



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219-2000

DAVID S. EKERN, P.E.
COMMISSIONER

July 22, 2008

To: County Administrators/City and Town Managers

Re: Update on Implementation of Local Programs Policy

Several months ago, we communicated the issuance of the Commissioner's new policy; *Delivery of Locally Administered Programs and Projects*. This policy recognizes the significant role localities play in delivering the transportation program. The policy emphasizes the need to partner with localities, provide flexibility in how localities meet requirements, identify streamlining opportunities and improve our efficiency. The Commissioner also identified several initiatives that support implementation of the new policy. I wanted to take an opportunity to provide an update on those initiatives.

Update of the Guide for Local Administration of VDOT Projects:

While the current Guide has served a very useful purpose in providing guidance on requirements for locally administered projects, we are working to develop a revamped Guide that will offer clearer guidance and expectations for both localities and VDOT. A Guide Development Team was created consisting of representatives of the Central Office divisions that have a role in providing guidance or establishing policy related to locally administered projects. That team has identified all of the requirements (federal regulations/state law) associated with locally administered projects and is currently developing the chapters for the new updated guide. The specific goals of this guide update include:

- Identify VDOT oversight requirements
- Clarify VDOT roles/responsibilities
- Include specific submittal requirements
- Better identify/communicate specific federal requirements
- Take advantage of certifications to eliminate duplicative work

A District Review Team was also created that will be involved in reviewing these chapters as they are developed. We will also be asking those localities that participated in the recent local government workshop to review and comment on the draft Guide.

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Surveys to Localities, Consultants and VDOT Project Coordinators:

To gather information on how to improve our processes and to help implement VDOT's recently adopted policy, VDOT surveyed our major stakeholders: Local Governments, VDOT Project Coordinators, and Consultants to Local Government. The survey results reinforce the need to better communicate requirements and responsibilities and show many similarities in how VDOT staff, consultants and localities want information communicated. The survey results have been shared with our Central Office Guide Development Team for their use. A summary from the surveys is available for viewing on the Local Assistance website at: <http://www.virginiadot.org/business/local-assistance.asp>.

Local Government Workshop (LAPs):

In addition to the surveys, a facilitated meeting was held in May with representatives of local governments that have had the more active locally administered programs. The participants offered many suggestions on ways to enhance the process and assist local governments with successful project delivery. There were also several comments about the good working relationships many of these localities had with local VDOT staff. A summary of this meeting has been shared with the Guide Development Team for their use in the Guide update and is also available on the Local Assistance website.

FHWA Process Review:

As a follow up to the National Process Review conducted last year, VDOT and the Federal Highway Administration's Virginia Division office initiated a Process Review of federally funded locally administered projects in Virginia. Three VDOT Districts, five local governments, and seven VDOT Central Office Divisions were interviewed as part of the Process Review. Overall the interviews went very well and many good practices were noted as well as some areas where FHWA will likely identify for further review and modification. The final report is expected later this year.

Local Government CEO Forum:

The Commissioner has established a Local CEO Forum similar to the current CEO Forums he holds with the consultant and contracting industry. The scope of these discussions will focus on transportation issues and suggestions to resolve those. The first meeting of the Local CEO Forum was held on July 11th.

I hope this update is helpful as we move forward with implementation of this important policy. Please feel free to contact me by phone at 804-786-2745 or via email at Michael.Estes@VDOT.Virginia.gov.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Estes, P.E.
Director, Local Assistance Division

cc: Virginia Association of Counties
Virginia Municipal League