



## Application Submission

The Transportation Enhancement program is competitively based and requires submission of an application including a detailed project description, local resolution, and anticipated project budget.

Applications are accepted on an annual basis. To be considered for funding, applications must be received in VDOT's Local Assistance Division (or post-marked) on or before **December 1<sup>st</sup>** of each year. The program is available to all local governments, as well as, state and federal agencies. Interested non-profit groups may also apply, but are required to "partner" with a local government to sponsor their project and guide them through the project development process.

Prior to submission, the application must be presented at a duly advertised public hearing and formally endorsed by a local jurisdiction or public agency. A copy of the public hearing notice must be included in the application along with a copy of the local resolution endorsing the project. A sample resolution is provided under the "Resources" panel on this website. In addition, projects that are located within a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area will require an endorsement from the local MPO [see "Resources" panel for a list of jurisdictions and MPO organizations]. **NOTE:** There is one exception – the Northern Virginia area MPO has issued a waiver to this requirement and does not provide endorsements to individual projects until they have been awarded funds.

If a public agency (state or federal) endorses an application, it must notify the jurisdiction in which the project is located and give the jurisdiction an opportunity to comment on the proposed project prior to submitting the application. If a project encompasses multiple jurisdictions, each jurisdiction must be given the opportunity to comment on the proposed project prior to submission of the application. These comments should be included in the application package.

To submit a project for consideration: complete the application form including Attachment A: Project Budget, Attachment B: Selection Criteria, and Attachment C: Project Status (for Existing Projects Only); present it to the local government or public agency (and MPO if applicable) for public hearing and endorsement; then submit five (5) copies of the entire package to the Virginia Department of Transportation's Local Assistance Division. The application form must be signed by the sponsoring agency's authorized local official; it cannot be signed by a non-profit or community group. Additional guidance and contact information is provided on the application form.

All Transportation Enhancement projects are administered by the project sponsor and/or sponsoring local government. When submitting an application for this program, realize that these are federal funds, and in accepting these funds, all applicable state and federal regulations and guidelines must be followed. This includes environmental assessments

and documentation; consultant selection procedures; AASHTO and ADA design standards; acquisition of land and buildings regulations; construction and procurement procedures; and obtaining the necessary permits. The Project Sponsor is responsible for completion of these items and adherence to all applicable guidelines. Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) staff will be available to provide guidance and technical assistance, but will not be responsible for project development and/or construction.

### **Project Selection**

Once received by the Department, all applications are reviewed for basic information including:

- Public hearing notice
- Local Government or Public Agency resolution
- MPO endorsement (if applicable)
- Detailed project budget
- Federal request not in excess of 80% of the project/phase cost and/or does not exceed \$1 million
- Local government comments (if application is submitted by a public agency and/or involves multiple jurisdictions)

VDOT staff then evaluates each application to ensure it meets basic program eligibility requirements. If eligibility is uncertain, the Department will forward the application to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for further consideration and an eligibility determination. The project must be deemed eligible in order to continue through the selection process.

New projects that meet the basic application requirements and are deemed eligible will be evaluated by members of a scoring committee made up of VDOT Enhancement Program Managers and VDOT District Enhancement Coordinators. Projects are scored based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated Need
- Use and Benefit
- Amenities and Support Facilities
- Educational / Historical Value
- Project Resources

For projects that have already received Transportation Enhancement funding, the project will be evaluated based on the progress it has made through current project development phases and if applicable, construction of prior phases.

Applications should address each of the scoring criteria thoroughly; provide data and numbers to substantiate the benefits and usage; provide pictures and maps; and include conceptual drawings or sketches that provide a visual image of the proposed

improvements. Keep in mind that the application is the only information reviewers have; we rely on the applicants to share all they can about the project and the area's history.

The committee's scores are averaged for each project and presented to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) for consideration. Board policy states that the annual Transportation Enhancement allocation will be divided into equal shares amongst the Secretary of Transportation and each of the 14 CTB members. The Board members will make project selections – first at the District level and then statewide, allocating the federal funds available for that year. The maximum federal award for a project will not exceed \$1 million per application cycle.

Enhancement project selections are approved each year in conjunction with the Department's Six-Year Improvement Program. Prior to formally approving the Six-Year Program, the Department announces the tentative Program including Transportation Enhancement projects, and holds pre-allocation meetings throughout the state affording project applicants an opportunity to address the Commonwealth Transportation Board. These meetings are normally held in the spring of each year; for schedule and locations, check the main VDOT website.