

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative Program Overview

*The Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative is a matching grant program that encourages municipalities to develop comprehensive bicycle plans and pedestrian plans. The Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT) and the Transportation Planning Branch (TPB) sponsor this grant. All North Carolina municipalities are eligible and are encouraged to apply. Counties with populations of less than 35,000 may apply on behalf of incorporated or unincorporated communities within their jurisdiction. Calls for proposals open annually.*

### Program Background

Communities throughout North Carolina have begun to place more emphasis on providing facilities for biking and walking. A desire for better modal choices, the demand for more walkable and bikeable communities and a focus on smart growth initiatives have combined to highlight the need for better, more complete bicycle and pedestrian transportation systems. Comprehensive planning documents are an integral part of developing these systems, and can guide both local and state efforts to improve conditions for bicycling and walking.

To encourage the development of comprehensive local bicycle plans and pedestrian plans, the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT) and the Transportation Planning Branch (TPB) have created a matching grant program to fund plan development. This program was initiated through a special allocation of funding approved by the North Carolina General Assembly in 2003 along with federal funds earmarked specifically for bicycle and pedestrian planning by the TPB. The planning grant program was launched in January 2004, and it is currently administered through NCDOT-DBPT. Over the past thirteen grant cycles, 173 municipal plans have been selected and funded from 411 applicants. A total of almost \$4.6 million has been allocated. Funding for 2017 is approximately \$400,000. Additional annual allocations will be sought for subsequent years.

### Who Can Apply

**All North Carolina municipalities** are eligible and are encouraged to apply for a planning grant. **Counties with populations of less than 35,000** may also apply on behalf of incorporated or unincorporated communities within their jurisdiction. Due to the limited amount of funding, counties with populations greater than 35,000 are not eligible to apply, nor are colleges/universities or other non-municipal entities. Applications submitted and received for previous grant cycles do not carry over — municipalities must re-apply each year to be considered within the current process. Please note that the application questions for 2017 have changed, and all applications and relevant documents will be accepted via email only (see Application Instructions for more information).

Municipalities who currently have bicycle plans and/or pedestrian plans, either through this grant program or otherwise, may also apply to update their plan provided it is at least five years old.

Smaller municipalities (below 5,000 population) are eligible to apply for a **joint bicycle and pedestrian plan**, but still have the option of applying for a stand-alone pedestrian or a standalone bicycle plan. Municipalities with populations of 5,000 and over may choose to apply for funding to undertake either a bicycle plan or a pedestrian plan in any given fiscal year. Municipalities may apply for funding for the other type of plan in subsequent years. Funding is intended to support the development of a comprehensive bicycle or pedestrian transportation plan. If neighboring municipalities wish to file a joint application, please contact DBPT for instructions and guidance.

Submitting an application for planning funds is a competitive process. However, an effort will be made to award grants based not only on the merit of the proposal but to achieve statewide geographic distribution as well. Consideration will be given to funding a cross-section of municipality types.

This year, in addition to the traditional bike and pedestrian planning grants, DBPT is opening up the application process for **corridor plans**. Any municipality eligible for a planning grant has the option to apply for a more targeted planning grant in a specific location within their municipality. Like the planning grants mentioned above, selection of these projects will be based on a competitive review process.

### The Role of MPO's and RPO's

The relevant approval processes and procedures of MPO and RPO organizations should be followed by any municipality applying for funding. **A resolution by the local MPO and or RPO is required.** It is strongly encouraged that the appropriate resolution be sent in with the grant application (via email), which is due by 5:00 pm on Friday, November 10, 2016. Staff from the MPO or RPO may assist with preparation of the application and should also be part of the steering committee guiding development of the plan.

### Important Dates

Key dates for the 2017 NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative are shown below. (Subject to change.)

Activity	Date
Issue Call for Proposals	August 4, 2016
<b>Application submission deadline - 5:00 pm (Friday)</b>	<b>November 10, 2016</b>
Awards Committee makes recommendations to NCDOT	January, 2017
Board of Transportation gives approval	March, 2017
Municipalities notified of award	March, 2017
Municipal Reimbursement Agreement executed and Notice to Proceed issued	Within 6 months from award notification
Plan completion deadline	Within 12 to 24 months from Notice to Proceed

### Plan Development

**Plans shall be developed by consultants that are prequalified by NCDOT.** Also, **a full-time permanent employee of the municipality must be assigned as project manager to oversee/coordinate the plan development.** A task force/steering committee must also be formed to oversee development of the plan. This group should include relevant local staff, regional planning staff, advocates and representatives of stakeholder groups as well as a DBPT staff member. The level of funding provided to a municipality for plan development will be determined by estimated cost and a matching grant formula.

Any plan developed with these funds must be comprehensive in nature and be a stand-alone plan. While NCDOT encourages the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian elements in local comprehensive plans, transportation plans, land use plans, recreation plans, greenway and open space plans, etc., applications for funding to develop such elements is not within the scope of this grant.

An outline of required content standards has been developed to assure that plans are comprehensive in nature and to help the municipality identify all bicycle or pedestrian needs, priorities and opportunities for improvements. (See documents under Content Standards for NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans, (<https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Pages/Planning-Grant-Initiative.aspx>). This tool will assist communities to address not only the infrastructure needs of users but also to develop construction project priorities; review local policies and guidelines and recommend favorable changes; identify opportunities for the implementation of education, enforcement and safety programs; and to develop encouragement and awareness initiatives. In addition, the plan will identify projects that can be integrated into the local and county Comprehensive Transportation Plans and project prioritization.

Other resources for plan development may be found at the bottom of the Planning Grant Initiative page. Links to planning and design guidelines, safety and education programs and initiatives and current research and development for bicycle and pedestrian planning can be found in this section. <https://www.ncdot.gov/bikeped/>

Completed plans can be found in this section. <https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Pages/default.aspx>.

### Matching Grant Formula

NCDOT planning grant funds will be provided on a sliding scale, based on municipal population, as shown in the table below. Neither in-kind services nor other state or federal funds from NCDOT can be used for local participation. As NCDOT draws the Powell Bill funds from the Highway Fund, they also may not be used as the local participation match.

Municipal Population	DOT Participation	Local Participation
Less than 5,000	90%	10%
5,000 to 10,000	80%	20%
10,000 to 50,000	70%	30%
50,000 to 100,000	60%	40%
Over 100,000	50%	50%

### Estimated Costs

Average costs associated with the development of comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plans vary greatly depending upon the size of the municipality and the complexity of issues to be addressed. A range of estimated costs for plans developed by consultants is shown below. The cost of all plans funded through this initiative shall be within these established ranges. After awardee notification, the specific cost of the plan will be determined through discussions between NCDOT and the municipality and through contract negotiations between NCDOT/municipality and the selected consultant.

Population	Estimated Consultant Costs		
	<i>Bicycle Plan</i>	<i>Pedestrian Plan</i>	<i>Corridor Plan</i>
Less than 5,000	Combined - \$30,000 to \$40,000		\$20,000-\$60,000
5,000 to 10,000	\$30,000-\$50,000	\$25,000-\$40,000	
10,000 to 50,000	\$40,000-\$70,000	\$35,000-\$60,000	
50,000 to 100,000	\$65,000-\$100,000	\$55,000-\$75,000	
Over 100,000	\$95,000-\$190,000	\$70,000-\$110,000	

Smaller municipalities (below 5,000 population) are eligible to apply for a joint bicycle and pedestrian plan, but still have the option of applying for a stand-alone pedestrian or a standalone bicycle plan. Smaller municipalities (<5,000 population) applying for a stand-alone plan should use the estimated costs for the 5,000 to 10,000 population.

Staff costs and in-house services are not eligible for reimbursement with these grant funds. Allowable expenses include consultant costs associated with plan development and delivery; GIS/mapping services, as appropriate; preparation of technical illustrations and graphic design/layout of plan undertaken by consultant; non-staff costs associated with data collection and public involvement activities; and, printing/copying of plan and maps.

All electronic files, maps, technical illustrations, etc. produced with these funds will become the property of the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and the funded municipality.

### Selection Process

DBPT and key planning professionals will conduct a preliminary review of all applications for completeness and general appropriateness. Applications that pass the initial screening will then be reviewed by the Planning Grant Initiative Awards Committee. This group will include DBPT and individuals with professional experience in developing, administering, and/or implementing bicycle plans and pedestrian plans. These individuals will represent municipalities of varying sizes, MPO's and RPO's, COG's and other appropriate agencies and organizations. The Awards Committee will review each proposal and evaluate it based on the stated vision, goals and needs of the municipality; comprehensiveness of scope; understanding of issues and opportunities; level of local commitment; and, feasibility of successful plan completion. The Awards Committee will forward their recommendations to the NCDOT for final approval.

### Selection Criteria

The Awards Committee will consider the following elements in evaluating applications for bicycle and pedestrian planning grant funds. Successful proposals will address the following:

- Identify critical municipal needs for planning and/or implementation of infrastructure improvements
- Identify targeted roadway, adjacent land and existing conditions for corridor plan that are most realistic for maximizing existing infrastructure and improving conditions

**BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLANNING GRANT INITIATIVE**

- Demonstrate an understanding of needs of the particular modal user (bicyclist, pedestrian)
- Recognize the need to serve diverse populations
- Focus on the development of a comprehensive bicycle or pedestrian transportation system
- Identify how having a bicycle or pedestrian plan would help improve the health of a community
- Assure assignment of appropriate level of staff to oversee / undertake plan development
- Consider policy issues and describe how multi-modal transportation needs will be incorporated into municipal processes
- Recognize the value of developing education, enforcement and awareness initiatives
- Demonstrate widespread local support:
  - Include a strong local endorsement to undertake plan
  - Demonstrate commitment of elected officials and senior staff to carry out recommendations of plan
- Demonstrate an understanding of interrelationships with other plans:
  - Recognize opportunities to integrate with Comprehensive Transportation Plan
  - Identify potential projects for state funding
  - Identify opportunities to coordinate with other municipal, county, regional and state plans
- Demonstrate involvement of local, regional and state organizations:
  - Involve appropriate local and regional agencies and organizations in plan development
  - Appoint or utilize a local steering committee / task force
  - Identify valid partnerships for various plan development and implementation elements.
  - Include letters / endorsements that reflect type, variety and strength of support from partnering agencies, organizations and individuals
- Promote current transportation plans and initiatives:
  - Build on existing municipal or regional initiatives; coordinates with regional or neighboring community plans
  - Communicate potential for implementing existing goals and policies
- Develop realistic aspirations:
  - Show an awareness of / describe a realistic plan implementation strategy
  - Identify tasks and include a realistic time line for plan development
- Address development of modal interconnectivity (where applicable)

### Conditions of Project Award

NCDOT offers the option to the local government to either handle the grant administrative responsibilities (RFP, consultant selection, project invoicing, etc.) themselves or delegate this to NCDOT-DBPT. Described below are the overall process and primary responsibilities. Dates are estimates.

#### NCDOT Administration of Grant Process

- In March 2017, DBPT will send the local government a municipal reimbursement agreement.
- NCDOT/DBPT maintains a short on-call list of experienced, pre-qualified consultants to prepare bicycle and pedestrian plans funded through the Planning Grant Initiative Program. DBPT staff will select a firm to prepare a community's plan whose skills match the needs of the local

jurisdiction (with input from the local government when necessary). Consultant assignment will also be influenced by current workload/available staff. Final plan development cost will be negotiated between DBPT and the selected cost with final cost falling within the plan cost range noted earlier in this document.

- Agreements between the locality and NCDOT will be signed in April – July 2017. The locality will be responsible for the local match at this time.
- Plan start date is anticipated in June/July.
- The consultant will be responsible for submitting quarterly progress reports to NCDOT.
- NCDOT-DBPT will handle all consultant invoicing and all other related documentation.
- The local government will establish the project steering committee consisting of local citizenry. A primary local contact will serve as the liaison between the locality, consultant and NCDOT.

#### Local Government Administration of Grant Process

- In March 2017, DBPT will send the local government various documentation including a municipal reimbursement agreement and grant recipient administrative procedures spelling out local responsibilities.
- The local government will draft a request for proposal and post the request for proposal and solicit firms. (DBPT will review and approve.)
- The local government will develop and document an equitable consultant selection process.
- Once the firm is chosen by the local government, the locality and selected consultant will develop a contract and scope. (DBPT and NCDOT External Audit will review and approve.)
- Agreements between the locality and NCDOT will be signed in April – July 2017.
- Plan start date varies, but based on prior experience, will likely occur 6 or more months after award notification, so September/October 2017 or later.
- The local government will establish the project steering committee consisting of local citizenry. A primary local contact will serve as the liaison between the locality, consultant and NCDOT.
- The local government will submit to NCDOT quarterly progress reports.
- The consultant will bill the local government directly throughout the plan development process. After payment, the local government can request reimbursement monthly to quarterly from NCDOT based on local match percentage. Supporting documentation is required.
- Unspent funds may be withdrawn from municipalities that fail to meet timely benchmarks in the plan development process.
- After project completion, the locality will need to maintain all documentation, accounting records, project records, etc. to substantiate costs incurred for 5 years from the date of final payment.
- Since this program is partially funded with federal dollars, the local government will be subject to certain federal audit requirements. Expectations will be spelled out in the agreement.

As outlined above, whichever grant administration process pursued, the funded municipality must be willing to execute a legal agreement with the NCDOT prior to receiving funding. This agreement will outline the responsibilities of each party, the terms of reimbursement and the deliverables. This agreement must be executed within six months of being awarded the grant.

The municipality must be willing to submit the final plan to the Town/City Council or other approving authority for adoption.

Costs incurred before receipt of a Notice to Proceed are not a reimbursable expense.

For grant processes administered locally, it is expected that awarded municipalities will have twenty-four months from the date of receipt of an NCDOT written Notice to Proceed to complete the plan. For plans administered by NCDOT, it is anticipated that selected consultants will have twelve months from the date of receipt of an NCDOT written Notice to Proceed to complete the plan. Final timeframes will be determined during creation of agreements and finalization of consultant contracts.

Municipalities must credit the North Carolina Department of Transportation for project participation in the plan document, in all press releases and other announcements and promotional materials related to the project.

All electronic files, maps, technical illustrations, etc. produced with these funds will become the property of the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and the funded municipality. GIS files created for plan development must adhere to NCDOT's PBIN geodatabase standards (for more information see: <https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/BikePed/Pages/PBIN.aspx>).

### **Administration / Technical Assistance**

Staff from the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT) will be available to either (a) directly administer the grant process as described above or (b) to assist the municipality with administering the grant process by answering questions and providing guidance in developing an RFP to solicit consultants, as well as, final consultant selection and approval. DBPT staff will also provide various forms of technical assistance, attend steering committee meetings and review/approve plan drafts throughout the plan development process.

### **How to Apply**

***The application deadline is 5:00 pm Friday, November 10, 2016***

1. The application form is available as a fillable PDF document. The application is designed so that applicants can download the application form and complete the form electronically for submittal. Application form and relevant documents will be accepted in digital format only and should be emailed to Nick Scheuer at [nrscheuer@ncdot.gov](mailto:nrscheuer@ncdot.gov), with subject title, 2017 Planning Grant Initiative Application – Your Municipality Name. Every effort should be made to convert any additional files to PDF format. (There is a maximum 25 megabyte application packet size for emailing per municipality).
2. Please use only the space provided to answer the questions. The *2017 Planning Grant*

*Application and Application Instructions* can be found in the right-hand column of the following page: (<https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Pages/Planning-Grant-Initiative.aspx>).

3. The signature of an authorized City/Town staff member is required in the space provided on the first page of the application for the proposal to be eligible for consideration (e.g. City/Town Manager, Administrator, Mayor, etc.). Please also print the name and title of this signatory in the space provided. The first page should then be scanned and either added to the application or included as a separate document.
4. A resolution from the municipality is required. A resolution from an MPO or RPO, as appropriate, is also required. Arrangements should be made far enough in advance to allow time to acquire the appropriate resolution so that it may be sent in with the application.
5. Other specific information on how each application packet should be formatted may be found under “Submission Instructions” section of the *Application Instructions* document (<https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Pages/Planning-Grant-Initiative.aspx>)
6. Applications will be accepted via e-mail only.
  - Maximum application packet size per municipality must be no larger than 25 megabytes.
  - Completed application form and relevant scanned documents should be converted to PDF format.
  - Online/links references to large files like maps is preferred.

**Email to:**

Nick Scheuer at [nrscheuer@ncdot.gov](mailto:nrscheuer@ncdot.gov)

Subject: 2017 Planning Grant Initiative Application – Your Municipality Name

**For questions:**

Nick Scheuer, 919.707.2608