
ONTARIO MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION

NOMINATION FOR

**2008 TAC SUSTAINABLE URBAN
TRANSPORTATION AWARD**



**Ontario Transportation Demand Management
Municipal Grant Program**

Ontario Transportation Demand Management Municipal Grant Program

This new grant program helps Ontario municipalities implement programs that promote transit and active transportation, reduce reliance on the automobile, and move toward a more sustainable transportation system.

Purpose of the Grant Program

Staff in the Ministry of Transportation's Urban Planning Office initiated the Ontario Transportation Demand Management Municipal Grant Program in 2008 as a way of responding to the call for more provincial support for sustainable transportation initiatives and as a way of demonstrating the ministry's commitment to reducing the impact of our transportation system on the environment.

In 2008-09, the pilot year for the grant program, a total of \$250,000 was available to municipalities to assist them in developing and implementing transportation demand management (TDM) initiatives. TDM refers to a variety of strategies that reduce single-occupant car trips in order to ease congestion and achieve a more sustainable transportation system. TDM strategies aim to change how, when, where, and why people travel by:

- Providing more travel choices and options
- Providing incentives to take transit, cycle, walk, or carpool
- Providing disincentives to discourage single-occupant car trips, especially during peak commuting hours
- Eliminating the need to make some trips

Examples of TDM strategies range from bicycle parking to real-time information on when the next bus will arrive to tax incentives for employers allowing employees to telework. These strategies can be implemented by governments, employers, schools, or community groups, and they encompass both incentives to choose better travel options and disincentives to driving alone.

TDM has also long been overlooked as a means to protect our investments in transportation infrastructure by ensuring that those facilities are used most efficiently and by tapping into currently underutilized capacity. TDM measures cost a fraction of what it costs to build roadway and transit infrastructure. A strong and committed emphasis on TDM would allow the province and our municipalities to squeeze additional capacity out of the existing transportation systems instead of thinking only of the most expensive and difficult-to-implement alternative - building new roads.

The TDM projects funded through the grant program had to focus on managing the demand for transportation, rather than simply increasing the supply of transportation services (i.e. increasing supply through more roadways or more transit service). Eligible TDM initiatives would involve education, promotion, outreach, or various incentives and

disincentives to help travelers choose alternatives that have less impact on the environment. Initiatives eligible for the grant program were TDM plans, tools, projects, outreach and education programs, and workshops and conferences.

Success of the Program

The grant program proved to be very popular with municipalities. Forty-five applications were received from 35 municipalities, with a total amount requested of almost \$1.7 million. The applicants were a diverse group – applicants ranged from small to very large communities and were located in all regions of the province. Some applicants have active TDM programs; for others, this project would represent their first TDM initiative.

A selection committee comprising staff well-versed in the field of TDM from the province's Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, and Metrolinx reviewed all applications that met the requirements of the program. The committee judged the proposed projects on criteria such as technical quality and soundness, cost-effectiveness, feasibility of completing the project in the allotted time, and the potential to replicate the project in other Ontario communities.

Thirteen projects were selected to receive funding (see Table 1). The successful applicants were announced March 6, 2009. Projects will be completed within one year. The projects selected involve a wide range of TDM initiatives, some quite innovative for Ontario. They include community-wide bicycle safety and commuter challenge promotions, transit promotion campaigns targeted to school children and disabled riders, walk-to-school programs, new bicycle parking and bike path signage, and comprehensive TDM and cycling plans for neighbourhoods and entire regions.

Promoting Sustainability

The grant program represents a concrete, positive effort that contributes to provincial goals of increased social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Facilitating more travel options and more efficient use of existing infrastructure lead to better managed congestion, lessened impact on the environment, a more sustainable transportation system, enhanced mobility and access for more people, and better quality of life for Ontario residents.

Demand for transportation is growing even faster than our increasing population. The reality is the province cannot meet all future travel needs by building roads. There is diminishing public support for expanding road networks because of the relationships between automobile travel and urban sprawl, energy use, and emission of pollutants and greenhouse gases.

Table 1. Ontario TDM Municipal Grant Program 2008-09 Grant Recipients	
Municipality	Project Name
City of Barrie	Bicycle Locking Post Program and Car-Free Sunday
City of Brampton	Pathways Signage Program
City of Guelph	Community-Based Social Marketing for Guelph's "Walk to School" Pilot Project
County of Haliburton	Building Capacity for Active Transportation in Haliburton County
City of Kitchener	Kitchener Cycling Master Plan Update
City of London	London's Travel Wise Community - <i>Moving TDM Forward</i>
Regional Municipality of Niagara	Regional Niagara TDM Policy
City of North Bay	City of North Bay Transit Outreach Program
Town of Oakville	Oakville's TDM Initiatives
Regional Municipality of Peel	Interactive Web-based Active Transportation Map
City of Peterborough	Bikeway and Trail Signage Project
City of Sarnia	School Program - Interactive Web-based Game to Promote Transit
City of Temiskaming Shores	Cycle Now – Educational and Promotional Program

The solution to meeting Ontario's future transportation needs will be to make smart and strategic decisions about where to make limited expansions to the road network, to more heavily invest in transit and active transportation, and to find more cost-effective ways of maximizing the return on infrastructure investments. TDM strategies can be used to shape the demand for transportation to complement our existing and future infrastructure and to better utilize its capacity.

Support for TDM also makes an important contribution to MTO's commitment to protect the natural environment and create a more sustainable transportation system by:

- Promoting public transit and active transportation as viable alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle
- Reducing transportation-related air emissions by managing congestion and reducing gridlock
- Conserving land and natural habitats by reducing the need for new infrastructure

Another of the objectives of the grant program is to increase awareness of TDM and build capacity in the province with regard to understanding the benefits of TDM. The program not only assists municipalities in immediately implementing TDM projects, but also encourages them to incorporate TDM as part of their regular transportation planning processes. Municipalities were also encouraged to partner with non-governmental organizations, transportation management associations, businesses, schools, and other community groups to deliver services.

Innovation and Transferability

TDM has become an increasingly important part of transportation planning and programming in the United States, Australia, East Asia, and Europe in the past three decades. In the US and Australia, the countries most similar in transportation culture to Canada, programs that promote and implement TDM strategies receive recurring, reliable, and significant funding from the federal and state governments. In Canada, however, there has been very little funding or governmental support at either the federal or provincial level expressly targeted for TDM. This grant program is an important first step toward an Ontario provincial TDM program and is a key piece in Ontario's current efforts to support sustainable transportation initiatives.

One of the criteria used to judge applications was how easily replicable the proposed project was and how well it could be applied elsewhere in the Province of Ontario. Program staff felt the ability for projects to be used as pilots or as examples to other communities was important and that it should be rewarded through the project selection process. Because TDM is new to many Ontario communities, it is important to have examples to look to in municipalities in a similar context. Program staff intend to disseminate the results of the projects that were awarded funding to municipalities throughout Ontario.

Several of the projects funded will use techniques that are innovative for Ontario. For example, Guelph's walk-to-school project uses a strategy increasingly popular with TDM practitioners in other parts of the world, community-based social marketing. The successful implementation of this project will provide lessons to other communities that want to promote not only walk-to-school programs, but also any TDM initiative that is best promoted through a personalized approach.

Staff were also pleased to receive applications from smaller communities who do not currently have established TDM plans or programs. For instance, Haliburton County's project to promote active transportation as a viable commuting alternative was well thought-out and comprehensive. The project represents an innovative approach to commuting in small-town and rural Ontario. Best practices and lessons learned through implementing these kinds of pioneering projects will be very beneficial to similar Ontario communities.

Partnerships

In developing the program, staff took the approach of wide consultation and paying great attention to best practices in the field in order to create a grant program that was pragmatic, effective, and really addressed the needs of Ontario communities. Program staff consulted with numerous municipalities, NGOs, Transport Canada, TDM experts, and grant administrators during the development of the program. Significant public comment on the province's role in TDM was also received during the ministry's Sustainable TransForum in 2007. The messages that were heard consistently were that TDM is underfunded and that there is a sincere desire for the province to show leadership in promoting and encouraging TDM and sustainable transportation. The program was announced through cooperation with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. Municipalities who applied for grants were also encouraged to partner with non-governmental organizations, transportation management associations, businesses, schools, and other community groups to deliver services. These efforts help to build awareness of TDM, leverage new resources, enable a culture of support for sustainable transportation concepts.

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