



Virginia Department of Transportation

Board of Supervisors Manual

A quick reference guide to
common
VDOT activities



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Table of Contents

Preface.....	2
Abandonment of Roads	3
Additions to the Secondary System of State Highways	4
Airport Access Funding	5
Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation	6
Devolution	7
Discontinuance	8
Donated Right of Way	9
Forest Highway Program	10
Industrial Access Program.....	11
Land Development/Site Plans.....	13
Locally Administered Projects.....	14
Maintenance Budget.....	15
Naming Bridges and Highways.....	16
Noise Abatement.....	17
Paving a Road.....	19
Permits (Land Use).....	21
Primary, Urban, and Interstate Allocation Process	22
Public Lands Highways	23
Public Versus Private Streets.....	24
Recreational Access Program	25
Revenue Sharing Program	26
Scenic Byways	27
Secondary Construction Budget.....	28
Secondary Six-Year Plan	29
Snow Removal	30
Speed Limits	31
Subdivision Street Standards.....	32
Through Truck Restriction.....	33
Towns With Populations Under 3,500	34
Traffic Calming.....	35
Traffic Counts	36
Traffic Signal, Sign or Pavement Marking Requests.....	37
Transportation Enhancement Program.....	38

Preface

This manual was developed as a quick reference guide to the more common activities associated with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

The purpose of this manual is to provide new members of the County Board of Supervisors, or other public officials, with a better understanding of the Department. The topics cover the activities most commonly performed by the residency and district offices, and may assist in answering questions generated from constituents.

In all cases, the information is a broad overview of policy or guidelines. Each residency and district office has unique characteristics that may require that they perform some functions beyond what is stated in this manual. For more detailed information, always contact the local residency or district office of VDOT.

We hope that this manual is a useful and productive tool in understanding and working with VDOT.

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Abandonment of Roads

There are two circumstances for abandoning a road that is a part of the secondary system of state highways.

1. When the Board of Supervisors decide that:
 - (a) "No public necessity exists for the continuance of the secondary road as a public road" (i.e., lack of public use), or
 - (b) "The safety and welfare of the public would be served best by abandoning the section of road."
2. When a new road "which serves the same citizens as the old road" has already been constructed to Department standards and accepted into the secondary system. In practice, the order of abandonment of the old road and request for acceptance of the new road are combined in the same resolution and enacted simultaneously, in that sequence.

The first circumstance requires the Board of Supervisors to announce its intent to abandon a road, including providing formal notice to the Commissioner, and posting of a Willingness Notice to hold a public hearing.

Following a public hearing, assuming one is requested and properly held, the Board of Supervisors acts to either dismiss the abandonment or to abandon the road within a prescribed time frame.

For roads that have only a prescriptive easement for right of way, a lawful abandonment, under either of the above circumstances, extinguishes the prescriptive easement and the road ceases to be a public road.

For roads that have right of way dedicated to public use, abandonment has the effect of closing the road to the public, but interests in the real property dedicated for right of way may only be transferred by a separate conveyance; right of way dedicated to a county government may be conveyed by the county after the Commissioner certifies that the right of way is no longer necessary for transportation purposes; right of way dedicated to the Commonwealth may be conveyed only by the Department. The conveyance of right of way may follow an abandonment, but may not precede an abandonment.

If the intent is to cease VDOT maintenance and responsibility but retain public road status, discontinuance should be considered.

Additions to the Secondary System of State Highways

Within counties, certain public roads exist that are not part of the secondary system of state highways maintained by VDOT. To become state maintained, the Board of Supervisors must request these roads be accepted by VDOT for maintenance and identify any funds necessary to improve those roads to minimum standards.

Additions to the secondary system of state highways generally result from:

- ◆ **Development** - These streets are usually the result of a subdivision of land and must meet the provisions of "Subdivision Street Requirements", which are a part of the Administrative Code of Virginia and a regulation of the Commonwealth Transportation Board.
- ◆ Streets that result from development under the Recreational Access, Industrial Access, and Airport Access programs are subject to additional prerequisites that are set forth in other documents specific to the individual access program. Procedures for the addition of such streets vary from those outlined for subdivision streets only in that a formal resolution from the local governing body typically precedes construction and requests the addition of the street upon completion.
- ◆ **Rural Additions** - Streets added under this category of additions may exist as a result of past development and were not initially accepted for maintenance by the Department as a part of the secondary system of state highways. Such streets may have been constructed for reasons other than development, were not formally established by the Board of Supervisors, and/or did not qualify for acceptance by the state. Qualifying streets may be considered for acceptance if appropriate funding is available and identified by the Board of Supervisors as part of the resolution requesting addition.

In most cases, for a street to be considered for rural addition and improvement, the county's subdivision ordinance must require all new streets established in the county, other than access to family divisions of land, to be constructed to VDOT minimum standards.

- ◆ **School Roads** - Roads used by school buses that lead from state highways, either primary or secondary, to public schools in the counties of the Commonwealth and which are on school property, are eligible for state maintenance as part of the secondary system of state highways, from state highways, either primary or secondary, to the entrance to parking lots.
- ◆ **Streets in Towns (Population under 3,500)** - In most towns having a population under 3,500 qualifying streets may be added to the secondary system of state highways. Limitations that may restrict annual mileage additions to not more than 1/4 mile and construction standards depend upon the individual town's operating authority.
- ◆ Miscellaneous additions to the secondary system of state highways (e.g., those that occur as a result of road relocation projects) are frequently accompanied by acts of discontinuance and abandonment.

Airport Access Funding

The airport access road program is used to provide access roads to licensed public use airports. The Commonwealth Transportation Board administers the program in cooperation with the Department of Aviation. Funding for airport access projects is allocated from the Industrial, Airport and Rail Access Fund.

Prior to the allocation, the governing body of the county, city, or town must, by resolution, request the access funds. Airport access funding may not be used for the acquisition of rights of way or adjustments of utilities, and the governing body must state in its resolution that these items will be provided at no cost to the program. A maximum allocation of \$450,000 (\$300,000, unmatched and up to \$150,000 matched dollar for dollar) may be used in any fiscal year to provide access for any one airport.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation

VDOT is committed to accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians, including pedestrians with disabilities, along with motorized transportation modes in the planning, funding, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of Virginia's transportation network to achieve a safe, effective, and balanced multimodal transportation system.

The Commonwealth Transportation Board policy on pedestrian and bicycle accommodations states that VDOT will initiate all highway construction projects with the presumption that the projects shall accommodate bicycling and walking. Project development for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations will follow VDOT's project development process and concurrent engineering process. VDOT will encourage the participation of localities in concurrent engineering activities that guide the project development.

The Commonwealth Transportation Board policy on pedestrian and bicycle accommodations also indicates the project manager and local representatives will, develop a recommendation on how and whether to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians in a construction project prior to the public hearing. The district administrator should confirm this recommendation prior to the public hearing. Public involvement comments will be reviewed and incorporated into project development prior to the preparation of the design approval recommendation. When a locality is not in agreement with VDOT's position on how bicyclists and pedestrians will or will not be accommodated in a construction project, the locality can introduce a formal appeal by means of a resolution adopted by the local governing body. The resolution must be submitted to the district administrator to be reviewed and considered prior to the submission of the design approval recommendation to the chief engineer. Local resolutions must be forwarded to the chief engineer for consideration during the project design approval or to the Commonwealth Transportation Board for consideration during location and design approval, if needed for a project. The resolution and supporting information related to the recommendation must be included in the project documentation. The decisions made by VDOT and localities for the provision of bicycle and pedestrian travel must be consistent with state and federal laws regarding accommodations and access for bicycling and walking.

As indicated in the Subdivision Street Requirement, any new subdivision street should ensure the design accommodates anticipated pedestrian and bicycle traffic. If separate facilities are deemed appropriate, they should be included in the initial construction, prior to VDOT acceptance. VDOT will accept the maintenance of sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and shared use paths located within the dedicated right of way when their construction is in compliance with the criteria and standards set out in VDOT's Road Design Manual. Any sidewalks, bicycle facilities or shared use paths located on the right of way but not constructed to VDOT standards may be allowed under a land use permit.

Devolution

Devolution is the process in which counties assume responsibility for all or a portion of their secondary road system. VDOT has been responsible for the construction and maintenance of all secondary roads in the Commonwealth, except those in Henrico and Arlington counties, since 1932. For more than 70 years VDOT has maintained the secondary system and, the County Boards of Supervisors and VDOT have cooperatively established priority lists of secondary construction projects within each county, with VDOT subsequently designing and constructing a majority of the roads.

In 2001, The General Assembly added § 33.1-84.1 to the *Code of Virginia*, allowing counties to assume responsibility for planning, constructing, maintaining, or operating all or a portion of their secondary system. To have more control over construction project delivery, many counties already administer some of their improvement projects and use bond referendums to generate funds for transportation projects. It is often noted that Virginia is one of few states where the state Department of Transportation has responsibility for nearly all local roads. Any locality interested in assuming responsibility for some or all of the secondary system should discuss this with the local residency administrator or other designee.

Discontinuance

Discontinuance will end VDOT's maintenance responsibility for a road and is an act reserved for the Commonwealth Transportation Board. It is the result of a determination that the road no longer serves a public service warranting its maintenance at public expense.

However, discontinuance of a secondary road does not eliminate it as a public road or render it unavailable for public use. If the intent is to eliminate the road as a public road, abandonment should be considered.

By petition or resolution the local governing body of any county or the town council (for towns with a population less than 3,500) may request that VDOT discontinue a section of roadway as part of the secondary system of state highways.

Then VDOT will issue a public notice of intent to discontinue maintenance and advise the County Board of Supervisors and all adjacent property owners of its willingness to hold a public hearing. A public hearing may be conducted if requested by the local governing body or property owner.

Following the willingness period or public hearing if one is requested, the Residency Administrator prepares a discontinuance assembly with a recommendation and submits it to the Asset Management Division for a final recommendation and submission to the Commonwealth Transportation Board for approval.

Donated Right of Way

Donated right of way is a means of quickly obtaining right of way for constructing those roads listed on the approved Secondary Six-Year Plan. These roads usually do not have any major environmental, historical, or citizen opposition associated with them. If everyone on the road is agreeable with the proposed construction and right of way can be negotiated through donation, the time and cost of preliminary engineering can be reduced.

Roads on which donated right of way is obtained can be constructed at a much lower cost. The costs associated with design, title search, appraisal, soils investigation, attorneys' fees and right of way agents are virtually eliminated. However, it is recommended that sufficient title research be performed to ensure that the Commonwealth obtains clear and indefeasible title. The District Right of Way and Utilities Manager should be consulted for advice and guidance.

When a road is included in the Secondary Six-Year Plan and comes within approximately two years of construction, typically, the residency sends letters to all property owners adjacent to the road advising them that we are beginning our right of way process. VDOT personnel will then contact affected property owners, explain the work necessary to improve the road, and negotiate for donated right of way.

Although it is called donated right of way, the property owner does have the right to receive just compensation. Items such as fences, shrubs or trees can be replaced or owners may be paid for the loss.

There are several standard deeds that may be used depending on the requirements of the roadway and the property. These deeds are signed by all property owners before a notary public and are recorded in the Circuit Court Clerk's Office of the affected county.

By using donated right of way procedures, roads may be constructed more quickly and at a cost significantly less than by using the full design and right of way purchase processes.

Board of Supervisors members can assist in the acquisition of donated rights of way by informing the interested parties of this process and encouraging their cooperation with VDOT representatives.

The administrating agency shall be responsible for the appropriate environmental review processes.

Forest Highway Program

The Public Lands Highways – Forest Highway Program provides money for the improvement of forest highways. Forest Highways are public roads that are owned by state or local agencies, serve the National Forest system, and are designated by the FHWA's Federal Lands Highway Division (in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service and VDOT) as forest highways. Forest highways should not be confused with Forest Development Roads, which are owned by the U.S. Forest Service.

The funds available to Virginia from this program vary from year to year, but average \$1.5 million per year. Forest Highway funding does not require a local match. As with all federal programs, federal authorization must be obtained before beginning work on a particular phase of a project. If authorization is not received before work begins that phase of the project will not be eligible for federal funding.

A meeting is held annually, generally in November or December, where FHWA, Forest Service, and VDOT representatives review program progress and to adjust priority or add projects to the plan.

Additional information on the Forest Highway Program may be found at <http://www.virginiadot.org/infoservice/faq-byways.asp>

Industrial Access Program

The industrial access road program is administered by the Commonwealth Transportation Board, which allocates funds for eligible projects from the Industrial, Airport and Rail Access Fund. The purpose of the program is to finance the construction or improvement of roads, with the exception of primaries, to new or expanding industrial sites. These roads will provide access from the nearest adequate publicly maintained road to the property line of the industrial site. Adequate access may require construction of a new roadway or improvement of an existing road. Qualifying industries are determined by the Commonwealth Transportation Board in consultation with the Virginia Department of Business Assistance.

Where an existing road constitutes a portion of the secondary (not primary) system of state highways or is part of the road system of the locality in which it is located, industrial access funds may be used to upgrade the existing road only to the extent required to meet the needs of traffic generated by the new or expanding industrial facility.

An initial request must be made to the local governing body by an industry desiring financial assistance. A letter of request to the appropriate local governing body must include the following:

- A.** Intent to build or expand on a designated site
- B.** Description and location of the site
- C.** Target date for building construction
- D.** Target date for beginning plant operation
- E.** Capital investment planned on the site, itemized
- F.** Product or products to be manufactured
- G.** The number of new jobs to be created
- H.** Access road improvements requested
- I.** Estimates of the numbers of additional employee vehicles and truck traffic which will use the access road on an average business day

The industry should submit a copy of this letter to the Residency Administrator, along with a preliminary road plan showing the entire parcel of land and the locations of: the building, major site features, the proposed entrance, the proposed access road, and existing public roads in the vicinity of the site. It is also advisable to forward a copy of this letter to the Virginia Department of Business Assistance.

If the local governing body supports the request, it should prepare and approve a resolution formally requesting the allocation of industrial access funds.

If a new road is to be constructed, the resolution should state that right of way and utility adjustments will be provided at no cost to the VDOT, and that the road will be added to the secondary system or to the local road system as appropriate.

Industrial Access Program, continued

If the project involves improvement of an existing road, the resolution should state that right of way and utility adjustments will be provided at no cost to the Industrial, Airport and Rail Access Fund.

Industrial access projects may be either traditional (where an existing industry is expanding, or a new industry is under firm contract) or bonded (where no industry is under contract to build).

The maximum allocation for any project is limited to the lesser of: the reasonable cost of an adequate road or 10 percent of the qualifying industrial investment made by the private industry. The maximum unmatched allocation within any one fiscal year is \$300,000. Where the cost exceeds \$300,000, the governing body may request up to \$150,000 in supplemental funds, which must be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Any ineligible project costs and all costs exceeding the maximum allocation must be borne by the locality.

Qualifying industrial investment includes the cost of land, the cost of site preparation and building construction, and the cost of newly purchased manufacturing or processing equipment.

Eligible capital outlay costs require documentation by copies of deeds, executed construction contracts, checks, and purchase orders, and are subject to verification by VDOT. Capital costs incurred more than six months prior to the date of the resolution of the governing body will normally be disallowed.

For bonded projects, it is necessary that the governing body guarantee that a bond or other acceptable surety will be provided to cover the cost of the road that is not justified by qualifying industrial development. Frequently in the development of an industrial park, road cost will exceed 1/10th of the amount of the qualifying capital investment. In such circumstances, it is possible to combine a regular project with a bonded project in order to provide for both present and prospective industries. The Residency Administrator will assist the locality in preparing sketches and cost estimates for the requested road improvements.

The administrating agency shall be responsible for the appropriate environmental review processes.

Land Development/Site Plans

The development of land has a direct impact on the transportation system, therefore the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) works with local jurisdictions to review site plans, evaluate traffic impacts, and to identify and recommend roadway improvements needed to serve proposed development sites.

Careful reviews of proposed development plans are important because traffic impacts caused by new developments can be very costly for both VDOT and the local jurisdictions. Since existing transportation needs exceed available funding, VDOT's limited funds cannot be relied upon to correct transportation problems created by new developments.

The Department's review of development plans includes a thorough analysis of traffic impacts and identifies improvements required to mitigate those impacts. In the site plan review process, VDOT personnel examine the site plan to determine if development plans provide designs adequate to accommodate traffic generated by the proposed site without adversely affecting state-maintained roads. VDOT's comments and recommendations are shared with the local jurisdiction, which has the authority to approve the site development. As part of the site development proposal, a traffic impact study may be required, by either the local jurisdiction or VDOT, to describe how the traffic generated by the site will be served by the existing or future road network. This study must analyze forecast traffic impacts of the fully developed site and identify solutions that will be implemented to accommodate the site traffic.

VDOT is responsible for regulating the location, design, construction, and maintenance of street and driveway connections on the State Highway System. Incumbent with this is the obligation to ensure protection of the transportation infrastructure, economy of maintenance, preservation of proper drainage, safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians thereon, and full accountability for the transportation investments bestowed by the citizens of Virginia upon VDOT. VDOT participation early in the land development process can help ensure proper access is provided while the reliability of the road system is preserved.

Locally Administered Projects

Various sections of the *Code of Virginia* provide localities the opportunity to administer projects financed by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

§33.1-12 allows the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner to enter into agreements with localities, authorities, and other organizations in order to improve and maintain Virginia's transportation system.

§33.1-23.3 of the *Code of Virginia* allows municipalities to assume the responsibility for their urban construction program.

§33.1-75.1 allows counties to administer Revenue Sharing projects under certain circumstances.

§33.1-75.3 allows counties to administer primary highway and secondary highway projects.

A project administration agreement is needed between the locality and VDOT for any locally administered projects. This agreement spells out the terms for a locality to administer a specific project and must be finalized before the locality starts work on the project. For projects utilizing federal funding, federal authorization is required before starting each phase of the project (preliminary engineering, right of way, or construction). Any expenditure made prior to Federal Highway Administration approval of a project phase will not be reimbursed.

An agreement must be requested by the locality by filling out and submitting a Request to Administer Construction Project Form to the local Residency Administrator or, for urban projects the Urban Program Manager.

When a locality decides to take advantage of this opportunity it must adhere to Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) policies and procedures as well as federal regulations, if using federal funding. Assistance regarding this process can be found on the VDOT web site at <http://www.virginiadot.org/business/local-assistance-locally%20administered.asp>. A reference guide titled "Guide for Local Administration of Virginia Department of Transportation Projects" is also available on this web site.

Maintenance Budget

Beginning in 1998, the Department adopted an asset management approach to administration and execution of maintenance efforts. Under this approach, maintenance budgets are developed and distributed in an attempt to optimize the overall condition of all roadway assets owned and operated by VDOT. General asset groups are used to capture the wide range of physical assets VDOT must maintain. More detailed asset type categories are used to identify specific details of asset groups. The categories are the primary building blocks of the budget, and are the basis for evaluating resources used, work performed, and overall effectiveness of the program and managers. These groups are:

Example asset categories

I.	Drainage	Pipes, culverts, ditches, sidewalks, curb and gutter
II.	Roadside	Brush, trees, grass, and landscaping
III.	Traffic	Signals, signs, pavement markings, guardrail, and lighting
IV.	Pavement	Asphalt, concrete, non-hard surfaces, and shoulders
V.	Bridges	Decks, superstructure, substructure, and large pipe/culverts
VI.	Special Facilities	Tunnels, rest areas, and ferries

Using asset condition information and performance targets, the statewide maintenance program funding is allocated in lump-sum or program level allocations to each district. Each district further distributes maintenance allocations based upon condition information, need and performance targets. Subsequent maintenance activities are then divided into three different activity types:

Preventive Work directed toward preservation of an existing asset and related accessories as necessary to maintain a safe and efficient operation. Measures taken to arrest deterioration are considered preventive.

Restorative Work performed to return an asset as near to its original or reconstructed design condition, as practical, where the asset or any portion thereof is replaced, added, substantially renovated, removed, and/or installed. Work performed to provide a new service life to the asset is considered restorative.

Operations Work performed toward the functioning or sustaining the operation of the asset or service.

In addition, VDOT has developed a System Operations Six-Year Program (soSYP) as a proactive business tool to actively manage maintenance funds, projects and budget items. The soSYP will provide complete accountability for when, where and how funds are to be programmed and spent. The soSYP will serve as a management tool to monitor budget items, expenditures and projects. VDOT has also developed and implemented a Needs-Based Budget (NBB), which provides a life-cycle management approach to VDOT's maintainable assets. Statewide maintenance needs are determined by identifying VDOT's assets, determining the condition of the assets, establishing performance targets, and determining gaps. The NBB provides adequate processes to plan, budget, implement and monitor work efforts.

Naming Bridges and Highways

Bridges and highways in Virginia can be named by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) or by action of the General Assembly. Often, naming by the CTB occurs as a request by a local jurisdiction. The CTB can name a bridge or highway to reflect the historical or geographical significance of the area where the highway is located or for a deceased person.

The General Assembly may name a bridge or highway for any purpose or person (deceased or not) through a bill that is enacted into law. The CTB may not name a bridge or highway that has previously been named by the General Assembly.

The procedure for local government to follow to request the CTB to name a bridge or highway is:

1. The request from a local government to name a bridge or highway should go to the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT's) Residency Administrator. The bridge or highway must not have been previously named by the General Assembly (check the Virginia Route Index for previously named bridges and highways). It also must meet one of the requirements listed above.
2. The local jurisdiction should provide the Residency Administrator a resolution requesting the action. The resolution must indicate that the local jurisdiction or family requesting the naming will pay all costs for the sign.
3. VDOT will review the request and resolution and present the request to the CTB.
4. After the CTB adoption, VDOT will install the signs.

Noise Abatement

In 1989, VDOT formally established a policy to lessen the impact of highway traffic noise on people in neighborhoods and in other noise-sensitive areas, such as churches, schools, hospitals and certain public recreational areas. VDOT's Noise Abatement Policy is based on Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations.

A noise wall is a specially designed structure built to reduce noise levels created by nearby highway traffic. It is built only after noise impact studies are conducted and certain conditions are met. VDOT conducts studies and looks into options for reducing noise levels along proposed federally funded highway improvement projects. These projects must meet one of the following conditions:

- A highway is being built on a new location;
- An existing highway is being redesigned with a significant change in its alignment; or
- The number of through traffic lanes on an existing highway is being increased.

On non-federally funded highway improvement projects, the locality can obtain partial funding from VDOT to build noise walls if the locality meets eligibility requirements outlined in the state noise policy

Engineers use computer models to analyze and predict noise levels based on the loudest hour of the day for future conditions. They also measure existing noise levels in various locations along the proposed highway project when there is no existing roadway to use for the computer models. Along with the road's design, they must consider the area's topography, the distance between the road and nearby properties, traffic speeds and the sounds created by different types of vehicles. The computer model uses that data to predict the future noise level, which is compared with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and VDOT noise criteria. If this comparison identifies an impact, VDOT engineers must investigate noise reduction options.

Several options are available. First, VDOT engineers try to reduce the anticipated noise while they are designing the road by shifting the road away from the affected properties. They also consider reducing the speed limit, restricting heavy truck traffic on the road, or designing the road so its surface is lower through the affected area, creating a natural sound barrier. Another option is the use of earthen berms to block the noise. If designing the road differently will not reduce noise, VDOT engineers then consider noise walls. The walls can reduce traffic noise significantly and improve quality of life for people living behind them. Noise walls must meet the following conditions:

- They must not create a safety or engineering problem;
- They must reduce noise levels by at least five decibels for the impacted properties that the noise wall protects; and
- They must cost \$30,000 or less per noise-impacted property. For noise wall that cost more than \$30,000 per noise-impacted property, they can still be built if a third party - someone other than VDOT or FHWA - funds the difference.

Noise Abatement, continued

VDOT roadway designers cannot predict if noise walls can be constructed until the road's specific location is determined. So, a decision about whether a highway project will include noise walls cannot be made until after final location and design public hearing plans are ready. After the noise wall design receives approval for inclusion in the road design, the citizens directly affected will have a chance to decide if they want the walls built.

Noise walls come in various materials, textures, colors and finishes. The goal is to select an attractive design that blends well with its surroundings. A consistent appearance is also one of the main considerations when the walls are to be used in a long corridor. VDOT uses a specially-designed absorptive concrete material for ground-mounted noise walls and a lightweight material, typically absorptive metal, for structure-mounted walls such as on bridges. Due to the type of noise environment, sound wall manufacturing capabilities and engineering costs, VDOT uses a standard aesthetic design. VDOT surveys the affected citizens and local governments as to the color and finish during various citizen information meetings. If citizens or a locality requests an aesthetic finish that is significantly above the standard cost, VDOT allows these parties to fund the difference. Noise walls built on state rights of way are maintained and repaired by VDOT.

Once a construction project is complete, the Department does not evaluate the possibility of a noise barrier unless a new construction project, meeting the criteria, is planned. Building noise walls that are not part of road construction projects are called "retrofits" and no VDOT funding is available for this purpose.

Paving a Road

When the secondary system of highways was established in 1932, VDOT accepted nearly 34,000 miles of unpaved roads. Today, nearly 9,000 miles of state maintained unpaved roads still exist and are an important part of each county's Secondary Six-Year Plan in addressing the unpaved road needs. Each county's secondary allocation included funds designated to improve unpaved roads based on their proportion of qualifying unpaved roads with traffic volumes over 50 vehicles per day.

The process of revising the Secondary Six-Year Plan includes an advertised public hearing to provide all citizens an opportunity to ask that their road be included in the plan. If all these requirements are met, a road will be improved and paved when funding reserved in the plan becomes available for spending.

Options available for paving unpaved roads.

The General Assembly has provided additional options in paving unpaved roads in recent years. This has provided increased flexibility and allowed more unpaved roads to be paved than previously possible. The options currently available include the Rural Rustic Road approach, the Pave-In Place approach and the traditional reconstruction approach when greater improvements and additional right of way are necessary.

Rural Rustic Road Program

As of July 1, 2003, the "rural rustic road" program was implemented which allows a more flexible approach to paving many unpaved roads. This option should be evaluated first.

For a road to qualify for rural rustic road treatment, several criteria must be met:

1. The county's Board of Supervisors must pass a resolution declaring the road to be a "rural rustic road";
2. The Board of Supervisors indicates that expected growth and traffic increase along the road in the near future is minimal;
3. The curves along the road should be generally adequate for the traffic and any increase in speeds expected after the improvement;
4. Roadway drainage must currently be sufficient or require only minor improvements;
5. The daily traffic volume must not exceed 500 vehicles; and
6. The citizens along the road should support this improvement concept.

Roads that are good candidates are paved with minimum disruption beyond the ditches and usually result in a significant cost savings. The Residency Administrator will determine whether this approach is suitable for a requested unpaved road. The Rural Rustic Road approach should be considered first when paving a road but it should be recognized that not all roads are good candidates for this concept.

Paving a Road, continued

Pave-In-Place Program

If the rural rustic road approach is not a good option for a road, the pave-in-place approach might be considered if:

1. The traffic is under 750 vehicles per day;
2. Only minor improvements are needed to accommodate traffic; and
3. Needed improvements can be made within the available, existing right of way. Easements might be necessary for spot improvements.

Under the pave-in-place option, the road is improved to a minimum standard of 18 feet of pavement with 2-foot shoulders.

Traditional Reconstruction with Additional Right of Way

If significant improvements are needed or if significant development is proposed along the road, a more traditional approach is used to reconstruct the unpaved road and improve the alignment. A minimum 40-foot right of way is usually required for these projects with additional R/W or easements acquired based on the proposed improvement.

The residents along the road are usually asked to donate any additional right of way needed. If that is done, the funds otherwise required to buy right of way can be used for construction. If additional right of way is needed and will be donated, the donated right of way should be acquired before the project is added to the Secondary Six-Year Plan.

Permits (Land Use)

A land use permit is a requirement of the General Rules and Regulations of the Virginia Department of Transportation (24 VAC 30-20). It ensures that all work performed in the right-of-way of any highway in the state highway system meets VDOT standards and policies, complies with highway laws and regulations, preserves the integrity and functionality of the highway, and provides for the safety of the traveling public.

Anyone who plans to work or perform an activity on or crossing any right-of-way under the jurisdiction of the Department must first obtain a land use permit. A land use permit is also required when modifications are planned for an existing entrance due to change in land use, traffic volume, or type of traffic. A land use permit is a written document, signed and issued by an agent of VDOT, which regulates and approves work or activities to be performed in the right-of-way of a highway in the state highways system. It describes and defines the scope of work, and specifies conditions and provisions for performing the work.

Land use permits are obtained at the local VDOT Residency office. The Land Use Permit Section in each residency is responsible for reviewing plans for utilities, land development, private entrances, commercial entrances, logging entrances, surveying operations, and activities that require access to VDOT's right-of-way.

Primary, Urban, and Interstate Allocation Process

Each year the Commonwealth Transportation Board updates the Six-Year Improvement Program that distributes funds available for construction on the interstate, primary, and urban highway systems, as well as funds available for the Secondary System and the other transportation modes; ports, airports, and rail and public transportation.

To seek the maximum input from the Commonwealth's citizens, planning and programming meetings are held during the fall in each of the state's nine construction districts. Advice and input are solicited from members of the General Assembly, County Boards of Supervisors, City and Town Council Members, Planning Districts, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, other public officials, and the general public.

After the District meetings, VDOT staff prepares a working draft of the Six-Year Improvement Program complying with the policy goals of the Commonwealth Transportation Board that include paying off deficits on completed projects and not creating new deficits, fully funding construction projects by the time they are complete, bringing phased projects or programs to a reasonable stage of completion, and requiring that new projects added to the program be eligible for federal funds.

The working draft of the Six-Year Improvement Program is released in the early spring and then a final public hearing is held. After this public hearing, the Commonwealth Transportation Board will adopt the final Six-Year Improvement Program for the next fiscal year. The Six-Year Improvement Program also contains projects funded under the current Federal Transportation legislation as well as the specially funded projects designated by the Virginia Transportation Act of 2000, and the U. S. Route 58 Corridor Development Program.

Public Lands Highways

The Public Lands Highways Discretionary Program provides funding for improvements to roads that are open to public travel and serve federal property such as National Forests, National Parks, nontaxable Indian lands, military installations, or other Federal reservations. Each year, the FHWA Federal Lands Highway Division issues a call for the submission of applications for participation, with applications required to be submitted by VDOT to the FHWA Virginia Division for candidate projects in the upcoming federal fiscal year.

This program is entirely discretionary in nature and there is no minimum level of funding for projects in Virginia. Public Lands Discretionary funding requires no local match, but state and local financial support of a project is one of the factors considered when the FHWA decides which projects it will fund. As with all federal programs, federal authorization must be obtained before beginning work on a particular phase (PE, RW, or Construction) of a project. If authorization is not received before work begins, that phase of the project will not be eligible for federal funding.

Public Versus Private Streets

Private streets are those where the use is permissive or privileged by right of ownership. The term is often confused with public streets that are privately maintained. VDOT refers to all streets not maintained by VDOT as private.

VDOT review of private street subdivision plans is limited to their impact on the existing public roadway network in terms of traffic generation, access, and drainage. VDOT may however review private street subdivision street plans in more detail if requested on an accounts receivable basis as agreed to by the residency.

Private street connections to state maintained roadways must meet all VDOT criteria for subdivision street connections and commercial entrances, such as sight distance, pavement structure, auxiliary lanes, signalization, and permits.

Streets are eligible to be accepted into the state's system if they are built to VDOT standards, dedicated to public use and otherwise comply with applicable requirements. They may be eligible as a rural addition if they are brought up to standards by others. VDOT funds may be available through the rural addition program for qualifying counties as mentioned in the section on Additions.

Recreational Access Program

The purpose of the Recreational Access Program is to provide adequate access to recreational areas or historic sites operated by the Commonwealth of Virginia, a local government, or authority. Both roads and bikeways are eligible for program funding.

The program is administered by VDOT under the authority of Section 33.1-223 of the *Code of Virginia*, with designation, recommendation and concurrence by the Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Roads constructed under this program become a part of the appropriate highway system. Separate bikeways become the responsibility of the authority or agency maintaining the site, which they serve.

The road or bikeway should be located to provide the most direct cost-effective access to the site. It should end either at the entrance to the area or at an internal parking lot.

The maximum eligible pavement width for a recreational access road will normally be 18 feet. Wider pavement may be warranted based on anticipated traffic. If wider pavement is desired than deemed necessary, the wider pavement may be included in the design but the additional cost must be funded entirely by the locality. Right of way width sufficient to provide for minimum standards and any utility adjustments must be provided at no cost to the Department.

Recreational access roads and bikeways are expected to be open to the public at all times; however, they may be closed during specific hours for security purposes. No fee may be charged for the use of these roads or bikeways.

A maximum of \$400,000 may be allocated for an access road to a facility operated by a state agency. For a bikeway to a facility operated by a state agency, the maximum allocation is \$75,000. These funds are intended for eligible costs associated with design and construction of access roads and bikeways.

For an access road to a facility operated by a locality or authority, the maximum unmatched allocation is \$250,000. Up to an additional \$100,000 may be allocated if matched dollar-for-dollar from other than highway sources. A maximum of \$60,000 unmatched may be allocated for a bikeway to a facility operated by a locality or authority. Up to an additional \$15,000 may be requested if matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by the locality or authority.

There is no annual limit on the number of recreational access projects per jurisdiction. The funding maximums apply only to individual projects. Also, if the appropriate criteria are met, both an access road and a bikeway may be funded separately to serve the same facility.

The administrating agency shall be responsible for the appropriate environmental review processes.

Revenue Sharing Program

The purpose of the Revenue Sharing Program is to provide additional funding for the maintenance, improvement, construction or reconstruction of the primary and secondary systems and eligible additions.

The program is administered by VDOT in cooperation with participating localities under the authority of Section 33.1-75.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. The Commonwealth Transportation Board annually appropriates funds for this program. Application for these funds must be made by resolution of the governing body, and construction may be accomplished by VDOT or by the locality under agreement by VDOT.

Matching funds may be used to finance work on the county's primary or secondary system. Matching funds are funds provided by the Commonwealth which are allocated to eligible items of work on a dollar-for-dollar basis by the locality's contribution. The following are examples of work eligible for these funds:

- A.** Deficits on completed construction or improvements
- B.** Supplemental funding for ongoing construction or improvements
- C.** Supplemental funding for future construction or improvements listed in the adopted Six-Year Plan
- D.** Construction or improvements not included in the adopted Six-Year Plan
- E.** Construction or improvements necessary for the acceptance of specific subdivision streets otherwise eligible for acceptance into the system for maintenance
- F.** Unprogrammed maintenance whose accomplishment is consistent with the Department's operating policies

Application for revenue sharing funds is made by the county in which the road is located. The county government and Residency Administrator jointly request funds for eligible projects. This request must include what will be accomplished by the project and who will administer the project. The local Residency Administrator submits the list to the Local Assistance Division with a copy to the District Administrator. The Local Assistance Division notifies the county of the availability of matching funds for their use. Each county may request up to \$500,000 per year based on the current language in the Code but the General Assembly can adjust these amounts.

VDOT's Local Assistance Division reviews all plans submitted and determines and recommends approval to the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The Commonwealth Transportation Board approves the statewide program in June.

The administrating agency shall be responsible for the appropriate environmental review processes.

Scenic Byways

The program recognizes road corridors possessing aesthetic or cultural value near areas of historical, natural or recreational significance. By designating certain roads as Virginia Byways and widely distributing "A Map of Scenic Roads in Virginia," the program encourages travel to interesting destinations and away from high-traffic corridors. Byways also stimulate local economies by attracting visitors to lesser-known destinations. Once designated, a byway becomes part of the coordinated promotional strategy for Virginia tourism. Byway designation might limit placement of outdoor advertising signs, but it does not affect land use controls or limit road improvements.

To be considered, a segment of road must substantially meet the following criteria:

- The route provides important scenic values and experiences.
- There is a diversity of experiences, as in transition from one landscape scene to another.
- The route links together or provides access to scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, natural and archeological elements.
- The route bypasses major roads or provides opportunity to leave high-speed routes for variety and leisure in motoring. Landscape control or management along the route is feasible.
- The route allows for additional features that will enhance the motorist's experience and improve safety.
- Local government(s) has/have initiated zoning or other land-use controls, so as to reasonably protect the aesthetic and cultural value of the highway.

Anyone can request byway designation, but local governments must adopt a resolution of support. They must also provide documentation identifying all historical and/or cultural resources along the proposed designated route. Upon receipt of a request from an interested party/local government, along with a map showing the beginning and ending termini and historical/cultural resource documentation, VDOT and Department of Conservation (DCR) collect information on local zoning laws, traffic volumes and accident reports before evaluating the roads according to the criteria. Local Governments are also requested to hold a public hearing to consider designation. Based on a joint review according to the criteria, the VDOT and DCR recommend qualifying roads for consideration by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). The CTB officially designates the Byways at their next scheduled meeting. Subsequently, signs are posted, and changes are made to the appropriate maps.

There are also two federal scenic byway programs – a designation program and a funding program. The All American Road/National Scenic Byway designation program is an opportunity to receive national byway designation. Applications must be submitted to VDOT to be considered for federal designation. Applications, generally accepted in April, are evaluated by VDOT and sent to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) with a recommendation. FHWA makes the designations. The National Scenic Byway Discretionary program is a program that funds projects to enhance scenic byways. Eligible activities include corridor planning, promotion, and other activities to improve the byway experience. Applications must be submitted to VDOT to be considered for federal funding. Applications which VDOT evaluates and sends to FHWA with a recommendation are generally accepted in February. FHWA makes the funding allocations. A byway must be state designated before it is eligible to participate in the federal programs.

Secondary Construction Budget

Although authority for the construction, maintenance, and control of the secondary road system is vested generally in the Department of Transportation, Virginia laws create partnership between the Department and the County Board of Supervisors in improving local transportation. Each year the Residency Administrator or a designee will attend a meeting of the Board of Supervisors for the purpose of preparing a budget for the expenditure of secondary road improvement funds for the next fiscal year. Often this is done as part of the annual Secondary Six-Year Plan public hearing in the fall of each fiscal year.

Highway funding is derived from state and federal gasoline taxes, vehicle title fees, vehicle sales tax and one-half percent of state's sales tax. Distribution of secondary construction funds is done by a 20% area and 80% population factor. The area of each county is derived by Geographic Information Systems Mapping and population figures are obtained from the Weldon Cooper Center. The distribution formula results in less-populated areas receiving less funding than urbanized areas.

Distribution of Unpaved Roads Funds is based on the ratio of unpaved secondary roads in the county serving fifty or more vehicles per day to the total number of such roads in the Commonwealth. The Unpaved Roads Funds were created by the General Assembly because of the recognized need for paving secondary unpaved roads. Reference, Section 33.1-23.1:1, of the *Code of Virginia*.

VDOT's construction is a pay-as-you-go program. Our goal is to allocate 70% of estimated costs for Preliminary Engineering, Right of Way and Construction before each specific phase of a project can be initiated. 100% of the construction costs must be fully funded in the fiscal year that the work is completed.

When the Six-Year Plan is produced, the Department is dealing with approximations and projections in funding. The Board of Supervisors approves the Secondary Six-Year Plan and Construction Priority List in the fall of each fiscal year based on those funding projections. The Department receives more exact figures in May or June of the next year and uses the approved priority list to apply the funds in the Secondary Construction Budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Occasionally, project costs exceed the funds programmed in previous budgets for that project. This creates deficits that must be addressed. Generally the first priority in the Six-Year Plan and Construction Budget is to finance deficits. Allocations are then made available for county wide or incidental improvements such as traffic and safety services, rural additions, pipe installation, surveying and preliminary engineering, fertilization and seeding, and design support. Allocations may be made for the unpaved roads, major reconstruction and bridge replacement projects based on priorities.

Normally construction projects in the first year of the Six-Year Plan are financed in the construction budget. After holding a public hearing on the proposed projects and considering citizen comments, the board, with the concurrence of the Residency Administrator, must adopt an official priority program for the next fiscal year.

Secondary Six-Year Plan

Funds for the Secondary Six-Year Plan and the construction budget are derived from state and federal fuel taxes, vehicle title fees, vehicle sales tax and one-half cent of the State's general sales tax.

The predictability of funding amounts is greatly dictated by the financial climate of the times and changes of funding levels by the federal government. Therefore, in dealing with construction funds, especially in the Secondary Six-Year Plan, the Department is dealing with approximations or projections. The Secondary Six-Year Plan is based on estimated funding which is provided by the Financial Planning Division.

Secondary Six-Year Plans are updated on an annual basis in the fall of each fiscal year. The process gives citizens a chance to request improvements annually; facilitates Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) planning and planning requirements of SAFETEA-LU; allows the Board of Supervisors to evaluate their program annually and update it to address any changes in county priorities.

Snow Removal

The Department shall provide snow and ice control services at a level of service consistent with local jurisdictional needs including, but not limited to, emergency access, customer input, commuter and educational systems, economic movement of goods, average daily traffic, industrial access, and other traffic data.

Highway needs for snow and ice control overlap highway systems and, as a result, are separated and identified by functional classifications of the highway rather than by roadway systems. Highways and roads are classified into categories of priority routes to ensure the optimal and safe movement of goods and traffic along Virginia's highways during snow and icy conditions.

For example, priority 1 highways include all interstate routes, most primary routes, and a few very high-service secondary routes. These routes should be kept free of ice and snow so that traffic can proceed in safety without severe delays, except during periods of heavy falling or drifting snow and ice storms. Generally, this is accomplished within 24 hours after the storm ends.

All pavement routes receive progressive and continuous effort to meet the snow removal goals. Routes not designated as priority 1 highways will receive attention as soon as practical and will have chemical treatment and plowing generally no later than 48 hours after the end of the storm. In many areas, VDOT shall apply chemical deicing abrasive to bridges at the beginning of a storm. Once a storm has ended, all chemical abrasives shall be removed from the bridge deck, wheel guard, etc.

Each year the local residency revises snow removal plans for the coming snow season based on local needs and available resources. Contractor supplied hired equipment is used to complement state forces.

VDOT does not remove snow from private or commercial roads or entrances. Upon written request VDOT will assist the cleaning of entrances for fire departments, emergency squads, and other emergency providers as operations allow.

VDOT provides snow removal service in most incorporated towns of less than 3,500 population, and on primary roads in some towns with populations over 3,500 depending on which section of the *Code of Virginia* by which the town is operating.

VDOT does not remove snow or ice on sidewalks.

VDOT does not remove snow off railroad grade crossings. The railroad has the responsibility to remove snow from the grade crossings. If the railroad company does not remove the snow then the Residency Administrator shall contact the railroad company official regarding removal.

Visit our agency web site at www.VirginiaDOT.org and click "**Winter Weather Road Conditions**."

Speed Limits

The black and white numbered (statutory) speed limit signs are posted for good reason, public safety. Speed regulations and speed limits are intended to supplement motorists' judgment in determining speeds that are reasonable and proper for particular weather and road conditions. Limits are imposed to promote better traffic flow by reducing the wide variance in speeds and to assist enforcement personnel.

The Virginia General Assembly has granted authority to the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner and to cities and certain counties and towns to establish speed limits not to exceed the maximum allowed by law for highways under their jurisdiction. The Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner has delegated speed limit approval authority to the Chief Engineer and the Chief of Systems Operations. Factors considered in determining reasonable and safe speed limits are categorized in two phases, the **engineering investigation** and the **traffic investigation**. The engineering investigation involves a study of roadway geometrics such as lane width, pavement type and condition and terrain. The traffic investigation involves gathering and analyzing traffic related data such as prevailing vehicle speeds, average test runs, volumes, crash data and traffic control devices that affect or are affected by vehicle speeds.

When a locality wants to request a speed limit change, the VDOT Residency Administrator at the local VDOT Residency office should be contacted. The Residency Administrator will request the District Traffic Section perform the engineering and traffic investigations. The results and a recommendation are provided to the central office State Traffic Engineer who prepares a resolution for the Chief Engineer's and the Chief of Systems Operations signature. Upon receipt of the approved, signed resolution, the Residency and District Traffic Section will post the applicable speed limit. However, it should be remembered that reducing the speed limit in itself does not automatically reduce operating speeds. Enforcement is usually needed to achieve compliance.

Subdivision Street Standards

VDOT's Subdivision Street Requirements establish the minimum provisions that new subdivision streets must meet to be considered for acceptance as part of the secondary system of state highways maintained by the Department. These requirements provide all necessary references required in the planning, design, development and regulation of residential, commercial and industrial subdivisions. The Subdivision Street Requirements are a regulation of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, developed under the provisions of the Administrative Process Act and constitute a part of the Virginia Administrative Code.

Plans for the streets are submitted to VDOT's Residency Administrator through the county in which the subdivision is located. VDOT will review the plans to determine if they comply with applicable standards and related requirements. If they do, the plans are approved. If the streets are built according to the plans and comply with other prerequisites, the County Board of Supervisors adopts a resolution requesting VDOT's acceptance of the streets. Once it is determined such action is appropriate, the street is officially accepted for maintenance as part of the secondary system of state highways.

Through Truck Restriction

Through trucks can be restricted on certain segments of primary and secondary routes in the limited number of cases where doing so will promote the health, safety and welfare of the public without creating an undue hardship on any transportation users.

For a request to be considered by VDOT, and in order to insure that all concerned parties have an opportunity to provide input concerning the proposed restriction and alternate route, the Board of Supervisors must hold a public hearing and make a formal request of the Department. The following must be adhered to:

- (A) The public notices for the hearing must include a description of the proposed through truck restriction and the alternate route with the same termini. A copy of the notices must be provided.
- (B) A public hearing must be held by the Board of Supervisors and a transcript of the hearing must be provided with the resolution.
- (C) The resolution must describe the proposed through truck restriction and a description of the alternate, including termini.
- (D) The Board of Supervisors must include in the resolution that it will use its good offices for enforcement of the proposed restriction by the appropriate local law enforcement agency.

Failure to comply with (A), (B), (C) and (D) will result in the request being returned.

The Board of Supervisors must make its formal request through the VDOT Residency Administrator, certifying that it has met all the requirements noted above. The Residency Administrator, upon acceptance of the truck restriction request, will forward it to the District Administrator who will forward the request to the State Traffic Engineer.

Following research and data gathering, the State Traffic Engineer will conduct a traffic engineering study of the restriction request and a report will be prepared. This report will be sent to the District Administrator who will obtain public input through appropriate means.

The District Administrator will prepare a report that will include his recommendation and all pertinent materials for the State Traffic Engineer. The State Traffic Engineer will review all data and material including the District Administrator's recommendation. A report will be prepared which will consider the four criteria outlined in the CTB approved "Guidelines for Considering Requests to Restrict Through Trucks on Primary and Secondary Highways". This report and a recommendation to approve or deny the proposed restriction will be presented to the Commissioner if the request is on a secondary road or the Commonwealth Transportation Board if the request is on a primary road.

Following approval or denial by the Commissioner or Board the State Traffic Engineer will make all appropriate notifications. The residency will be requested to post appropriate signs if the restriction is approved

Towns With Populations Under 3,500

VDOT is responsible for the maintenance and improvement of streets in most incorporated towns of less than 3,500 population. However, there are a limited number of towns of less than 3,500 in population that maintain their own streets. Towns that request VDOT to maintain their streets operate under §33.1-79 of the *Code of Virginia* and are limited to two miles of secondary system streets initially and are allowed to add up to 0.25 mile of additional streets annually to the secondary system. Streets established prior to January 1, 1962, must have a minimum 30 feet of right of way, and those established on or after January 1, 1962, must have 40 feet right of way. These streets must be in accessible for travel under normal conditions.

Towns that do not request VDOT to maintain their roads under §33.1-79 operate under §33.1-82, and are not subject to the same 0.25 mile limitation and may add streets if the following requirements are met:

Minimum 30 feet right of way with 12 feet of hard surface if established prior to July 1, 1950.

Minimum 50 feet right of way with 20 feet of hard surface if established on or after July 1, 1950.

Minimum subdivision street requirements if constructed as a local street after July 1, 1996.

Improvement of secondary system streets within towns of less than 3,500 in population that are not maintained under the Urban Highway System program must be considered along with all other roads in the secondary system of the county in which the town is located and be established as part of the county's Six-Year Plan.

Traffic Calming

In June 2001, VDOT adopted the "Traffic Calming Guide for Local Residential Streets", which provides communities with a traffic management tool to deal specifically with speeding. The goal of VDOT's traffic calming program is to slow speeders in subdivisions or residential neighborhoods on streets classified as local. Certain collector streets that have many of the characteristics of local residential streets may also qualify for traffic calming measures. It should be noted that the goal of traffic calming is to reduce speeding, not to restrict access.

The process to implement traffic calming on a residential street recognizes that the county and VDOT are partners in addressing speeding problems. The county will initiate and take the lead role in coordinating the traffic calming process and VDOT staff will provide technical support. For traffic calming, VDOT is represented by the local Residency Administrator, except in Fairfax, Prince William, and Loudoun Counties where VDOT is represented by the district traffic engineer.

VDOT's process also recognizes that substantial neighborhood support is necessary in order for traffic calming measures to be effective. Any measure that is implemented will have an impact on residents - the way they drive and on the way their neighborhood roads look. Verification of community support in the form of a signed petition must accompany a county request for traffic calming.

VDOT's traffic calming program is intended for existing streets only. However, the issue of traffic calming should be considered during the design of the subdivision street layout. Early consideration can minimize future speeding problems and improve the livability of the neighborhood. Potential traffic calming concerns can be addressed with roadway design geometry changes, especially roadway width (narrowing) and road curvature. The county should consider planning, enforcement, and transportation together in a comprehensive approach to managing residential traffic.

Traffic Counts

Traffic counts are the basis for safety, economic, and engineering considerations in guiding administrators and engineers in the development of highway systems.

A traffic count serves only to provide the number of vehicles passing a given point in a given time period. The value of such a count is limited. Its potential value is increased when it is part of a series of comparable counts taken at strategic points in a network system. It becomes useful for many more purposes when the origin and destination of the vehicles comprising the count are known. Speed, spacing, direction and type of vehicles counted are essential to other facets of engineering studies. The principal uses of traffic counts programming future improvements are (1) accident analyses, (2) engineering studies, (3) a guide in planning and programming future improvements and land development, (4) determining road classification, and (5) to answer many inquiries from individuals and representatives of businesses.

The Department conducts traffic counts using a three-year count cycle. All roads that are functionally classified higher than local will be counted once during that three-year period. The count schedule is set-up by county, so that all roads within a county are counted during the same year of the three-year cycle. All unpaved roads, regardless of functional classification, are also counted once during the three-year period. Already paved roads that are functionally classified as local will be counted once every six years (if there is growth potential for the area) or once every twelve years (if they serve fully occupied housing subdivisions).

Traffic Signal, Sign or Pavement Marking Requests

Contact your local VDOT Residency office, which will send the request to the District Traffic Engineer for evaluation of location, traffic volume, accidents, and other factors. The findings will be used in determining whether to install a traffic control device (i.e., signal, sign, and pavement marking). Transportation agencies across the United States follow uniform guidelines to determine when a traffic control device is appropriate. These guidelines are found in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) published by the Federal Highway Administration. In jurisdictions that maintain their own street systems, requests should go to the appropriate local officials.

Transportation Enhancement Program

Congress first established the Transportation Enhancement (EN) Program in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991. This program was the first Federal initiative to focus on enhancing the travel experience and fostering the quality of life in American communities. The EN program fosters more choices for travel by providing funding for sidewalks, bike lanes, and the conversion of abandoned railroad corridors into trails. Communities may also use the program to revitalize local and regional economies by restoring eligible historic buildings, renovating streetscapes, or providing transportation museums and visitor centers. Many communities also use the program to acquire, restore and preserve scenic or historic sites.

The basic Federal requirements for EN projects are that they demonstrate a relationship to surface transportation and fall within one of the 12 eligible activities:

1. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities
2. Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Educational Activities
3. Acquisition of Scenic or Historic Easements and Sites
4. Scenic or Historic Highway Programs including Tourist and Welcome Centers
5. Landscaping and Scenic Beautification
6. Historic Preservation
7. Rehabilitation and Operation of Historic Transportation Buildings, Structures, or Facilities
8. Preservation of Abandoned Railway Corridors
9. Control and Removal of Outdoor Advertising
10. Archaeological Planning and Research
11. Mitigation of Highway Runoff and Provision of Wildlife Under/Over-crossings
12. Establishment of Transportation Museums

Transportation Enhancement is a Federal-aid reimbursement program, not a grant program. The project sponsor is responsible for paying the project costs and submitting reimbursement requests to VDOT, which submits to FHWA. The Federal government reimburses 80% of the project cost. The project sponsor is responsible for the balance, also called the matching funds, and any amount exceeding the amount granted by the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

Applying for EN funds is a competitive process. Any local government, state agency, group or individual may initiate an EN project. Prior to submission, all projects require formal endorsement by a local jurisdiction or public agency, and a duly advertised public hearing. Projects that are within a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area also require the endorsement of the appropriate MPO. The Department schedules "Applicant Workshops" held at various locations throughout the state in the summer to assist with the preparation of applications. Applications are due on November 1st annually.

Transportation Enhancement Program, continued

The Department schedules "Sponsor Workshops" held at various locations throughout the state annually. These workshops are designed to acquaint Enhancement sponsors and project managers with the federal and state requirements for project development. All sponsors and project managers are expected to attend one of these workshops.