

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Can county or regional government agencies apply for funding?

Counties with populations of less than 35,000 may apply on behalf of incorporated or unincorporated communities within their jurisdiction. County governments with populations greater than 35,000 and regional government are not eligible to apply, nor are colleges/universities or other non-municipal entities.

Can a municipality that already has a plan apply for funding?

Municipalities who currently have a comprehensive bicycle and/or pedestrian plan at least five (5) years old may apply for funding. Municipalities may have plans that target only off-road projects, as in a greenway master plan, or just on-road improvements as part of an existing transportation plan, and are therefore, not viewed as a comprehensive planning document for this planning grant program. Such plans typically do not address elements that are a part of comprehensive planning document, such as, policy, education, enforcement, maintenance, and land use/development issues. To understand what is included in a comprehensive pedestrian and/or bicycle plan, see the "Planning Grant Templates" provided on the Planning Grant webpage:

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Pages/Planning-Grant-Initiative.aspx>.

If a proposal was submitted in a previous grant cycle, can the same proposal be resubmitted?

The application is slightly modified every year to clarify/improve both the application process and the review process. Therefore, a new application form must be submitted to be eligible for consideration each year. All municipalities are encouraged to re-apply. Those municipalities that received funding in previous years may apply for the type of plan, bicycle or pedestrian, for which they did not receive funding in the past.

Can the plan be a project/corridor plan, or focus on a sub-area of a municipality or specific construction project?

In the past, funding was only intended to support the development of a comprehensive bicycle, pedestrian or joint bicycle and pedestrian transportation plan for the entire municipality. For 2017 DBPT is allowing for corridor plan proposals in targeted areas. The criteria used for valuing municipal plans will be applied to proposals for site-specific corridor plans.

Can the funding be used to develop a bicycle or pedestrian element of other municipal planning efforts?

Any plan developed with these funds must be comprehensive in nature and be a stand-alone bicycle or pedestrian 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., requests for funding to develop such elements are not within the scope of this grant.

Can in-kind services be used for a local match?

In-kind services cannot be used for local participation. The local match must be a cash contribution.

Can other non-municipal funds be used for the local cash match?

Other NCDOT state or federal funds provided to a municipality cannot be used as a local cash match. Funds secured from other state or federal agencies and organizations or businesses may be used for the local match.

Can Powell Bill funds be used for a local match?

Yes, Powell Bill funds may be used toward the local match. Funds secured from state agencies other than NCDOT may also be used for a local match.

How much does a plan cost to develop?

Average costs associated with the development of plans vary greatly depending on the size of the municipality and the complexity of issues to be addressed in the plan. 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		
5,000 to 10,000	\$30,000-\$50,000	\$25,000-\$40,000	\$20,000-\$60,000
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	

What percent does my town pay?

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.

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%

When will selected municipalities receive the funding?

Municipalities will be notified of the planning grant award in March 2017. A municipality selected for funding must execute a legal agreement with the NCDOT prior to receiving funding authorization. This agreement will outline the responsibilities of each party, the terms of reimbursement and the deliverables.

As described in the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative Program Overview* document, a local

government may either handle the grant administrative responsibilities (RFP, consultant selection, project invoicing, etc.) themselves or delegate this responsibility to NCDOT.

If the grant process is administered locally, funds will be provided on a reimbursement basis – the municipality will provide periodic payments to the consultant, then may request reimbursement from NCDOT. Municipalities have six months to complete all steps necessary in order to be issued a Notice to Proceed. The planning process will begin once the following conditions are met: (a) the municipal reimbursement agreement is executed, (b) a list of potential steering committee members has been submitted to NCDOT, and (c) an executed consultant contract with approved scope of work and cost proposal has been submitted to NCDOT.

If the grant process is administered by NCDOT, the municipality will submit a lump sum of their matching funds for this project with the signed agreement. NCDOT will, then, administer all payments to the consultant preparing the plan. The planning process will begin once (a) the municipal reimbursement is executed and local match is received and (b) NCDOT has assigned a consultant to the project and negotiated plan cost.

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

What is the time frame for executing a reimbursement agreement between NCDOT and a funded municipality?

Once a municipality is notified of award, NCDOT will generate a municipal reimbursement agreement and forward it to the municipality for execution. The municipality shall submit an executed contract within six months of award notification (For grant processes administered by NCDOT, it is anticipated that contract execution will occur within 3 months of award notification.)

How long will the municipality have to complete the plan?

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.

How will proposals be selected for funding?

Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT) staff will conduct a preliminary review of all applications for completeness and general appropriateness. An Awards Committee will review all proposals that pass the initial screening and will forward their funding recommendations to the NCDOT for final approval. The Awards Committee will include DBPT staff 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 Board of Transportation will approve selected municipalities in February or March 2017.

What are the selection criteria?

The NCDOT Planning Grant 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. For a comprehensive list of criteria, see the "Selection Criteria" section of the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative Program Overview* document:

(<https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Pages/Planning-Grant-Initiative.aspx>).

What type of assistance is available to local staff preparing a proposal?

Staff from the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT) will be available to answer questions and provide guidance. (Nick Scheuer at nrscheuer@ncdot.gov, 919-707-2608). MPO and RPO planning staff may also be able to provide helpful information or staff assistance. In addition, plan templates, a list of past awardees, completed plans, and links to Web sites that provide general information on bicycle and pedestrian planning may be found on the Planning Grant Initiative webpage: (<https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Pages/Planning-Grant-Initiative.aspx>).

Is the funding provided on an "all or nothing" basis?

Yes. Applications for funding for a comprehensive municipal bicycle or pedestrian plan from a municipality that can provide the necessary level and type of matching funds are the only type of proposals that will be considered.

What does a bicycle plan or pedestrian plan look like?

A list of plans are may be found on the Planning Grant Initiative page (<https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Pages/Grant-Recipients-and-Completed-Plans.aspx>).

Can the funds be used for construction of sidewalks, greenway trails or other capital improvements projects?

These funds are made available for the development of comprehensive bicycle and/or pedestrian transportation plans only. Proposals detailing specific construction projects are not eligible for consideration.

Is there a "live person" available who can answer my questions?

Yes, you can contact:

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John Vine-Hodge	(919) 707-2607 / javinehodge@ncdot.gov