

Municipal Roads Grants-In-Aid Pilot Project Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

1. What is the Municipal Roads Grants-In-Aid Pilot Project?

Response: The Municipal Roads Grants-In-Aid Pilot Project is a new pilot initiative to provide funding for municipalities to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) on municipal roads, ahead of the forthcoming state Municipal Road General Permit (MRGP). Refer to the website: <http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/stormwater/permit-information-applications-fees/municipal-roads-program>.

2. Are municipalities required to participate?

Response: No. This is a pilot project. We are inviting municipalities to voluntarily participate in this project.

3. What are the benefits for a municipality participating in this pilot project?

Response: Those municipalities who voluntarily sign up to participate will gain greater familiarity with some of the types of practices necessary to comply with the MRGP and be reimbursed 80% of their project costs.

4. Are participating municipalities required to provide match under this pilot project?

Response: Yes. Municipalities will need to document a minimum of 20% local match. Local match can include cash and quantified in-kind contributions such as: transportation, municipally owned road equipment, crew labor, municipal staff time or other costs directly related to the BMP construction project as part of the pilot project Funds from other federal or state grant programs or local match for those other federal and state grant programs cannot be included as match.

5. Do municipalities that agree to participate in the pilot project need to then apply for a grant to support construction of BMPs?

Response: No. Another advantage of this pilot project is that no grant application is necessary. Participating municipalities will need to sign a letter of intent that specifies the expectations under the pilot project.

6. What kind of assistance is available to a municipality interested in participating in this pilot project?

Response: Your Regional Planning Commission is managing the pilot project and is available to assist all municipalities interested in participating. Here is a link to the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies website to find the regional planning commission for your area: <https://www.vapda.org/>.

7. If this pilot project is successful, will it become a standard way of distributing funds to municipalities for compliance with the MRGP?

Response: Possibly. If this pilot project is successful, there may be an opportunity to continue the project, to efficiently provide state support to all of Vermont's municipalities in complying with the MRGP.

8. How will you disperse state funds under this pilot project?

Response: The State anticipates using a formula to determine the level of support per participating municipalities. The formula will be based on the number of connected road segments in each municipality in need of treatment to achieve state clean water road standards of the Municipal Road General Permit (MRGP).

9. What do we mean by “connected roads?”

Response: Roads that are hydrologically-connected to surface waters. Connected roads are municipal roads adjacent to or bisecting perennial and intermittent streams, wetlands, lakes and ponds. Pilot project funding will be for bringing connected municipal roads up to MRGP standards (which are in draft form). Maps of hydrologically-connected roads are available here: <http://anr.vermont.gov/maps/nr-atlas>

10. Why is DEC focused on road-related runoff?

Response: DEC has data that shows road runoff, in addition to agricultural sources, are the largest nonpoint sources; road-related projects are among the most phosphorus-reducing and cost-effective actions to implement. The BMPs being supported by the pilot project should also improve local resilience to large storm events and will help save municipalities money in the long run in operations and maintenance needs.

11. What kind of projects are anticipated under this pilot project?

Response: The following BMPs are eligible for funding under this pilot project, which are aligned with the draft MRGP standards. For the purposes of this pilot, we encourage municipalities to work with the regional planning commission to identify those road segments in need of BMPs but will not necessarily cause impacts to natural resources, such as floodplains, river corridors and wetlands, thereby triggering other state permits:

- Grass and stone-lined drainage ditches, turnouts, and other disconnection and infiltration practices;
- Removal of grader berms and lowering of high road shoulders;
- Improvement and replacement of drainage culverts and installation of culvert headwalls and outlet stabilization;
- Stabilization of gully erosion on Class 4 roads; and
- Stabilization of catch basin outlets.

12. What does a municipality need to do under the pilot project?

Response: Municipalities must work with their regional planning commission to:

- (a) Sign a letter of intent that specifies expectations;
- (b) Identify specific road segment(s) to target as part of this project and determine appropriate BMPs;
- (c) Secure technical assistance, if necessary;
- (d) Report on the projects using a DEC report template that includes before/after photos, project location by road segment, type of BMP;
- (e) Secure reimbursement up to 80% of the implementation costs.

13. Why does the Letter of Commitment to participate in the pilot project include a certification of the number of hydrologically connected road miles?

Response: DEC has set aside over \$2 million to support this pilot project. For the purposes of this pilot project, DEC is using a formula, based on best available information on the number of connected road-segments per municipality, to determine how to equitably apportion funds. Participating municipalities can select either: (a) the state’s map layer for hydrologically connected municipal roads in Vermont or (b) a recent road erosion inventory conducted using a State-approved assessment methodology that would provide a more precise count of connected roads segments in their town.

14. What kind of reporting will be required under this pilot project?

Response: The State is required to track the use of all clean water funding, and has available a tracking template to use for this project. Your regional planning commission is available to assist municipalities in project reporting using this template. Required reporting includes: connected road name, road segment identification number, road slope, practices installed, whether the segment now meets MRGP draft standards and before/after photographs.