



Make the Connection Program **For Small – Scale Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects**

The *Make the Connection Program* assists municipal project sponsors to fund improvements to the region's bicycle and pedestrian travel network. The intent of the program is to improve the non-motorized travel network by addressing gaps or deficiencies in the existing surface transportation system that discourage or physically impede efficient and safe bicycle and pedestrian activities. This includes improvements which address problems at specific locations such as intersections, short lengths of roadways or trails, or single destinations that generate pedestrian and bicycle travel.

Project candidates need to directly benefit cyclists and/or pedestrians and should be confined to a small, definable area. Only projects that are designed specifically to improve bicycle and/or pedestrian activity will be considered in this program. All projects must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and associated design guidelines. The following list contains examples of the types of projects that will be considered as part of the *Make the Connection Program*:

- ✓ new sidewalks that connect to existing facilities
- ✓ new multi-use trails or trail segments
- ✓ safety improvements geared towards pedestrians or cyclists
- ✓ improvements to existing multi-use trails
- ✓ projects to bring existing facilities into compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, such as curb ramps with detectable warning treatments or pedestrian count-down signals
- ✓ improvements to bikeable areas of roadways (i.e. bike lanes or shoulders), including but not limited to shoulder widening, bicycle-friendly drainage grates, and pavement repairs
- ✓ traffic calming deployments such as speed tables, bulbouts and median islands
- ✓ installation of pavement markings that enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety and/or delineate bicycle and pedestrian space
- ✓ traffic signal upgrades that create new pedestrian or bicycle actuation and improved phasing for bicyclists and pedestrians
- ✓ bicycle/pedestrian improvements to transit facilities
- ✓ bicycle and pedestrian improvements to be carried out concurrently with other roadway projects
- ✓ sidewalk repair elements in conjunction with any of the above

Additional types of project candidates will be considered as warranted if they are not included on the list of project types that are hereby defined as ineligible:

- × any project primarily intended to benefit operations of motorized vehicles with no tangible improvement to bicyclists and pedestrians
- × any project contingent on the completion of unscheduled work by another municipality or private interest
- × any project where all the necessary conditions to enable the completion of the project are not within the control of the project sponsor
- × projects which do not meet federal and state environmental regulations
- × any bicycle or pedestrian project which is principally for recreational, rather than transportation, purposes

Project sponsors should consider the ownership of the project area when completing their application. This program does not include right-of-way acquisition as an eligible expense. Project applicants should provide details concerning ownership of the project area. For projects which are not owned by the project sponsor (such as privately-owned property or NYS-highway right-of-way), the application must state how the applicant will coordinate with the property owner to complete the project. Special consideration will be given to applications which demonstrate coordination between the project sponsor and property owner (correspondence, easements, work permits, MOUs, etc.)

Questions regarding potential project eligibility should be directed to A/GFTC staff.

Project Phasing

Make the Connection grants can be awarded for design, construction, or both design and construction. All phases must comply with applicable state and federal regulations. **Applications for first-time federal-aid project sponsors are limited to design phase funding requests only.** Construction funding requests will only be granted to applicants that have completed the design phase according to NYSDOT's procedures for Locally Administered Federal Aid Projects (LAFAP).

It is recommended that projects which may have complicating factors, such as right-of-way, utility relocations, or the potential for unanticipated issues, or projects with the potential for a high level of public interest and involvement, apply for design phase funding only. This will allow project sponsors to best determine appropriate design solutions without the potential for project delivery issues related to construction. In addition, completing the design as a stand-alone phase allows project sponsors to be better prepared to apply for funding from other sources, such as the DOT Transportation Alternatives Program or through the NYS Consolidated Funding Application.

Questions regarding project phasing should be directed to A/GFTC staff.

Project Cost

A/GFTC has programmed \$1.5M in matched federal dollars that is available for award through this solicitation. The following project minimums have been established:

- **Design-only: \$20,000**, for a total matched project minimum of \$25,000.
- **Construction-only or Design and Construction: \$60,000**, for a total matched project minimum of \$75,000

Please note: Partial funding for projects will not be awarded. A minimum local cash match of 20% is required, and overmatching on behalf of the sponsoring municipality is encouraged. In-kind labor **cannot** be counted towards the local match.

Project Management

The *Make the Connection Program* is a reimbursement program. Project sponsors will be required to **first** secure construction authorization from NYSDOT Region 1 and then first-instance project costs of the project prior to receiving reimbursement for the federal share. The amount of the federal share assigned to any project funded under this program will not change; any cost overruns will be the responsibility of the project sponsor. Reimbursement will not be available for costs incurred by the project sponsor prior to project selection, such as those resulting from preliminary design or document production. Projects must be sponsored by a municipality located within the A/GFTC planning area, which includes Warren and Washington Counties, as well as the Town of Moreau in Saratoga County.

It is also important to consider the administrative responsibilities attached to federal funding programs. Once federal funds are awarded through the *Make the Connection Program*, the project sponsor will have to fulfill federal and state requirements for Locally-Administered Federal Aid Projects, such as consultant procurement regulations, SEQR

determination, preliminary NEPA checklist, and design report. Such requirements can be a burden to municipalities without dedicated staff or experience with the federal reimbursement process. Project sponsors should carefully weigh the benefits and costs of federal funding when deciding to pursue assistance through the *Make the Connection Program*. The project selection process has been designed to strongly favor those municipalities that have demonstrated experience in delivering locally-administered federal aid transportation projects.

Project Completion Schedule

Awarded projects must adhere to the following schedule for completion:

- Project Initiation: 18 months from date of award letter, with State - Local Agreements in place within 6 months of project award. Project initiation shall be defined as any action which commences construction or substantially commits the project sponsor to the construction of the project, including issuing Request for Proposals for consultant services, SEQR compliance, advertising for construction bids, or purchase of materials.
- Project completion: 3 years from date of award letter. Project completion shall be defined as the substantial completion of construction of the project.

Project Evaluations

A selection committee comprised of A/GFTC committee members and staff will review all applications based upon their ability to satisfy the following considerations:

- Eligibility: Ineligible projects will receive no further consideration.
- Feasibility: Can the project be completed in three years? Does the project sponsor have direct control over the project area, or has the sponsor obtained appropriate work permit/permissions for construction? Does the potential for environmental impacts exist? Does the project require design, survey, or utility work? If so, how will this work be funded?
- Benefits: Does the project benefit a large portion of the community, including underserved populations? Does the project provide benefit to both cyclists and pedestrians?
- Significance of Deficiency to be Addressed: Does the project address a location where no bike ped/facility currently exists, or where the facility is unusable (including ADA compliance), or does the project improve convenience of bike/ped use in area where alternative facilities exist? Does the project link to significant bike/ped generators and receptors? Does the project connect to existing bike/ped infrastructure? Note: projects that would primarily repair existing sidewalks without providing meaningful expansion of the bicycle/pedestrian network will be given lower priority.
- Planning Consistency: Is the project consistent with local and regional plans? Is the project an integral element of a larger project or plan? Does a one-time or limited-time opportunity exist to accomplish this project?
- Project Delivery: Is there a reasonable assurance that the 20% minimum match is readily available? Can the sponsor provide a match in excess of 20%? Has the sponsor successfully delivered other Make the Connection or federal-aid projects in the past?

Timetable/Deadlines

Date	Activity
August 19, 2024	Project solicitation
October 31, 2024	Applications due to A/GFTC staff
December 11, 2024	Target date for completed project evaluation and selection by A/GFTC

Project applications should be delivered to A/GFTC via e-mail (preferred) or letter no later than October 31, 2024 using the contact information below:

Adirondack / Glens Falls Transportation Council
11 South Street, Suite 203
Glens Falls, NY 12801
Phone: 518-223-0086 Fax: 518-223-0584
Email: jack@agftc.org