

**VDOT BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN
IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR
LOCALITY INVOLVEMENT**
April 2017

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About this Guide

On March 18th, 2004 the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) passed the *Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations* which addresses bicycling and walking as fundamental travel modes, and integrates the consideration of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into VDOT procedures and projects agency-wide. VDOT has developed a number of governance and guidance documents to aid in the implementation of this policy. This guide outlines the different responsibilities of VDOT and local governments and how requirements differ for VDOT administered and locally administered projects.

Encouraging Development of Bike and Pedestrian Plans by Localities

Transportation planning in Virginia is largely a bottom-up process, with decisions regarding project selection, economic development and land use residing with localities. While largely the responsibility for maintenance, statewide transportation planning and project management mostly resides with the state. Increasingly, more projects are Locally Administered.

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 standalone 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 Project Manager should confirm whether the project falls on U.S. 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.

Encourage development and use of bicycle & pedestrian plans by localities	Team Member Responsible
<p>address transportation issues in each community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - While the primary focus of these plans is on the highway system, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and needs will be identified. TMPD maintains a library of the Small Urban Area Plans. - <u>In the absence of a local plan that provides specific information regarding bicycle and pedestrian needs, the bicycle and pedestrian element of the applicable Small Urban Area Plan should be used to determine appropriate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.</u> <p>MPO Long-Range Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TMPD administers the federal funding for the state’s metropolitan planning organizations to conduct the federally required continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process. - The transportation plans developed through this process must include a bicycle and pedestrian element. TMPD maintains a copy of the current long-range plan for each MPO and VDOT District Planners participate in the development of these plans. - <u>In the absence of a local comprehensive plan that provides specific information regarding bicycle and pedestrian needs, the bicycle and pedestrian element of the applicable MPO’s Long-Range Plan should be used to determine appropriate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.</u> <p><u>U.S. Bicycle Routes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>In the absence of a local or regional bicycle plan, the Project Manager should check whether the project falls on a US Numbered Bicycle Routes. Virginia’s Route are mapped below:</u> <p>http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/united_states_bicycle_route_1_and_76_in_virginia.asp</p>	<p>TMPD, District Planners</p> <p>TMPD, District Planners</p> <p>TMPD</p>

Involving Localities in Pre-scoping and Scoping for VDOT Administered Projects

A critical decision point in the development of any project is the scoping. It establishes the vision and goals of the project, as well as the budget and schedule for achieving them.

As each and every project is built in a locality of the Commonwealth, often with funds raised and/or prioritized by local officials, local government involvement in the scoping process is essential. As the Department moves forward on the CTB's policy for bike and pedestrian features, it is necessary that localities are involved in the decision making process for where and how these features will be included on highway projects. To that end, the following table outlines the procedural steps to be taken to ensure locality involvement in establishing the bike and pedestrian features on a project.

Specify how localities are to be included in scoping of projects	Team Member Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- At least 14 days prior to the scoping meeting, a formal letter will be sent to affected local governments, inviting them to participate in pre-scoping and scoping meetings. This letter should be sent to the county administrator, town manager, or other executive leader.- Within 14 days following a scoping meeting, local government shall submit a written letter of agreement or disagreement with the scope of the project as established at the scoping meeting. <i>Further, this response must explicitly agree or disagree with the bike and pedestrian features being planned for the project. If no letter is received, it will be assumed that the locality concurs with the scope of the project as established at the scoping meeting.</i>- The scoping form will be elevated to the District Administrator for resolution in the event that a locality has formally expressed disagreement with bicycle and pedestrian design features as proposed.- The District Administrator will meet with the locality and subsequently provide a written response explaining the final direction for the project.- Appeals of decisions made by the District Administrator will be made to the Chief Engineer. The Chief Engineer's decision will be final.	<p>VDOT Project Manager</p> <p>Local Government</p> <p>VDOT Project Manager</p>

In the case of SMART SCALE projects, decisions regarding the bicycle and pedestrian project elements are made prior to the grant submission. Those projects that are funded go through the project development process and will have an official scoping later. These projects must still comply with the 2004 CTB Policy and document the bicycle and pedestrian accommodation decisions on the Scoping Worksheet Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation (SWBPA). It is important that bicycle and pedestrian features are considered before the application is submitted as cost increases due to additions required for compliance with the 2004 CTB Policy could cause an application to be rescored. See the SMART SCALE Policy, Technical, and Application Guides on the [SMART SCALE Resources](#) website for more information.

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.virginiadot.org/business/resources/locdes/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"> <li data-bbox="297 338 1070 585">- 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. <i><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></i> <li data-bbox="347 625 922 690">This letter will be sent directly to the District Administrator. <li data-bbox="297 737 1070 842">- The District Administrator will meet with the locality and subsequently provide a written response explaining the final direction for the project. <li data-bbox="297 884 1070 989">- Appeals of decisions made by the District Administrator will be made to the Chief Engineer. The Chief Engineer's decision will be final. 	<p data-bbox="1166 338 1338 401" style="text-align: center;">Local Government</p> <p data-bbox="1149 737 1349 800" style="text-align: center;">District Administrator</p> <p data-bbox="1146 884 1352 915" style="text-align: center;">Chief Engineer</p>

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

Virginia's transportation program delivery continues to evolve to include increasing roles and responsibilities by local governments. Much of this change has been initiated through changes in Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) business philosophy, the Virginia General Assembly's direction through legislation, and an increase in local funding to meet transportation needs. As a result, VDOT is expanding beyond its traditional role as an implementing agency with an increased role in oversight and stewardship of the transportation program.

In addition to localities managing their own construction projects and programs, many localities are initiating road projects beyond those included in VDOT's Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP). These projects range from constructing a turn lane to constructing a multilane facility that is part of the locality's Capital Improvement Program.

Until March of 2004, VDOT's policies often discouraged localities from including sidewalks and bicycle 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 bicycle/pedestrian facilities in locally initiated and locally administered projects.

When a locality chooses to initiate or administer a transportation project and the project uses funds that pass through VDOT or is on VDOT right of way, localities must adhere to the [2004 Commonwealth Transportation Board Policy for Integrating Bicycle and](#)

[*Pedestrian Accommodations*](#) and [DPM 2-12](#). In accordance with this policy, the locality will determine how and where bicycle and pedestrian accommodations will be included in each project. Locally administered projects are not required to follow VDOT processes and therefore, may utilize their own scoping documents to meet this requirement; 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. Localities are encouraged to work with their VDOT District Project Coordinator to ensure projects are appropriately documented. Additional information can be found in Chapter 12 of the [Local Administered Projects \(LAP\) Manual](#) and on the [Bicycling and Walking in Virginia's website](#).