

## Committee of the Whole (2) Report

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**DATE:** Tuesday, March 8, 2022

**WARD(S):** ALL

**TITLE:** ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

**FROM:**

Nick Spensieri, City Manager

Vince Musacchio, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development

**ACTION:** DECISION

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**Purpose**

To obtain Council support for an application to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Communities to the 2022 [Active Transportation Fund](#) ("ATF").

**Report Highlights**

- On February 10, 2021, the Prime Minister, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, and Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced \$5.9 billion in new funding for public transit and active transportation over 5 years, beginning in 2021-2022.
- This funding includes the Active Transportation Fund (ATF), a \$400 million, 5-year investment to fund projects that expand and enhance AT networks in communities, and support Canada's National Active Transportation Strategy.
- There are two streams; Capital Projects may receive a 60% contribution of up to \$50,000,000 with stacking limit of 100% with other granting programs (if applicable) and the Planning Stream is 100% up to \$50,000 in funding
- Based on a review of approved and planned active transportation projects under the Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure Implementation Program, Vaughan Super Trail Development Program and other stand-alone active transportation projects, the design of the Humber Trail extension from Boyd Conservation Park and Langstaff Road will be put forward for funding consideration under the Planning (and Design) Stream and the construction of the "Uptown Link" Jane Street Sidewalk, Cycle Tracks and Streetlighting project will be put forward for funding consideration under the Capital Stream.

### **Report Highlights continued**

- Implementing Council-approved priorities is critical. Both the Humber Trail and Bridge and the Jane Street projects align with the City of Vaughan's [Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan](#) and resulting active transportation capital programs.
- Both these projects are aligned with the [Toronto and Region Conservation Authority \(TRCA\) Trail Strategy \(2010\)](#), form part of [Ontario's Province-wide Cycling Network](#) and support [Canada's National Active Transportation Strategy](#) to provide comfortable and convenient access to active transportation for Canadians of all ages, ethnicities, abilities, genders and backgrounds.

### **Recommendations**

1. THAT Council endorse both applications to the Active Transportation Fund (ATF) Grant program;
2. THAT this report be sent to Vaughan's Ontario Members of Provincial Parliament, including the Ontario Minister of Infrastructure and Community, as well as York Region's Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Planning and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA); and
3. That the City Clerk and/or City Treasurer be authorized to enter into a future ATF Transfer Payment Agreement(s), if awarded.

### **Background**

**On March 12, 2021, the Federal Government announced the forthcoming Active Transportation Fund (ATF), a \$400 million, 5-year investment and consulted with Staff on program details**

In March 2021, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities announced the forthcoming Active Transportation Fund (ATF), a \$400 million, 5-year investment to fund projects that expand and enhance active transportation networks in communities of all types and sizes, and support Canada's First National Active Transportation Strategy. The Federal Government indicated that they will be working with local municipalities to develop the details of an Active Transportation Fund (ATF) prior to the release of any details or application intake. Throughout 2021, staff were involved in several consultation sessions with the Federal government regarding what this program might look like.

**On February 10, 2022, the Federal Government announced the details of the Active Transportation Fund (ATF) and opened the application intake period**

In February 2022, the Prime Minister, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, and Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced \$5.9 billion in new funding for

public transit and active transportation over 5 years, beginning in 2021-2022, with a permanent annual envelope of \$3 billion ongoing beginning in 2026-2027. Embedded within this funding is the long-awaited Active Transportation Fund (ATF), a \$400 million, 5-year investment to fund projects that expand and enhance active transportation networks in communities of all types and sizes, and support Canada's National Active Transportation Strategy. The announcement included the details of the ATF and official opening of the application intake period.

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 mobility aids such as wheelchairs, scooters, e-bikes, rollerblades, snowshoes and cross-country skis, and more.

The objective of the ATF is to increase the total amount, usage, and quality of active transportation infrastructure throughout Canada. The ATF will support capital and planning projects that encourage a modal shift away from cars and improve the safety and security of Canadians. In recognition that almost every journey begins and ends with a form of active transportation, the ATF will seek to support first-and-last kilometre connections to existing and planned transit infrastructure.

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

[Grant Funding Policy, 09.C.01](#)

Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update – [December 10, 2019, Committee of the Whole \(2\) \(Item 10, Report No. 41, Recommendation 1, 2 and 3\)](#)

Humber Trail Feasibility Study – [November 9, 2021, Committee of the Whole \(2\) \(Item 6, Recommendation 1\)](#)

## **Analysis and Options**

**The Active Transportation Fund (ATF) has two funding streams for eligible projects: Planning (and Design) Projects and Capital Projects**

The ATF has two funding streams for eligible projects. The first stream is for planning and design projects and offers grants of up to \$50,000, funding up to 100% of eligible costs. Planning and design projects include the development or enhancement of formal active transportation strategic planning documents, design of future capital projects or stakeholder engagement. Eligible projects include:

- Research, including case studies, data collection initiatives, mapping of walkability and bikeability, community audits/assessments
- Public and/or stakeholder engagement and outreach, education programs
- Policy development, including drafting objectives/actions for inclusion in community land use and/or transportation plans
- Feasibility studies, business cases, and detailed cost estimates relating to the design of a project or program
- Functional and detailed design projects
- Projects which support the implementation of Canada's national active transportation strategy, such as events raising awareness and encouraging adoption of active transportation.

The second stream is for capital projects. This stream offers contributions up to \$50 million funding up to 60% of eligible costs with a stacking limit of 100%. Capital projects include new infrastructure construction, enhancement of existing infrastructure, and fixed design and safety features that encourage increased active transportation. Eligible capital projects include:

- Building or enhancing infrastructure for active transportation, such as multi-use paths, sidewalks, footbridges, separated bicycle lanes, nature trails and other infrastructure
- Enhancing active transportation infrastructure, including design considerations in which there may be no net gain in kilometers of infrastructure, but quality improvements that support greater usage
- Building or enhancing design features and facilities which promote active transportation, such as storage facilities, lighting, greenery, shade, and benches
- Building or enhancing safety features which promote active transportation, such as crosswalks, medians, speed bumps, and wayfinding signage.

**Each funding stream has separate merit criteria, which will be used to evaluate projects**

Generally, the following merit criteria will be used for evaluating projects under both streams: connectivity and accessibility, economic benefit, environmental and climate benefits, improvement to user mobility, safety and security as well as viability. Planning projects will also need to show that there was an identified need for the project, the project is integrated in existing planning documents or policies and that the project will lead to a subsequent active transportation capital project.

## **The intake period for the Active Transportation Fund closes March 31, 2021 at 7pm EST**

The deadline to apply is March 31 at 7pm EST with project completion dates set for March 31, 2026. Bundling of projects is allowed in one application and more than one application is also permitted per organization. Project expenditures and contracts will only be eligible as of date of project funding approval.

### **Staff are working on putting forth two applications, one for each stream with Humber Trail extension from Boyd Conservation Park to Langstaff Road for the Planning (and Design) Stream and Jane Street Sidewalk, Cycle Track and Streetlighting for the Capital Stream**

Staff have reviewed approved and planned active transportation projects under the Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure Implementation Program, the Vaughan Super Trail Development Program, and other standalone approved and planned active transportation planning, design and construction projects. Projects were evaluated against the merit criteria, timing requirements, current status of each project and financials. Based on this evaluation process, the Humber Trail extension from Boyd Conservation Park to Langstaff Road was selected to put forth for the Planning (and Design) Stream and the Jane Street Sidewalk, Cycle Track and Streetlighting capital project was selected to put forth for the Capital Stream.

Both these projects align with the infrastructure priorities of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. The Humber Trail extension is part of the City's Vaughan Super Trail initiative, identified as a priority for expanding the open space multi-use recreational trail system. The Jane Street "Uptown Link" was identified as part of the priority pedestrian and cycling networks and further highlighted as a signature project within the Plan.

## **Financial Impact**

### **Receiving funding through the Active Transportation Fund (ATF) would contribute to project expenses and potentially alleviate municipal funds to put towards other active transportation projects**

The Humber Trail Feasibility Study, endorsed by Council on November 16, 2021, identifies the segment from Boyd Conservation Area to Langstaff Road as a priority area for short term implementation estimated at an approximate capital cost of \$2.6 million. Advancing this segment as a priority project was endorsed by the TRCA at the January 28, 2022 Board of Directors meeting and aligns with the TRCA Trail Strategy (2019). Cost estimate associated with design and planning of this segment is estimated at \$338,000 (excluding tax, cost escalation, staff recovery and administration costs) of which the grant

could offset up to \$50,000 of planned expenses. Funding has been identified for this project the 2022 Budget and subsequent years under the Vaughan Super Trail Development Program (PK-6373-19). The Phase 1 project identifies approximately 1.4 km of trail extending the trail through Boyd Conservation Park south to Langstaff and will include, decommissioning and commemoration of the existing bowstring bridge, providing a new bridge crossing, trail amenities, signage, landscaping and restoration works.

The 2022 Budget and 2023-2026 Capital Plan identified \$13 million in 2023 for the construction of Jane Street Sidewalk, Cycle Track and Streetlights Capital Project (ID-2056-18). Due to COVID-19 related inflation and supply chain challenges, staff are seeing expenses as much as 20-30% more than anticipated. The construction of this project is estimated to be approximately \$16 million with the entire project works eligible for funding under this program. There is opportunity to offset up to \$9.6 million (60%) of the project costs through the Active Transportation Fund.

Capital costs for the implementation of both of these projects are funded from the Engineering Development Charges Reserve.

### **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

The Humber Trail Feasibility Study identifies options to connect a critical 7 km gap of the existing Humber Trail between Boyd Conservation Park and Steeles Avenue West. Closing this gap will create a key regional trail that extends northward through the William Granger Greenway to the Nashville Conservation Reserve in Vaughan, and into the Town of Caledon to the Oak Ridges Moraine, and southward through the City of Toronto to the Lake Ontario waterfront. The Humber Trail forms an important part of and further advances the Vaughan Super Trail. The study is based on recommendations of the City of Vaughan Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (2020) to close gaps along key city-wide trails, and to further advance the Vaughan Super Trail and the TRCA Trail Strategy (2019). It also is in conformance with the following trail and active transportation policies and strategies: Tour by Bike: Ontario's Cycling Tourism Plan (2017), York Regional Transportation Master Plan (2016), York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (2008), City of Toronto Cycling Network Plan (2016), Natural Environment Trail Strategy (2013), and Toronto Ravine Strategy (2017). The Phasing and Implementation Plan of the study identifies the segment from Boyd Conservation Area to Langstaff Road as a priority project.

The Jane Street sidewalk and cycle tracks will stitch together a regional scale active transportation network including existing and soon to be implemented east-west

pedestrian and cycling facilities along Teston Road, Major Mackenzie, Rutherford Road, Langstaff Road, Portage Parkway and Highway 7. In addition, York Region Transit (YRT) /VivaNext plan to operate high-frequency transit along the corridor building on the VivaNext Highway 7 Bus Rapid Transit route. The AT facilities will provide critical first-last mile connections from residential areas to the YRT Bus Terminal in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) at the south end, the existing bus terminal at Vaughan Mills Centre Mall and intensification area as well as the bus terminal at Canada's Wonderland and Mackenzie Health Hospital at the north end. At the south end, the Jane Street project will connect to the City's planned Edgeley Pond and Park and Black Creek Trail which will connect to the City of Toronto's 25-kilometre Jane Jacobs Promenade and Bikeway creating 36 kilometers of continuous north-south active transportation facilities through Vaughan and Toronto. Jane Street active transportation facilities were also identified as part of the TRCA Trail Strategy as well as the Ontario Province-wide Cycling Network, inevitably contributing to a cross-country network and the National Active Transportation Strategy.

## **Conclusion**

With Council approval on the recommended grant application and project plan, the two Active Transportation Fund (ATF) applications will be submitted, and the funding allocated to support active transportation initiatives in the City of Vaughan. This aligns with the City's commitment to advancing active transportation in alignment with the 2018-2022 Term of Council Strategic Plan.

**For more information**, please contact: Jamie Bronsema, Director, Parks Infrastructure Planning & Development, ext. 8858 and Selma Hubjer, Acting Director, Infrastructure Planning & Corporate Asset Management, ext. 8674.

## **Attachments**

N/A

## **Prepared by**

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**Approved by**

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Vince Musacchio, Deputy City Manager,  
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**Reviewed by**

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Nick Spensieri, City Manager