



To: Mayor Leonard and Council

From: Patrick Graham, Director of Engineering

Date: July 10, 2023

Meeting Date: July 24, 2023

**Subject:** Application for the Federal Rural Transit Solutions Fund for the Next Phase of the Cross-Island Multi-Use Path

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council direct staff to apply for the Capital Project stream of the Government of Canada's Rural Transit Solution Fund for construction of the next phase of the Multi-Use Path from Charlie's Lane to Grafton Lake.

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### **PURPOSE**

To seek Council approval to apply for the continuous intake of the Capital Projects stream of the Federal Government's Rural Transit Solutions Fund for the construction of the next phase of the Cross Island Multi-Use Path (MUP) from Charlie's Ln to Grafton Lake.

### **BACKGROUND**

The MUP, along Bowen Island Trunk Rd. and Grafton Rd, is now complete from Cardena Drive to Artisan Lane and provides 1.3 km of continuous active transportation infrastructure. To date, the MUP has cost a total amount of \$1,485,958, of which \$1,240,645 was grant funded (83.5%) and the remaining \$245,313 was funded by BIM.

Design is underway for the next phase of the MUP, approximately 600 m from Artisan Lane to Charlie's Lane. Several sources of grant funding have been secured to fund construction of this phase totaling \$1,179,171, about 73.7% of the total estimated cost of \$1,600,000 for this section, which leaves about \$420,829 to be funded by BIM.

At the June 26, 2023 meeting, Council endorsed an MUP alignment that proceeds off-road past Artisan lane and then rejoins and follows Grafton Road past Charlie's Lane. To date no funding has been secured for the construction of the MUP section from Charlie's Lane to Grafton Lake. The Rural Transit Solutions Fund (RTSF) is a potential opportunity to secure grant funding for this section of the MUP. Based on previous Class D cost estimates, the approximately 900 m section from Charlie's Lane to Grafton Lake is estimated to cost about \$2,400,000. Potentially, up to 80% of this cost could be funded from a RTSF grant.

## RURAL TRANSIT SOLUTIONS FUND

The Rural Transit Solutions Fund (RTSF) is part of the Government of Canada's Permanent Public Transit Program, which allocates \$14.9 billion over the next eight years to support the development and expansion of locally driven transit solutions. Depending on the nature of the project, eligible applicants can seek funding through two program streams, the Planning and Design Projects stream and the Capital Project stream. The continuous intake of the RTSF opened on January 20, 2023.

### Capital Project Stream

For the Fund's capital stream, applicants can apply for a contribution of up to \$3 million for conventional solutions or up to \$5 million for zero-emissions transit solutions. Given the parameters of the MUP project, BIM will pursue the conventional funding contribution to help cover the capital costs of the expanded active transportation project. Some costs, such as operational expenditures, are not eligible.

### Maximum Contribution

The federal contribution is calculated based on the capital eligible expenses and is based on the table below:

Eligible organization	Maximum Rural Transit Solutions Fund contribution (% of capital eligible expenses)	Maximum Federal Contribution from all sources (% of capital expenses)	Total Canadian (federal provincial, territorial, and municipal) Government stacking (% of capital expenses)
Applicant is located in a province or is a not-for-profit organization	80%	80%	100%

### Capital Project Deadlines

Capital purchases must be completed within two years of a successful applicant signing a contribution agreement under the Rural Transit Solutions Fund's Capital Projects stream.

**Evaluation of Application**

Projects will be evaluated according to the Rural Transit Solutions Fund merit criteria below. The criteria are described in terms of transit solutions, but the program guide ([Infrastructure Canada - Rural Transit Solutions Fund: Application Guide for the Capital Stream](#)) indicates that active transportation infrastructure projects, such as multi-use paths, are eligible.

Merit Criteria	DESCRIPTION
<b>Community demand for rural transit solution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The application should describe the type of proposed transit service, as well as the population (size and demographics) expected to use the service, including any vulnerable populations. It should also describe any currently available transit services. It should provide an understanding of the community/area and its needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Inclusiveness benefits to local community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The application explains how the transit solution will contribute to improving the quality of life and safety of various groups in the community/area and to closing existing socio-economic gaps.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential for economic impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The application explains how the transit solution will contribute to the economy of the community/area. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estimates of the number of jobs created, the income of individuals and other economic benefits.</li> <li>How local businesses and business associations could be engaged and contribute to the success of public transit in your community/area.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Environmental impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The application has community/area implementation strategies to encourage more people to use public transit.</li> <li>The application should explain how the project will reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions or how the transit solution will integrate clean or zero-emission technologies.</li> </ul>
<b>Viability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The application describes the objectives and how success will be measured.</li> <li>The application explains strategies that could be put in place to support the long-term viability of the project, including potential sources of funds (e.g., fares, local and provincial government support, contribution from local businesses, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Locally driven</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The application explains how the community is expected to support the rural transit solution.</li> <li>The application describes the nature of the delivery partnership or partnerships that have been established at various levels, including with neighboring communities, regional governments, existing transit organizations, etc.</li> <li>The application may include strategies to maintain and expand local support.</li> </ul>

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

As part of the application, Bowen Island Municipality (BIM) will be asked to provide a total estimated dollar value for the project. This should include: the requested Federal contribution, BIM's financial contribution and any other sources of funding from partners associated with the project.

Based on 80% grant funding of the estimated \$2.4 million project, BIM's contribution would be \$480,000, likely split between the 2024 and 2025 budget years.

## **COMMUNICATION TO THE PUBLIC**

Notice of Council's decision will be included in the Council Highlights and in Council minutes of the meeting.

## **ECOLOGICAL/ENVIRONMENTAL/CLIMATE CONSIDERATIONS**

At this time directly measuring impacts is beyond the scope of this project. However, BIM may be responsible for providing detailed project information to assist Infrastructure Canada in determining whether the project may be subject to federal environmental statutory requirements and require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

## **CONCLUSION**

Due to the high costs for MUP construction, grant funding is essential to delivering the project, and all potential grant funding opportunities are being pursued. The Rural Transit Solution Fund could potentially fund the majority of one of the most challenging and costly sections of the cross island MUP.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. That Council direct staff not to apply for the RTSF, Capital Projects stream at this time.
2. Other alternative as identified by Council

## **ATTACHMENTS AND REFERENCES:**

Attachment 1 – Rural Transit Solutions Fund, Application Guide

**Submitted by:** Patrick Graham, Director of Engineering

**REVIEWED BY:**

CAO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bylaw Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire & Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment & Parks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Library	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Works	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Recreation & Community Services	<input type="checkbox"/>