

**BIKE & PEDESTRIAN IMPLEMENTATION
GUIDE FOR LOCALITY INVOLVEMENT**

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Encouraging Development of Bike and Pedestrian Plans by Localities

Transportation planning in Virginia is largely a bottom-up process, with decisions regarding economic development and land use residing with localities and most of the responsibility for transportation residing with the state.

Localities develop local comprehensive plans, which include a transportation component that focuses on the specific issues and needs of the locality. These local plans may or may not include a specific bicycle and pedestrian component. Many localities have specific bicycle and/or pedestrian plans.

Regional plans, such as Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Long-Range Transportation Plans, Small Urban Area Plans, and Rural Long-Range Transportation Plans take a larger geographic perspective with respect to transportation and address, to varying degrees, bicycle and pedestrian needs.

As described in the following table, these local and regional plans should serve as a resource for VDOT project managers in determining where and what type of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are desired by localities.

In the absence of a local or regional bicycle and pedestrian plan, the Statewide Bicycle Plan should be used as a resource for determining appropriate bicycle accommodations on US Numbered Bicycle Routes 1 and 76. While bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are not required to be in a local, regional, or state plan for inclusion in a highway project, documenting the need for accommodations and existence of a bicycle or pedestrian network in the context of an adopted planning document demonstrates the locality's commitment, serves as a guide for future improvements, and provides a basis for investment decisions.

On the following pages, more detailed discussion of these plans and expected steps are provided to guide project development activities of VDOT project managers.

- It is the responsibility of the District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator and/or District Planner, in coordination TMPD staff, to encourage development and use of bicycle and pedestrian elements of transportation plans.
- It is the responsibility of the District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator and/or District Planner to bring information regarding the content of applicable bike/ped plans to the scoping meeting.
- It is the responsibility of the assigned project manager that appropriate bike and pedestrian features are considered and included in all projects as detailed in the CTB policy.

Documenting Locality Involvement and Positions through the Public Hearing Process

Involving the locality in project scoping should build consensus on the vision for the project and minimize objection to the design features.

The District Administrator notifies the locality via letter of the Public Hearing results and design approval with or without accommodations. *Further, this response must explicitly detail the planned bike & pedestrian features and costs.*

Requirements for the public hearing process are specifically identified in VDOT's Public Involvement Manual at the following web site:

<http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/electronic%20pubsPublic%20Involvement%20Manual/Public-Involvement-Manual.pdf>

Steps for Conflict Resolution between VDOT and Localities

As the locality will be integrally involved in establishing the vision of the project through the scoping process, it is not anticipated that there will be frequent objection to the design features following public hearing.

There are matters that surface during the public involvement process that can raise questions and concerns from a locality.

As discussed in the preceding section of this guide, the District Administrator (or designee) will be responsible for providing a letter to affected localities explaining the outcome of the public hearing. That letter will be explicit about the planned bike and pedestrian features and estimated costs.

If a locality’s standards differ from AASHTO and VDOT standards, the design exception process must be followed.

Upon such occasion that a locality disagrees with the decisions made by a District Administrator, the procedures identified in the following table will be followed to provide resolution.

Specifying steps for appeals/conflict resolution when localities disagree with VDOT bike & pedestrian strategies on a project	Team Member Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Within 14 days of receipt of documentation from a public hearing, local government shall submit a written letter of disagreement with the design features established following the public hearing process. <u>Further, this response must explicitly disagree with the bike and pedestrian features being planned for the project and provide an explanation for the disagreement.</u> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">This letter will be sent directly to the District Administrator.</p>	Local Government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The District Administrator will meet with the locality and subsequently provide a written response explaining the final direction for the project. 	District Administrator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appeals of decisions made by the District Administrator will be made to the Chief Engineer. The Chief Engineer’s decision will be final. 	Chief Engineer

Implementation of Bike & Pedestrian Policy with Locally Initiated or Locally Administered projects:

In recent years, locally administered projects have become more commonplace in the VDOT improvement program. More and more localities are interested in administering their own construction projects and the establishment of “the First Cities Initiative” has shifted management of entire improvement programs to certain localities. In the 2005 Session of the Virginia General Assembly, as part of the Appropriations Act, the Department was granted new tools to encourage local governments to assume more responsibility referred to as the Local Partnership Initiatives. This included the Local Partnership Fund Program whereby a locality that assumed responsibility for certain projects could receive additional funding for administering the program. In 2006, the General Assembly continued to provide incentives for localities to administer their own projects.

In addition to localities managing their own construction projects and programs, many localities are initiating road projects beyond those included in VDOT plans. These projects range from constructing a turn lane with revenue sharing funds to building a road for a new industry in the area to constructing a multilane facility that is part of the locality Capital Improvement Program but not part of VDOT’s Six-Year Improvement Program. These locality initiated projects may depend on partial VDOT funding through the revenue sharing or access roads programs, or the locality may fully fund the improvement.

As efforts continue to encourage localities to assume responsibility for all or part of their highway systems, and in keeping with VDOT’s business plan, VDOT’s role in these projects will move to an oversight and advisory role. VDOT’s role is to ensure that state and federal requirements are met, but not to prescribe processes and procedures for the localities.

Until March of 2004, VDOT’s policies often discouraged localities from including sidewalks and bike lanes in their construction projects. Urban and suburban localities have often requested these facilities and it is expected that they will include various types of bike/ped facilities in locally initiated and locally administered projects.

When a locality chooses to initiate or administer a transportation project, it must adhere to the Commonwealth Transportation Board Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations. The locality will determine how and where bicycle and pedestrian accommodations will be included in each project. Locally administered projects do not have to follow VDOT processes; however, the locality must document in the project file what accommodations are made. If no accommodation is made, the locality must document which exception from the CTB policy was met.