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## TRAILS CONNECTING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM – 2023

### Information Sheet and Application Guide

#### 1. Introduction

The County of Simcoe has dedicated funding for 2023 to assist local municipalities in the development of active transportation and recreational trail opportunities, with a focus on enhancing and/or expanding the trail network for non-motorized uses. The following information is intended to outline the basic information regarding the Trails Connecting Communities Program (TCCP).

For enquiries relating to the Trails Connecting Communities Program, please contact Keirsten Morris, TCCP Coordinator at 705-726-9300 x1973 or [keirsten.morris@simcoe.ca](mailto:keirsten.morris@simcoe.ca).

#### 2. Eligibility

The TCCP funding is available to local municipalities within the County of Simcoe. Trail projects may be initiated by community groups, trail associations, recreation associations, institutions, crown corporations and Conservation Authorities in partnership with the local municipality, however, both local municipalities and the TCCP applicant must be financially committed to the project. It should be noted that the TCCP is a reimbursement program. Applying municipalities should be prepared to incur all of the costs of the project and then request reimbursement from the County of Simcoe at project completion. As a minimum, projects are required to meet the following criteria:

- Project will enhance an existing trail or establish a key trail linkage to improve network connectivity.
- Project will be constructed to specifications that improve trail accessibility to people with disabilities.
- Projects will work towards linking local municipalities and/or settlement areas.
- Construction will begin in 2023 or 2024 and be completed by the end of 2024 (unless alternate scheduling is confirmed).
- Project/trail design is satisfactory to County staff (i.e. access, signage, width, surface material, etc.)
- All construction activities will occur in accordance with applicable policies, bylaws, standards and regulations.

**Note: The Applicant is required to pre-consult with the TCCP Coordinator to discuss the proposed plans prior to submitting their application.**

#### 3. Available Assistance

Projects will be funded up to 50% of the total eligible costs, to a maximum of **\$30,000**, with County funds matching the contributions of the local municipality or increased funding available through the County TCCP reserve funds with County Council approval. Exceptions to the maximum may be granted for projects involving partnerships between municipalities.

#### 4. Expenditures

**a. Expenses eligible to receive matching funding include:**

- Construction materials, bridges, signage, benches, access barriers, ramps, trailhead shelters/pavilions, surfacing material, contracted workers and equipment
- Trail property purchase
- Technical and/or Feasibility studies

**b. Ineligible expenses include:**

- Wages for part-time and full-time municipal employees or trail group
- Municipal equipment costs
- Property taxes, insurance
- Legal and/or Administration Costs
- Food related expenditures – food expenses for banquets, dinners, fundraisers and celebrations
- HST

#### 5. Application Process & Requirements

The **primary intake** period for TCCP applications is from **April 24, 2023 to May 26, 2023**. Applications received during this period will be given first consideration depending on budget availability and compliance with the TCCP criteria. Applications received after the primary intake period may be considered for any remaining funds on a first come-first served basis. The following materials are to be submitted in support of a complete application:

- Trails Connecting Communities Program 2023 Application Form
- Letter briefly identifying how the project will benefit the local community and the active transportation network within the County of Simcoe. The letter should also address trail connectivity, accessibility, economic benefit, respect for the environment and sustainable trail development
- Map identifying the location and length of the proposed trail segment where work is to be completed
- Outline of proposed trail specifications – width, height, surface material, signage, etc.
- Cost estimate of project
- Pre-construction photos of the project site (where applicable)
- Project plan with proposed timelines
- Proposed construction/engineering drawings (if any)

**Note: Any required permits (i.e. Conservation Authority) shall be obtained prior to commencement of construction. Depending on the project proposal and location, funding approval may be contingent on submitting supporting documentation that demonstrates no negative impact to surrounding environmental features.**

Applications and supporting materials are to be submitted to:

Trails Connecting Communities Program  
c/o Keirsten Morris, TCCP Coordinator  
County of Simcoe, 1110 Highway 26  
Midhurst, ON L9X 1N6  
705-726-9300 Ext. 1973 or [keirsten.morris@simcoe.ca](mailto:keirsten.morris@simcoe.ca)

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Successful applicants will be notified, in writing, of the County of Simcoe's commitment to fund their respective project. Following receipt of the County's Letter of Commitment, applicants will be subject to periodic project progress updates over the course of the project.

## 6. Obligations

By receiving assistance funding from the County of Simcoe, applicants acknowledge that certain obligations must be adhered to. These include the following:

- All projects receiving TCCP funds will be completed by **Friday, November 15, 2024**.
- Upon completion of the project, the County of Simcoe requires the following materials to be submitted by the local municipality to the TCCP Coordinator by **Friday, November 29, 2024** to confirm the eligibility of the project:
  - A signed letter confirming the works completed, the amount of money spent by the local municipality on the project, and the amount of money requested through the TCCP program.
  - Confirmation that the trail or trail infrastructure has been constructed to comply with Trail Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
  - Post-construction photos of the project site (where applicable)

Please note that failure to provide the required information may result in a reduction or withdrawal of the County of Simcoe's funding commitment. Funds granted through the TCCP are not transferable. The County of Simcoe must approve, in writing, **prior** to any significant change in the use of committed funds. Unused funds, or funds that were spent incorrectly, must be returned to Simcoe County. Signage related to the trail project construction shall acknowledge the County of Simcoe as a partner in the project and shall be reviewed by the TCCP Coordinator, and all applicants will save harmless the County of Simcoe for any liabilities, problems or issues that arise either during or after the TCCP 2023 funding process.

## 7. Trails Accessibility Standards

Further to the above Section 6, titled Obligations, municipalities are to follow the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)** standard for the design of public spaces. This standard ensures that exterior paths of travel, recreational trails, beach access routes, outdoor play spaces and parking areas are made to be accessible to all people. Please consult your local Accessibility Committee or the Government of Ontario AODA for up-to-date requirements and guidance. Requirements for the design of recreational trails include:

- Clear Width: 3 metre minimum to allow two-way traffic (1.5 metres each direction)
  - Clear Height: 2.1 metres headroom above trails
  - Trail Signage: signage must be in accordance with Regional Tourism Organization 7 Standards
  - Surface Material: trail surfaces must be firm, stable and accessible. Please note the following:
    - Concrete or asphalt: Accessible
    - Crushed stone: Moderately accessible
    - Grass/ gravel/ wood chips: Not accessible
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