



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1401 EAST BROAD STREET  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219-2000

David S. Ekern, P.E.  
COMMISSIONER

January 23, 2007

Local Government Official  
Locality, Virginia

Dear Local Government Official,

The citizens of Virginia have made it clear that they want a multimodal transportation system that serves all of us. I would like to update you on one of the efforts to meet this goal. In March 2004, the Commonwealth Transportation Board adopted a "Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations," which addresses bicycling and walking as fundamental travel modes, and thoroughly integrates the consideration of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into VDOT procedures and projects agency-wide. An interdisciplinary team was charged to assure the efficient development, operation, and maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

The team's efforts have resulted in updated procedures and best practices for the department. The main provisions of these new and revised procedures are found on the VDOT Web page: <http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/bk-documents.asp>

The provisions include:

- Guidelines for coordinating with localities that encourage the development and use of bicycle and pedestrian plans as the primary resource for discussions regarding accommodations. The guidelines also specify how localities are to be included in project scoping and identify a mechanism to confirm accommodations with localities prior to the public hearing
- Cost estimates for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations to be used during initial project cost estimating. Some cost estimates for shared use paths, bicycle lanes, paved shoulders, wide curb lanes, and signs and pavement markings are found at: <http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/bk-documents.asp> "Sample Planning Level Cost Estimates".
- A goal of spending 2 percent of the paving budget in each VDOT Construction District to provide paved shoulders. A minimum of 2 foot paved shoulders may be provided on roadway sections that are in the paving schedule that meet one of the following criteria: (1) the road is identified in an adopted transportation plan as a bicycle facility and no appropriate accommodation exists, (2) the roadway has been identified in a traffic engineering study as presenting a safety hazard for bicycles and pedestrians, (3) the locality has requested a paved shoulder for the roadway and VDOT agrees that provision of a paved shoulder is appropriate, or (4) paving the shoulder will provide a connection between existing facilities. The paving of unpaved shoulders provides a safer roadway for all users. Localities maintaining their own streets may use a portion of their maintenance payments to provide bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Relevant sections of the revised *Asset Management Best Practices Manual* can be reviewed at: <http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/bk-documents.asp> (1) "Asset Mgmt Best Practices Manual 12.5" (2) "Asset Mgmt Best Practices Manual 4.10" (3) "Asset Mgmt Best Practices Manual 12.9"
- Six exceptions to the requirement to provide accommodations as part of construction projects: (1) absence of need for accommodations, (2) environmental or social impacts that outweigh the need for accommodations, (3) evidence that safety

would be compromised, (4) costs excessively disproportionate to the need, (5) project purpose and scope that do not facilitate the provision of accommodations, and (6) locations where bicycle and pedestrian travel is prohibited by state or federal law. In order to clarify when these exceptions apply, specific guidelines have been established, including cost thresholds. If the roadway segment is not identified as a bicycle or pedestrian facility in an adopted transportation plan, the cost of providing bicycle and pedestrian accommodations should not exceed 10 percent of the total project cost. If the roadway segment is a designated bicycle/pedestrian facility, up to 20 percent of the total project cost may go towards accommodations. In the case of major projects (\$500 million or more), up to 10 percent of total project costs may go toward bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. The specific guidelines and a decision tree can be reviewed at: <http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/bk-documents.asp> "Bike Ped Decision Process and Exceptions".

- The decision process used for providing bicycle and pedestrian accommodations will be documented during the scoping of all VDOT managed projects. A revised scoping form has been developed for construction projects, and a new procedure for scoping operations and maintenance projects has been established. Although locally managed projects are not required to use VDOT's new scoping forms and scoping procedures, localities must document the consideration of whether bicycle and pedestrian accommodations will be provided for projects that take place on VDOT right of way or are funded by VDOT. Decisions should be documented in project files. VDOT's new scoping forms are available for your review at: <http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/bk-documents.asp> (1) "Construction Project Scoping Form LD-430" and (2) "Maintenance Project Scoping Form AM-430".

For clarification and further information, please feel free to contact VDOT's District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinators, listed at: <http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/bk-documents.asp> "VDOT District Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinators", or your District Administrator.

Sincerely,

Richard L. Walton

Chief of Policy, Planning and the Environment  
Virginia Department of Transportation

Cc:

Commissioner David S. Ekem  
District Administrators  
Michael Estes  
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District Coordinators