# BIKE & PEDESTRIAN IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR LOCALITY INVOLVEMENT November 2006

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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.

Enco	urage development and use of bicycle & pedestrian plans by localities	Team Member Responsible
Lo	ocal Plans	
À	The Code of Virginia requires localities to prepare comprehensive plans to guide development. These plans must include a transportation element, and as of July 1, 2007, a transportation plan, that addresses bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Many localities also have a local bicycle and/or pedestrian plans.	TMPD, Residency Administrators
<b>&gt;</b>	Beginning in July 2007, the VA Code (see 15.2-2222.1) requires VDOT to review and provide comments on new or amended local comprehensive plans and traffic impact statements for activities that will substantially affect transportation on state-controlled highways. Local governments are the resource for obtaining individual plans.	
>	Local plans should be the primary resource for determining where and what type of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are desired by localities.	
Re	egional Plans	
Rı	iral Long-Range Transportation Plans	
	Through the Rural Transportation Planning Program, TMPD is encouraging PDCs and localities to develop rural long-range transportation plans.	TMPD, District Planners, Residency
	These plans will be developed in three phases and include an inventory of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and recommended improvements. TMPD provides technical support for this initiative, with VDOT district staff responsible for coordinating with the PDC on the plan's development. TMPD will maintain a library of the Rural Long-Range Transportation Plans.  In the absence of a local plan that provides specific information regarding bicycle and pedestrian needs, the bicycle and pedestrian element of the applicable Rural	Administrators
	Long-Range Transportation Plan should be used to determine appropriate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.	
	nall Urban Area Plans	TMDD
>	Planners update the Small Urban Area Plans for "small urban areas" (towns and cities with populations less than 50,000 people) across the Commonwealth. These plans	TMPD, District Planners

Encou	urage development and use of bicycle & pedestrian plans by localities	Team Member Responsible
>	address transportation issues in each community.  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.	
>	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.	
M	PO Long-Range Plans	
<b>A</b>	TMPD administers the federal funding for the state's 14 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.  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.	TMPD, District Planners
	TMPD will produce a State Bicycle Plan in 2007 that will focus on improvements needed to US Numbered Bicycle Routes 1 and 76.	TMPD
<b>&gt;</b>	In the absence of a local or regional bicycle plan, the State Bicycle Plan should be used to determine appropriate bicycle accommodations on US Numbered Bicycle Routes 1 and 76.	

#### **Involving Localities in Pre-scoping and Scoping**

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.

Speci	fy how localities are to be included in scoping of projects	Team Member Responsible
<b>A</b>	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.	VDOT Project Manager
>	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. 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.	Local Government
>	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.	VDOT Project Manager
>	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.	

## <u>Documenting Locality Involvement and Positions through the Public Hearing</u> <u>Process</u>

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. <u>Further, this response must explicitly detail the planned bike & pedestrian features and costs.</u>

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. <u>That letter will be explicit about the planned bike and pedestrian features and estimated costs.</u>

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.

_	ying steps for appeals/conflict resolution when localities ree with VDOT bike & pedestrian strategies on a project	Team Member Responsible
>	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>Further, this response must explicitly disagree with the bike and pedestrian features being planned for the project and provide an explanation for the disagreement</i> .  This letter will be sent directly to the District Administrator.	Local Government
>	The District Administrator will meet with the locality and subsequently provide a written response explaining the final direction for the project.	District Administrator
>	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

## <u>Implementation of Bike & Pedestrian Policy with Locally Initiated or Locally Administered projects:</u>

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.