

2017 VTrans Bike/Ped Program FAQs and Answers

1. Can you include admin/design costs for small scale projects as match?

No. The funding for the small-scale, state-funded, construction projects is for construction only. You may use local forces to do part of the work and use the value of their time and equipment used as match.

2. Can match be in-kind for small scale projects? DPW equipment time, etc.

Yes. See question above.

3. Will lighting for existing mixed use path be eligible for small scale?

Yes, if a good case can be made for why lighting is an important improvement. This could include data on night time use or any lighting related safety concerns.

4. Do these grants apply to walking trails which connect parks to schools, etc.

Facilities funded through this program must serve a transportation purpose and be open for public use. Any pedestrian facility would need to meet Americans with Disabilities Act design standards for accessibility. In general, this means a firm, stable and slip resistant surface, a 60-inch-wide surface and acceptable running and cross slopes. If it is truly a "trail", then the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation program for Recreation Trails funding might be a better source of funds. Rec Trails - <http://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/grants/rtp>.

5. Can there be more than one project - i.e. the projects are not contiguous, but serve a greater purpose, such as better route to a certain place?

If there are discontinuous segments of facility that make sense to develop as one project, then they can be combined into a single project. This happens when you have an overall network that has several gaps within a corridor.

6. Are gravel trails eligible?

It is possible to have a path or sidewalk with an aggregate surface provided that the specification results in a surface that is firm, stable and slip resistant. VTrans has a specification that we feel meets this requirement. See Question #4 regarding "trails" in general.

7. Would you please speak briefly about what you consider the 'best' way for a community to update project cost estimates, when the scoping study on which the project is based was completed more than a few years ago?

Take the year that the construction cost estimate was developed, assume 4 years from now (2021) for a time frame in which the project will be built and apply an inflation factor to the construction cost. Then recalculate other eligible costs such as project management, engineering and construction inspection using the percentages in the Grant guide or the VTrans Unit Cost Report to come up with a new overall cost.

8. *We have only two full time public works employees- could it be a volunteer resident to monitor progress of construction?*

Projects that include Federal funds require stringent oversight during construction. Generally, the inspector is on site any time the contractor is working. The oversight must be by a qualified professional who knows federal and state standards and has general construction experience. There also is a material testing requirement that is typically fulfilled by an independent testing laboratory. For the small-scale, state funded, projects, oversight requirements are much less strict and what is described might be adequate.

9. *Regarding additional funding: If you have a VTrans Transportation Alternative Grant and need additional funds do you fill out the full application?*

Yes. Requests for additional funding for a construction project need to complete the full application, including all of the required elements. The selection committee is often made up of individuals from outside the Municipal Assistance Bureau, so applicants should not assume that the committee knows anything about the project, even though it is already being developed with VTrans oversight.

10. *Are there examples of pedestrian projects for streets near a downtown that are not wide enough for a sidewalk? Speed tables, speed humps, etc.*

We would entertain such an application, but the burden would be on the applicant to demonstrate how the proposed improvement would result in safer conditions for walking and bicycling. We definitely have funded those type of improvements as a component of a larger project e.g. putting in sidewalks.

11. *We have received a Federal Grant for our sidewalk project. Can we use the small scale funding for a "shortfall"?*

No. The small-scale projects are intended to stand alone and may not be used to supplement a federal-aid project.

12. *Can I get a copy of the slides used in the presentation?*

A .PDF version of the presentation slides is currently linked at <http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/bike-ped>.

13. *What is the deadline for the grant app?*

All applications must be received either electronically or in-hand by 1:00 PM on Friday, July 14, 2017.

14. *Can you discuss the situation of the need for additional scoping if there is not enough town support?*

If there is not support for the project at the town government level, then moving forward with an application would not be a good idea. One of the required elements of the application is a letter of support from the governing body. Additional scoping will not solve this problem.

15. *How strict are you about the 100 word limit for project description?*

The 100-word limit only applies on the separate application form (fillable .pdf). The purpose of that description is just to understand in simple terms what is being applied for. Applicants can, and are encouraged to, expand on the project description as part of answering the criteria questions.

16. Is it valid to apply for a small-scale improvement that is within an area that may see larger scale improvements in the future?

Yes. If there is a demonstrated need (e.g. safety, improved access, complying with ADA) for the proposed small-scale project based on current conditions, that is a valid application. It may be years before the larger, longer term vision of improvements are realized and in the near term, bicycling and/or walking will be improved.

17. How do you want electronic files to be submitted?

Ideally, each project would consist of two files. One would be the fillable .pdf application form and the second .pdf would be everything else – criteria answers, cost estimate back-up, letters of support, maps, photos, etc.