

## Asset Management's Best Practices Manual

### 12.9 Bicycle Paths and Pedestrian Walkways

Transportation is a basic need for all residents of the Commonwealth of Virginia to support integration into and survival in community living. A successful transportation infrastructure incorporates the needs of pedestrians and bicycle users. It is necessary to consider bicycle and pedestrian accommodations during the development of an Asset Management plan.

Of particular significance are the needs of individuals with disabilities. Significant physical barriers such as poorly placed and unsafe curb cuts, inaccessible bus stops and sidewalks limit these individuals from transportation options. These barriers also present safety hazards. Moreover, the inaccessibility of pedestrian rights of way prevents persons with disabilities from using streets and sidewalks to get around their communities.

Terms for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations include:

- Bike Lane
- Crosswalk
- Curb Ramp
- Paved Shoulder
- Shared Lane
- Shared Use Path
- Sidewalk
- Signed Shared Roadways
- Wide Outside Lane

Definitions for these terms can be found in the “Glossary” (Section 20 of this manual).

#### 12.9.1 Project Development

The Asset Management Program should consider accommodations for bicycling and walking during project development. The Program may produce facility changes that will enhance the environment for bicycling and walking. Factors that support the need to provide bicycle and pedestrian accommodations include, but are not limited to the following:

- Project is identified along an adopted bicycle or pedestrian plan.
- Project accommodates existing and future bicycle and pedestrian use.
- Project improves or maintains safety for all users.
- Project is located along a connection to public transportation services and facilities.
- Project serves areas or population groups with limited transportation options.
- Project is along a connection to bicycling and walking trip generators such as employment, education, retail, recreation, and residential centers and public facilities.
- Project provides a connection to a school or located along a connection to a school.
- Project provides a link to other bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.



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Completed maintenance activities should not hinder the movement of those choosing to use bicycling and walking as transportation modes.

### **12.9.2 Exceptions to the Provision of Accommodations**

Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations may be provided for maintenance projects, except where one or more of the following conditions exist:

- Safety would be compromised.
- Bicycle and pedestrian travel is prohibited by state or federal laws.
- The proposed accommodation requires increased right-of-way.
- Purpose and scope of the specific project do not facilitate the provision of such accommodations (e.g., projects for pipe cleaning, mowing, or crack sealing).
- Accommodation costs are unreasonable.
- Lack of need (for example: scarcity of population, travel, and attractors, both existing and future, indicate an absence of need for such accommodations).

These conditions should be documented on the “Scoping Report for Maintenance Projects” (Form AM-430).

### **12.9.3 Project Scoping Report (Form AM-430)**

A description and use of the “Scoping Report for Maintenance Projects” (Form AM-430) can be found in Section 4.10 of this manual.

To assist in the consistent completion of the Project Scoping Report, the following information identifies suggested criteria:

- AASHTO’s Pedestrian Guide describes criteria for “shared use path” and “sidewalk” in their Pedestrian Facilities section.
- VDOT’s Location and Design’s Road Design Manual, Appendix A-5, identifies “Bicycle Facility Guidelines.” Specific criteria for “shared use paths” can be found on pages A-86 and A-87 of the Road Design Manual.
- Curb Ramps. When a road is repaved, the adjacent pedestrian facilities that are on VDOT’s right-of-way should be evaluated for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Evaluations could include the following considerations:
  - Missing curb ramps
  - Installation type
  - Existing curb ramps
  - Adjacent sidewalks
  - Curb ramp standards
- No Curb. When repaving a road with just a shoulder section (no curb), VDOT personnel need to verify that detectable warning surfaces exist where any

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asphalt path intersects the asphalt roadway. This is best done by installing a concrete pad for the detectable warning surface. It should be 2 feet wide and extend the full width of the path.

For L&D's Road Design Manual, Appendix A-5 on "Bicycle Facility Guidelines," see: <http://www.extranet.vdot.state.va.us/locdes/Electronic%20Pubs/2005%20RDM/appenda.pdf>

### **12.9.3.1 Maintenance Practice**

The sidewalk and bicycle accommodation surfaces should be kept firm, smooth and free of holes, other defects, and debris. Sidewalk and bicycle accommodation maintenance does not include snow/ice removal unless the bicycle accommodation is contiguous with the roadway surface.

All sidewalks under the jurisdiction of the Department should be given the same careful maintenance as roadway surfaces. Irregularities caused by settlement, blow-ups or other causes should be promptly repaired.

Shared use paths that are contiguous with the roadway, or that are separated from the roadway but closely follow the vertical alignment of the roadway without meandering on and off the right-of-way, should be accepted for maintenance.

### **12.9.3.2 Maintenance Responsibility**

The Department is responsible for the maintenance of sidewalks and bicycle accommodations on State maintained routes, which are built to VDOT design standards, as noted in the following:

- A. In incorporated towns of less than 3,500 population, the Department will maintain sidewalks in which the Department has participated in the sidewalk construction cost. This does not include snow/ice removal.
- B. In incorporated towns of less than 3,500 population, the Department will maintain bicycle accommodations that are contiguous with the roadway or that are within the right-of-way separated from motor vehicles, closely follow the vertical alignment, and do not meander on and off the right-of-way.
- C. Outside of incorporated towns and cities, the Department is responsible for the maintenance of all sidewalks located on the right-of-way that do not meander on and off the right-of-way, except those placed under permit for private or commercial use. State sidewalk maintenance does not include snow/ice removal.
- D. Sidewalks and bicycle accommodations are constructed and maintained for pedestrian or bicycle traffic and should not be obstructed. Permission cannot be granted to place trash or garbage containers, or any other obstructions on sidewalks or bicycle facilities outside of incorporated towns.
- E. The following criteria are established regarding the acceptance of sidewalks and bicycle facilities for state maintenance:
  - a. A sidewalk or bicycle accommodation located outside incorporated towns will be eligible for maintenance if built in accordance with the Subdivision Street Requirements.

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- b. Sidewalks and bicycle facilities not covered by the Subdivision Street Requirements may be approved for maintenance eligibility after individual study by the Department's Residency Administrator and the county involved.

### **Definitions** (added to the Best Practices' Glossary, Chapter 20)

**Bike Lane.** A portion of a roadway designated by signs and pavement markings for the preferential use of bicycles.

**Crosswalk.** Either the part of a roadway at an intersection that is an extension of a sidewalk or shoulder or any portion of a roadway at an intersection or place distinctly indicated for pedestrian crossing by lines or other surface markings.

**Curb Ramp.** A combined ramp and landing that accomplished a change in level to provide access to and across streets and other travel ways from sidewalks and other pedestrian ways.

**Paved Shoulder.** A paved portion of a highway to the right of the edge stripe on which bicyclists may ride and pedestrians may walk.

**Shared Lane.** A travel lane of standard width that is shared by motor vehicles and bicycles.

**Shared Use Path.** A facility physically separated from the roadway, either within a highway right-of-way or within a separate right-of-way, intended for the use of bicycles, pedestrians, and other non-motorized users.

**Sidewalk.** The portion of a public right-of-way between the curb lines or lateral lines of a highway and the adjacent property lines that is intended for pedestrian use.

**Signed Shared Roadway.** A highway open to bicycle and motor vehicle travel, such as a shared lane, wide outside lane, or road with paved shoulders that has been designated by signs to either provide continuity to other accommodations or indicate a preferred route for bicycle use.

**Wide Outside Lane.** An outside travel lane wider than standard width that is shared by motor vehicles and bicycles.