



Infrastructure
Canada

Canada

Rural Transit Solutions Fund

*Application Guide for the planning and
design stream*

This publication is available upon request in accessible formats.

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Objective

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 2021-22, with a permanent annual envelope of \$3B ongoing beginning in 2026-27. As part of that new commitment, \$250 million, (over 5 years, beginning in 2021-22) was identified for the new Rural Transit Solutions Fund.

The Rural Transit Solutions Fund aims to help develop new and support existing public transit solutions in rural and remote, Northern and Indigenous communities that will make it easier for Canadians living in these areas to get around their communities and regions – to get to work, school, appointments, run errands or visit loved ones.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the Infrastructure Canada team at RTSF-FSTCR@infcc.gc.ca or toll free at 1-833-699-2280 to obtain answers to any questions about the Fund or the application process.

Call for applications

Infrastructure Canada has launched the Rural Transit Solutions Fund, part of the Public Transit Funds, and invites eligible organizations to apply for funding for planning and design grants and capital projects.

Communities that would benefit from developing a local transit plan are invited to apply for a planning and design grant of up to \$50,000 from August 6, 2021, to October 7, 2021.

Communities that have a transit plan in place that would benefit from capital purchases that can be completed by March 31, 2023, will also be invited to apply for a capital project federal contribution of up to \$3,000,000 for conventional solutions, or up to \$5,000,000 if the project incorporates zero-emission transit solutions in the coming weeks.

Additional information relating to the application process and eligibility for planning and design grants are found below.

Applications for planning grants will be accepted until 11:59 pm (PDT) on October 7, 2021.

Who can apply for Rural Transit Solutions Fund Planning and Design Grants?

Municipal, local and regional governments such as service districts; and Indigenous organizations can apply for planning and design grants. Not-for-profit organizations are eligible to apply for planning and design grants, if they have documented support from a municipal, local or regional government or Indigenous organization. **The complete list of eligible applicants is:**



1. Municipalities, local and regional governments established under provincial or territorial statute, including service districts.
2. Public sector bodies that are established by or under provincial or territorial statute, or by regulation, or are wholly-owned by a province, territory, municipal or regional government, including but not limited to:
 - a. *Municipally-owned corporations;*
 - b. *Provincial or territorial organizations that deliver municipal services; and*
 - c. *Any **other** form of local governance that exists outside of the municipality description .*
3. Indigenous governing bodies, including but not limited to:
 - a. *A band council within the meaning of section 2 of the Indian Act;*
 - b. *A First Nation, Inuit or Métis government or authority established pursuant to a Self-Government Agreement or a Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada and an Indigenous people of Canada, that has been approved, given effect and declared valid by federal legislation; and*
 - c. *A First Nation, Inuit or Métis government that is established by or under legislation whether federal or provincial that incorporates a governance structure.*
4. Federally or Provincially incorporated not-for-profit organizations whose mandate is to improve Indigenous outcomes, organizations serving Indigenous communities living in urban centers and First Nations living off-reserve
5. Indigenous development corporations
6. Federally or Provincially incorporated not-for-profit organizations (when an application is submitted on behalf of any primary eligible recipients listed as 1-5 above).

Please note that individuals; private citizens; and federal entities, including federal Crown corporations **are ineligible**.

While for profit organizations are not eligible to apply under the RTSF, they may partner with an eligible organization to facilitate implementation of a rural transit solution. For such projects, the ownership of the infrastructure or rolling stock must remain with the eligible organization.

Potential applicants are encouraged to contact Infrastructure Canada at RTSF-FSTCR@infcc.gc.ca or toll free at 1-833-699-2280 to obtain answers to any questions about eligibility and other application requirements.

Available funding for Planning and Design projects

Grants of up to \$50,000 are available under the Rural Transit Solutions Fund for planning projects. Federal funding will be provided to the recipient once a grant agreement is signed.

The total federal government funding from all Government of Canada sources cannot exceed 100% of total cost of the planning project.

Eligible Planning and Design activities

Planning and Design projects are intended to assess and/or develop a rural transit solution that is appropriate for the local community. Eligible planning projects can include assessing routes and modes of travel, feasibility studies, public and stakeholder engagement and surveys.

Planning and Design projects to support transit solutions to connect nearby communities in a region are eligible for funding, if they support day-to-day activities (e.g., get to work, school, appointments, run errands or visit friends).

Proposed solutions that rely on air travel as a means of serving the community **are ineligible** under the Rural Transit Solutions Fund.

Process for Planning and Design applications

What is required in the application?

Applicants are asked to complete the application form to be considered for a Rural Transit Solutions Fund Planning and Design grant. Their application will need to provide sufficient information for Infrastructure Canada to review the proposal. Applications will be assessed against the criteria outlined in the table below.

Merit Criteria	DESCRIPTION
Need	Description and demographics for the community for the planning and design project. The current state of transit programming in the community. How the proposed planning and design project will identify community populations who will benefit from improved transit solutions.
Scope	How the planning and design project will contribute to developing a proposal that could be integrated into the future development of the community or region. How the planning and design project will support the development and implementation of a future project in the community.
Viability	How the planning outcomes will be shared with be communicated to community members to support the development of a project proposal that has community support. The expected time frame of the planning process.

Can a project involve other partners?

Infrastructure Canada encourages applications for projects that connect nearby or neighbouring communities.

For projects involving more than one organization, the application must identify a **lead applicant** (the organization responsible for overall management and coordination of activities) and include information regarding the roles and responsibilities of each partner organization.

The lead applicant must submit the planning project to Infrastructure Canada.

What is the cost limit of a Planning and Design project?

There is no limit to the cost of a planning project, however the maximum grant available under the Rural Transit Solutions Fund is limited to \$50,000. The total funding allocated under the Rural Transit Solutions Fund and from all federal sources cannot exceed 100% of the total costs of the planning and design project.

Infrastructure Canada will not provide additional payment for costs overruns.

Planning and Design project deadlines

For the first round of applications for the Rural Transit Solutions Fund Planning and Design Grants, the projects must be completed by March 31, 2023.

Other documents required

In addition to providing the information requested in the application form, the following additional documents will be requested at the application intake stage, as applicable.

These include:

- Letters of support from community for the project;
- Letter confirming partnership if the applicant is a Not for Profit organization or an Indigenous development corporation; and
- Letter of support from Indigenous community confirming mandate, if the applicant is an organization whose mandate is to improve Indigenous outcomes.



Additional supporting material

Please note that Infrastructure Canada may request additional information, if applicable, as a part of the review process, including:

- Proof of Incorporation;
- Confirmation of support from other financial investors /cost-sharing organizations;
- Transit plan/municipal plan

How to apply

The initial call for applications for Rural Transit Solutions Fund Planning Grants will involve the completion of the application and provision of the required additional documents as outlined in the “Other documents required” section above.

Annex A of this guide also provides additional information on how to complete the application form including an overview of what information to provide when answering each of the application questions.

Applicants that have difficulty with completing their application are encouraged to contact Infrastructure Canada officials at RTSF-FSTCR@infcc.gc.ca, or toll free at 1-833-699-2280 if additional support is required.

Deadline for submission of Planning and Design applications

The intake for Planning and Design projects opens on August 6, 2021, and closes at 11:59 pm (PDT) on October 7, 2021.

Decisions for Planning and Grant applications

Applicants may be contacted for additional information throughout the review process, as necessary. Funding decisions will be communicated as soon as possible to all applicants.

Contact Information

For questions about the Rural Transit Solutions Program or the application process, please contact Infrastructure Canada officials at RTSF-FSTCR@infcc.gc.ca or toll free at 1-833-699-2280

For more information on the Public Transit Funds, as well as Infrastructure Canada and its other programs, visit the Infrastructure Canada website at www.infrastructure.gc.ca



Annex A - How to fill out the Application Form

All interested applicants for the Rural Transit Solutions Fund’s Planning and Design Grants, are invited to complete the Application Form located on the Infrastructure Canada website. Detailed instructions on how to complete an application are outlined below.

As this application involves completing a PDF form, you are encouraged to save your form regularly.

Application Field	
1. Project Identification	
Project Title	In 300 characters or less please provide a concise but meaningful project title for your project, and include the location of the project. (e.g. “xyz public transit system for community X, province Y”).
2. Lead Applicant Organization	
Lead Applicant Name	Provide the legal name of the lead applicant organization that will receive funds and deliver the project.
Mailing address	Provide the mailing address for the lead organization.
Eligible Organization Type	Select the appropriate type of organization from the menu. Note: If the lead applicant is an Indigenous Governing body, Indigenous development corporation or, an Incorporated not-for-profit organization mandated to improve Indigenous outcomes/serving Indigenous communities, please select the appropriate Indigenous Population(s).
3. Lead Applicant Contacts	
Primary Contact Name	Provide the name (Last, First) for a primary contact person from the lead applicant organization.



	This information will be used by Infrastructure Canada to request additional information, if necessary, and to communicate decisions with respect to the proposed planning project.
Primary Contact Email Address	Provide the email address for the primary contact.
Secondary	Provide the name (Last, First) for a back-up contact person from the lead applicant organization. This information will be used by Infrastructure Canada if the primary contact provided is not available.
Secondary Contact Email Address	Provide the email address for the primary contact.
4. Project Partners	
Are you partnering with other organization(s) to deliver the project?	Please select Yes or No. In particular, please identify whether another local government or organization(s) will contribute to delivering the proposed planning project. Paid contractors and/or service providers do not need to be identified here.
Legal Name of Partner Organization	Provide the legal name of the organization(s) that will support the project.
Description of the partner organization	Provide a description of the role and mandate of the partner organization(s). Describe the support that will be provided to the proposed planning project and/or to the lead organization for the proposed project.
5. Project Location	
Please specify where the community transit solution will operate.	List all the municipalities/regions/towns in which the project will operate (e.g. Within community A only, or from Community A to Community B, C, etc.)

6. Project Description – For questions in this section, please provide a response in 4,000 words or fewer to each of the following questions if/as appropriate

<p>Project Description</p>	<p>Please describe the work that will be done for the proposed project and the expected product to be delivered/developed.</p> <p>If some planning effort has already been completed please provide this information as well.</p> <p>Please describe the current level of access to public transportation options in the community.</p> <p>Include information about the timelines associates with the different stages of your project if/as applicable.</p> <p>If applicable, please describe the process (and timelines) that will be established to ensure Indigenous involvement in developing the proposed planning project with Indigenous Peoples.</p> <p>If you have already secured community support for your project, please include proof with your application.</p>
<p>Will your project serve Indigenous populations?</p>	<p>Please answer yes or no.</p> <p>If yes, please select the Indigenous population(s) that will be served by the proposed planning project by selecting the appropriate peoples from the list available.</p> <p>If ‘Multiple Indigenous Groups’ or ‘Other’ is selected, then please specify in the space provided.</p>
<p>Describe the direct and ongoing benefits this will bring to Indigenous Peoples.</p>	<p>If the proposed planning project will serve Indigenous Peoples, please describe the tangible benefits that will be provided by the project, as well as the expected timeline for these tangible benefits.</p>

<p>Please choose your project type:</p>	<p>Please indicate the transit type being considered from among the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fixed route service <input type="checkbox"/> Ride-sharing or ride-hailing <input type="checkbox"/> On-demand services (demand-response) <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) <input type="checkbox"/> Intermodal hubs <input type="checkbox"/> Installation of charging stations <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase of software (e.g., trip planning or booking platform) <input type="checkbox"/> Other – <p>If 'Other' is selected, please specify.</p>
<p>Will there be any public consultation and/or participation?</p>	<p>Please answer yes or no.</p> <p>If yes, please describe the planned opportunities for members of the community to contribute their views to the proposed project.</p>
<p>Please explain how the proposed planning project will identify vulnerable community populations who could benefit from improved transit solutions.</p>	<p>Please summarize plans to or the anticipated approach to include an assessment of vulnerable populations in the proposed project.</p>
<p>Please explain how the planning project will contribute to developing a proposal to support the future development of your community or region.</p>	<p>Please describe how the final product from the proposed planning project would be used to position the community to obtain funding for implementing a transit solution. For example, would the final product be used to apply to future calls for applications to the Rural Transit Solutions Fund, or to provincial/territorial transit funds?</p>
<p>Does your proposed project plan address specific challenges outlined in your Municipal Plan or</p>	<p>Please answer yes or no.</p> <p>If yes, please explain by identifying any current local planning documents that reference local transit needs if</p>

alternate local community planning documentation?	any, and explain how the proposed planning project is aligned with these documents.
Please explain how the planning results/the plan will be shared with community members and decision-makers to support the development of a project proposal.	Please explain the plans for sharing the final document/outcomes of the proposed planning project with community members and decision-makers. What are next steps following the completion of the transit plan to advance to a project proposal?
7. Climate considerations	
Are you considering assessing the option of using low-carbon technologies (e.g. zero-emission vehicles) to deliver your public transit solution?	Please answer yes or no. If yes, please describe how options for low carbon technologies will be assessed as a part of the proposed planning project.
8. Project Financials	
Estimated Total Project Cost:	Please indicate how much the project is expected to cost. The total investment from Infrastructure Canada as a planning grant under the Fund can cover up to \$50,000 of the total costs. The total federal government funding from all Government of Canada sources cannot exceed 100% of total cost of the planning project.
Requested Federal Contribution (up to \$50,000):	Please state the total funding request to Infrastructure Canada.
Applicant's share of the total cost:	Please indicate your financial contribution share of the total estimated costs.
Other contributors:	Please indicate the name and amounts from other sources (e.g.: provincial funding, other municipalities or other partners) and confirm if these funds are secured. Letters of confirmation may be requested at a later point to validate this information.

9. Required Documents

<p>Please provide the following documents</p>	<p>Attach required documents as needed see *below for more information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letters of support from the community for the project, if applicable;• Letter confirming partnership if the applicant is an Indigenous Development Corporation or a Not-for-Profit organization; and• Letter of support from Indigenous community confirming mandate if the applicant is an organization whose mandate is to improve Indigenous outcomes. <p>Please note that Infrastructure Canada may request additional information, if applicable, as a part of the review process, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proof of Incorporation;• Confirmation of support from other financial investors /cost-sharing organizations;• Transit plan/municipal plan. <p>*When you click ‘submit’ on your completed application form, it will generate an email to send the application form to Infrastructure Canada, it is at this time that you can add additional attachments to that transmission email.</p>
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10. Attestation

	<p>Please read.</p> <p>Acknowledgement is confirmed with signature of authorized official from the lead applicant sign the application form.</p>
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11. Privacy Notice Statement and Confidentiality

	<p>Please read.</p> <p>Acknowledgement is confirmed with signature of authorized official from the lead applicant sign the application form.</p>
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Definitions

Term	Explanation
Charging stations	An electric vehicle charging station is equipment that connects an electric vehicle to a source of electricity to recharge electric cars, neighborhood electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids.
Fixed route service	Is defined as a service provided on a repetitive, fixed-schedule basis along a specific route with busses stopping to pick up and deliver passengers to specific locations; each fixed-route trip services the same origins and destinations.
Indigenous governing body	A council, government or other entity that is authorized to act on behalf of an Indigenous group, community or people that holds rights recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the <i>Constitution Act, 1982</i> . Indigenous peoples of Canada has the meaning assigned by the definition Aboriginal peoples of Canada in subsection 35(2) of the <i>Constitution Act, 1982</i> .
Intermodal hubs/intermodal (transit) facilities	An intermodal hub or intermodal transit facility gathers many modes of transportation together and is strategically located to increase destination alternatives. Intermodal hubs/facilities can help to improve mobility for a city and a region.
Low-carbon technology	Low and zero carbon technology (LZC) is the term given to technologies that emit low levels of Carbon Dioxide (CO ₂) emissions, or no net CO ₂ emissions.
Mobility-as-a-Service	Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is the integration of various forms of transport services into a single mobility service accessible on demand. To meet a customer’s request, a MaaS operator facilitates a diverse menu of transport options, be they public transport, ride-, car- or bike-sharing, taxi or car rental/lease, or a combination thereof.
Municipal Plan/alternate local community planning documentation	A municipal development plan (sometimes referred to as a community sustainability plan) is a framework used by municipalities or other local government bodies to address long-term community development, land use, and growth.
On-demand services (Demand-response)	On-Demand services enables passengers to book their journey at a convenient time (during service operating hours), and to be picked up from an agreed location.

Ride-sharing or ride-hailing	An arrangement in which a passenger travels in a private vehicle free or for a fee, especially as arranged by means of a website or application.
Rural	The Fund acknowledges the diversity of rural and remote communities in Canada and avoids the application of an arbitrarily established population size in the definition of rural populations. It will be up to each applicant to demonstrate the rural character of the communities served by their project.
Transit Plan	A Transportation Master Plan integrates existing and future land-use planning and the planning of transportation infrastructure with the principles of environmental assessment planning. Many Transportation Master Plans at the regional and local levels emphasize that increased use of transit is a key component of an integrated transportation strategy that considers all modes of travel.
Vulnerable population	Vulnerable populations include but are not limited to, Indigenous peoples, racialized peoples, youth, persons with disabilities, seniors, linguistic minorities, newcomers to Canada (Immigrants, Refugees), women, persons experiencing poverty, persons experiencing homelessness, and LGBTQ2+.