COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219-2000

DAVID S. EKERN, P.E.
COMMISSIONER

March 5, 2008

To: County Governments & Urban Municipalities

Subject: Local Programs Policy

In the last few years, localities across the Commonwealth have increasingly taken on responsibility for administering construction projects and several cities and towns have taken responsibility for their entire construction program. As the number of locally administered programs grows, the importance of VDOT partnering with localities to ensure effective project delivery becomes more critical. In support of that partnership, I want to share with you VDOT's new policy for working with local governments as they assume more responsibility for administering transportation construction projects and programs.

To emphasize our commitment to ensuring effective local program delivery, I have issued the attached Department Policy Memorandum 8-7 for the Delivery of Locally Administered Programs and Projects. It emphasizes the importance of VDOT's partnership with local governments and thoroughly integrates oversight of the local administration of programs and projects as a core responsibility and mission of VDOT.

The policy commits VDOT to developing programs and processes that:

- provide local governments tools to successfully administer transportation programs,
- provide a consistent approach to VDOT stewardship and oversight across districts and divisions, and
- promote efficient and effective local project and program delivery.

There will be specific efforts in the next year to enhance the success of locally administered programs and projects. While the policy encompasses all local programs, our initial focus will be on project development.

- VDOT will review and update our locally administered project guidance for ease of use, to identify VDOT oversight requirements, to clarify VDOT roles/responsibilities, and to include specific minimum submittal requirements. VDOT will review federal and state regulations to verify that the necessary requirements are communicated to the localities and identify our oversight obligations/expectations. We will take advantage of locality certifications as much as possible to eliminate duplicative work.

- We are working with FHWA on a process review of our current locally administered programs. We will work with FHWA to identify VDOT requirements in excess of what FHWA requires to ensure we are taking advantage of available efficiencies.

- I will establish a forum with local government officials to discuss issues and concerns and to focus on the future relationships between localities and VDOT.

- We will expand training to localities through the Local Partnership Team. This interdisciplinary team has been providing topic specific workshops for localities and VDOT staff for several years and has already scheduled several more workshops for this year.

- We will look for opportunities to streamline processes such as a certification and local government auditing program for localities and reduced oversight for low-risk projects.

- We will survey internal and external customers for feedback on areas needing additional focus.

The implementation of this policy and the integration of locally administrated projects and programs in VDOT's practices represent an exciting opportunity for all of us.

I have asked Michael Estes, Local Assistance Division Director, to oversee this initiative. You will receive updates on the policy implementation in the coming months. If you need anything in the interim, Mike can be reached at 804-786-2745 or by email at Michael.Estes@VDOT.Virginia.gov. I appreciate your support as we move forward with this important initiative.

Sincerely,

David S. Ekern, P.E.

Attachment