
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 rezoning requests and site plans, evaluate traffic impacts, and to identify and recommend roadway improvements needed to serve proposed development sites.

Chapter 527 of the 2006 Acts of Assembly and the resulting Traffic Impact Analysis regulations require localities to submit land development proposals to VDOT at the comprehensive plan, rezoning, and site plan/subdivision plat/plan of development stages if the developments are expected to have a significant impact on state highways. Information on Chapter 527 can be found on VDOT's website at <http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/chapter527/default.asp>. Even if a development proposal does not meet the thresholds that would require submission to VDOT, localities should include the Department in the various stages of the development review process.

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. The review also will evaluate the development's compliance with VDOT's access management regulations and standards. 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. In addition, if abandonment or a relocation of a state highway is necessary in order to accommodate a particular development, VDOT should be involved in the early stages in order ensure such actions take place in a manner consistent with the applicable Code sections.