



April 1, 2020

Dear Minister McKenna and Parliamentary Secretary Fillmore,

Our proposal is to immediately create a program whereby the Federal government is able to support local communities with added infrastructure in response to the CoVID-19 pandemic.

We are seeing a growing need for more space for active transportation and rapid connectivity of the networks of bikeways and sidewalks in communities across Canada. Active transportation has been thrust into the middle of a societal response to CoVID-19.

Walking or cycling is already the preferred mode for millions of Canadians. With transit operating at limited capacity, more people than ever need to use active transportation for essential trips. The closure of pools, recreation centres, and other amenities is adding additional pressure as people seek other ways to get physical activity and recreate outdoors.

In response, some cities have begun closing some of the unused car roadways to allow more room for cycling and walking. We see active transportation as a rapid and ongoing response to the post-pandemic reality.

Below is a potential outline for an active transportation infrastructure stimulus program designed to create jobs and ensure short term and medium mobility goals across the country. This proposal has been developed based on experience with the 2009 Economic Action Plan, the research that informed our official AT infrastructure proposal, as well as discussions with those AT leaders in Canada.

Main Constituency:

- Small, medium, and large communities across Canada.

Goals:

- **Rapidly plan and install temporary bicycle networks** to support safe road sharing for AT
- Construction firms to **implement shovel-ready or shovel-near projects during the 2020 construction season**
- **Purchase snow clearing equipment and fund additional wages** for the 2020/2021 winter season
- **Hire design, architecture and planning firms** to work on projects that will be implemented in 2021
- **Transition from temporary protected bike lane networks to permanent networks**

Parameters:

- **Make the decision easy.** Offer a 1-year funding commitment in 2020 of 100% of the cost of projects. Anticipate extending for 2021 and 2022 at 75% of the cost of projects and telegraph the message that cities should start now and be paid back later. Aim to flow all of available funding in the first year. Work directly with large cities and municipal organizations as much as possible. Allow the cities to work with a lump sum contribution and determine its own priorities.
- **Make sure there is knowledge transfer and support.** Ensure that a certain portion of funds is directed provincially and nationally to community, industry leaders, and experts to develop online webinars and support networks for those working on implementation (ie.TAC, TCAT, Share the Road, VeloQuebec, EnviroCentre, HUB, APBP, CCU, CIP, VCB, etc.)
- **Offer flexible project eligibility to include design and operations, and preparation for a winter with limited public transit options.** Ensure that eligible expenses include temporary measures, design work, amenities like wayfinding, operation costs (especially enhanced snow clearing 2020) in addition to construction costs.

Funding concept:

- **Take the Halifax model as the baseline for feasibility, account for additional urgency, and extend this opportunity to every small, medium and large community in Canada.** i.e. \$30M/3 years (\$25M already committed over 3 years + \$5M for temporary measures and urgency)

Funding calculations:

- Dedicate ~\$24CAD* per Canadian living in non-rural areas year 2020/2021
- Plan for ~\$70 per capita spanning 3 years
- Examples of short term 2020 maximum contributions to some sample Canadian communities:
 - Halifax (pop. 431,000) \$10.3M in
 - Winnipeg (pop.749,534) \$18.7M
 - Renfrew, ON (pop.8300) \$200K
 - Edmonton (pop.981,000) \$23.5M
 - Greater Victoria (pop.270K) \$8.8


Rationale:

- **Cost effective.** For less than the cost of one delivered pizza per Canadian/year, resilient and healthy transportation choices for everyone.
- **Job creation.** Active transportation doesn't just let people access jobs, it creates them. Walking and cycling projects create more jobs per dollar than roadwork and they spur the kind of local economic development characteristic of resilient communities.

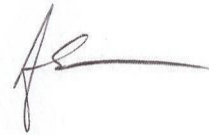
- **Practical measure to enable physical distancing.** Sidewalks and bike lanes in Canada are typically narrower than the minimum recommended guidelines.
- **Support transit.** Our systems will not be able to accommodate previous capacity in short/medium term due to physical distancing and passenger concerns.
- **Reduce underlying health conditions.** Use physical activity to fight chronic diseases that are underlying conditions. Avoid the particulate matters that cause additional respiratory disease and COVID-19 transmission.
- **Support for differently-abled.** Elderly persons and those with physical impairments often rely on public transit and need more options for independent mobility while social distancing.
- **Supporting all Canadians in a time of economic hardship.** At a time when many Canadians will take some time to recover from job and revenue loss, we need to offer low-cost and safe options to get around, so as to reduce the burden of transportation costs in household budgets.

This proposal is one that we feel can be seized on immediately, have direct impacts in communities across the country, and is responsive to both short term goals related to the CoVID pandemic as well as longer term goals around climate resiliency.

Sincerely



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