



Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Local Assistance Division



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1 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This manual provides programmatic guidance on the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) as administered by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). This document supplements and interprets guidance provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in its [Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Implementation Guidance of March 2022](#).

This information is provided as a supplement to the information found in [VDOT's Locally Administered Projects Manual \(LAP Manual\)](#), which is the primary source for guidance regarding project development and delivery, and should be utilized as the primary reference for any locality administering a VDOT- or FHWA-funded project, including TAP. Further, additional state and federal rules and regulations, including those promulgated by VDOT and FHWA, may supersede the information provided in this guide.

TAP aids Local Public Agencies (LPAs) in funding community-based projects that expand non-motorized and multimodal travel choices and enhance the transportation experience. Such projects improve the cultural, historical, and environmental aspects of transportation infrastructure. The Program does not fund traditional roadway facility or maintenance projects. Instead, it emphasizes constructing and expanding active transportation facilities that provide equitable accommodations for all users. Outcomes of the supported projects lead to quality-of-life benefits for residents, alternative mode accessibility, safety, reductions in pollutants and emissions, and the expansion of recreational facilities.

1.2 BACKGROUND

1.2.1 Program History

TAP is a subset of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) of the most recent federal transportation bill, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Pub. L. 117-58), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) (23 U.S.C. 133(h)). Eligibility for these set-aside funds include all activities that were previously eligible under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21).

The Transportation Enhancement program, which later evolved to the current Transportation Alternatives Program, was established in 1991 under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and continued through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). TAP was established in 2012 under MAP-21. TAP modified the former TE eligible categories and consolidated these with Safe Routes to School (SRTS). The Recreational Trails program is administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

1.2.2 Program Intent

TAP expands non-motorized travel choices, strengthens local economies, improves safety and quality of life, and protects the environment. Funds may be awarded to eligible entities for eligible projects through a competitive application process. TAP's focus is on providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and community improvements, and it is a key program for helping to build Complete Streets, which are safe for all users and provide safe, connected, and equitable on- and off-road networks.



The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) encourages the use of funding to upgrade the conditions of streets, highways, and bridges to make them safe for all users, while also modernizing the network to be accessible for all users, provide better choices, accommodate technological advances, and be sustainable, resilient, and equitable.

1.3 CONTACT INFORMATION

The nine VDOT District Offices have designated staff working on TAP projects. These staff are the first points of contact for additional information and clarifications, where needed. District staff coordinate with Central Office staff for guidance and policy direction when needed.

A directory of current District staff contacts is available on [VDOT's TAP webpage](#).

VDOT also provides a list of localities served by each District Office as well as [general District contact information](#).



2 PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

2.1 ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

Entities eligible to receive Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding are set by federal legislation and include:

1. **A local government:** any unit of local government below a state government agency, except for an MPO. Examples include city, town, or county agencies.
2. **A regional transportation authority:** Considered the same as the Regional Transportation Planning Organizations defined in the statewide planning section (23 U.S.C. 135(m)).
3. **A transit agency:** any agency responsible for public transportation that is eligible for funds as determined by the Federal Transit Administration.
4. **A natural resource or public land agency:** any Federal, Tribal, State, or local agency responsible for natural resources or public land, including state or local forest agencies, fish and game or wildlife agencies, Department of the Interior land management agencies, and U.S. Forest Service.
5. **A school district, local education agency, or school:** any school district or school, including public or nonprofit private schools. Projects should benefit the public and not a private entity.
6. **A Tribal government.**
7. **A metropolitan planning organization** that serves an urbanized area with a population of 200,000 or more (i.e., Transportation Management Areas (TMAs), Transportation Planning Organizations (TPOs), Council of Governments (COG)).
8. **Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for or oversight of transportation or recreational trails** (other than an ineligible MPO or state agency) that the state determines to be eligible consistent with the goals of 23 U.S.C. 133(h).
9. **A State (VDOT),** at the request of an eligible entity listed above.

2.2 PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

2.2.1 Local Administration

To administer a federal-aid project, local public agencies (LPAs) must have a full-time Responsible Person who will make all major project decisions and an accounting system to track project costs. If an applicant wishes to administer their own project, they should first review the [LAP Manual](#) and other project development guidance. LPAs are required to have at least one current full-time staff member who has successfully completed the [VDOT Qualification Program](#).

VDOT provides oversight of federally funded projects on behalf of FHWA, including on locally administered projects. VDOT's oversight may include plan review, preparing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document, and evaluation of property appraisals. All VDOT oversight will be charged to the project and reimbursed from federal allocations at the same 80% federal/20% LPA rate as other reimbursements.

On locally administered projects, the LPA is responsible for administration and completion of the project. This includes project development, quality assurance, contract administration, daily project management, construction, and record retention, even if these services or activities are outsourced. In addition to project development, the LPA is also responsible for securing all required permits needed for a project according to the administering body in advance of construction beginning.



The LPA is responsible for future maintenance and upkeep unless alternate arrangements are made with VDOT. Although standard transportation infrastructure located within VDOT right of way is typically maintained by VDOT (crosswalks, sidewalks, pull offs, etc.), the LPA should consult with the appropriate local VDOT office to confirm that VDOT will continue to maintain these items if they are modified by the LPA as part of a TAP project. Any facility constructed or improved with TAP funds is required to be maintained for the intended use, even if ownership changes, according to the [useful life schedule](#).

As the sub-recipient of federal transportation funds and the manager of a federal-aid project, the LPA must adhere to all applicable federal and state regulations and guidelines. The LPA is responsible for maintaining all project documentation required for state or federal audit. Refer to the [LAP Manual](#) for more information about required documentation.

2.2.2 VDOT Administration

VDOT may administer local TAP projects upon the request of the applicant or in cases where VDOT has determined that the applicant does not have adequate resources to manage the project independently. If an LPA has limited experience or is unsure, they can discuss the possibility of having VDOT administer the TAP project on their behalf. VDOT does not typically administer vertical construction such as historic preservation projects.

VDOT administration requires coordination with the local VDOT District Office in advance of the application process.

2.3 ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

2.3.1 Eligible Project Categories

TAP provides funding for a variety of transportation projects, including:

- On- and off-road trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation;
- Construction, planning, and design of projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers to access daily needs;
- Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized transportation users (Rails-to-Trails);
- Construction of turnouts and viewing areas, which are comprised of a project that supports a qualifying logical terminus with independent utility;
- Community improvement activities, including:
 - Inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising,
 - Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities, solely to preserve and protect the structure according to historic preservation standards,
 - Vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control, and
 - Archaeological activities relating to impacts from a transportation project eligible under 23, U.S.C.;
- Environmental mitigation activities, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement and mitigation to:
 - Address stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff, or
 - Reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats;
- Safe routes to school projects, as eligible under 23 U.S.C. 208, including:
 - Infrastructure-related projects [23 U.S.C. 208(g)(1)], and
 - Noninfrastructure-related activities [23 U.S.C. 208(g)(3)];
- Planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways (Boulevards from Divided Highways).



See [Appendix C: Eligible Project Activities](#) for additional project eligibility information.

2.3.2 Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Activities

Safe Routes to School (SRTS), as eligible under 23 U.S.C. 208, includes non-infrastructure-related activities [23 U.S.C. 208(g)(3)] located within two miles of a school (grades K-12, including public and private schools).

All SRTS non-infrastructure (SRTS-NI) projects are submitted through the same process as described in this guide. However, these projects have different documentation and information requirements. Required application attachments include a program budget, program plan, program dashboard, resolution of support from the governing body, letter of support, proof of public participation, metropolitan planning organization (MPO) endorsement (see the [Public Involvement in an MPO Area](#) section), and a third-party contribution plan, if applicable (see the [Third-Party Contributions](#) section).

SRTS-NI applicants do not need to provide a Request to Administer or complete the full Qualification Program. Applicants for SRTS-NI projects are required to complete a limited online modules portion of the Qualification Program and must demonstrate this through the application process.

Funded SRTS-NI projects will follow the same project agreement process as all other TAP projects (see the [Project Agreement](#) section), but the program budget, program plan, and program dashboard will accompany the agreement as supplemental documents identifying eligible project expenses and activities.

VDOT's Transportation and Mobility Planning Division (TMPD) oversees all SRTS-NI projects. Additional guidance is available on the [SRTS-NI webpage](#).

2.4 FEDERAL INVESTMENT REQUIREMENTS

TAP projects are required to meet specific criteria to be eligible for funding. In the case of a multi-phase project, each phase must independently meet the criteria.

Each project must:

- Have [logical termini](#) and [independent utility](#);
- Be accessible to the public and not used as a rental space for offices, events, etc.;
- Be used as intended and maintained for the useful life as set forth in the [Useful Life Schedule](#); and
- Be not-for-profit. An admission fee may be acceptable if the cost is reasonable and reinvested to support operation and upkeep of the TAP-funded facility.

2.4.1 Developing a Project Scope

TAP is governed by Title 23 of the United States Code of Federal Regulations. The design of a TAP project must meet or exceed VDOT and/or American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) design standards, depending upon the project location. Urban localities responsible for street maintenance are required to comply with AASHTO standards while localities with VDOT-maintained roadways are required to comply with VDOT standards. All TAP projects must have a well-defined, achievable scope and clear termini.

Once a project is awarded TAP funding based on the defined scope and termini identified in the TAP application, it cannot be altered without an approved scope change from VDOT's Local Assistance Division.



2.4.2 Logical Termini

All projects must have logical termini to be eligible for federal participation. For pedestrian and bicycle facilities, logical termini could be a roadway intersection, connection to an existing sidewalk or trail facility, or delivery to a destination such as a shopping center, library, or park entrance. Private driveways, property lines, or local city/town borders are unacceptable termini. TAP is intended to provide mobility options that connect non-motorized users to a system of transportation assets.

2.4.3 Independent Utility

All projects must have independent utility to be eligible for federal participation. This means that the project will provide a benefit to the travelling public and an improvement to the existing transportation network even if no other segments are ever built. Subsequent funding is not guaranteed, and this requirement ensures that a funded project can stand alone.

2.5 INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND EXPENSES

TAP funds cannot be used for the following activities:

- MPO administrative purposes, except as allowed according to FHWA's [Memo Allocating Indirect Costs to Projects](#), dated September 4, 2015;
- Promotional activities and training expenses, except those permitted as [SRTS-NI](#);
- Routine maintenance and operations;
- General recreation and park facilities, playground equipment, sports fields, campgrounds, picnic areas, pavilions;
- Traditional roadway activities and motorized improvements, including traffic signals, lighting, full depth paving, and surface treatment;
- Property acquisition beyond that required by the project; and
- Betterment or aesthetic improvements



3 BUDGETING AND FUNDS MANAGEMENT

3.1 FUNDING OVERVIEW

VDOT solicits Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) project applications on a biennial basis and uses a competitive process to select projects for funding. Funding is suballocated based on legislation, with an initial suballocation made for the [Recreational Trails Program \(RTP\)](#), administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. All remaining funds are allocated based on legislation, with 59% available for award based on population area, and 41% available anywhere within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The legislated population areas include:

- Equal to or less than 5,000
- Greater than 5,000 to equal to or less than 50,000
- Greater than 50,000 to equal to or less than 200,000
- Greater than 200,000

TAP funding for areas with populations greater than 200,000 is suballocated to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) for award to eligible projects. The MPO may use these funds for projects anywhere within the boundaries of the applicable MPO area (23 U.S.C. 133(d)(2)). Applicants seeking TAP allocations from the MPO apply through VDOT's standard application process, and MPOs select projects through the competitive process in consultation with VDOT.

The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) makes project selections and awards non-MPO TAP funds for population areas under 200,000. Per CTB policy, the 41% of statewide TAP funds are divided among the 14 members and Secretary of Transportation.

3.2 REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

Locally administered TAP projects receive federal funds through reimbursement; this means that local public agencies (LPA) must make expenditures prior to receiving any TAP funds. VDOT is the direct recipient of federal TAP funds.

Projects that are selected for financial assistance are eligible for cost reimbursement by VDOT. LPAs must program and obligate independent capital resources to projects in advance of state Department of Transportation reimbursement. In most cases, the maximum allowable federal aid contribution to selected projects is 80% of total eligible project cost. Applicants must demonstrate the availability of project funding commitments in advance of a prospective award in a funded local Capital Improvement Plan or regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

TAP projects are limited to a lifetime maximum of \$2.5 million in federal TAP funds. Each CTB member is allotted an equal share of federal TAP funding to allocate per fiscal year, by policy. The policy also requires that all funded projects receive 100% of the requested TAP amount. Additional TAP funds for a funded project can only receive additional funds through a statewide prioritization process for use of surplus TAP funds. Previously fully funded projects cannot be submitted during the biennial application process for additional funding.



Specific steps are required before costs can be incurred for reimbursement through TAP. A [Project Administration Agreement \(PAA\)](#) must be executed to establish the project. [Federal authorization](#) must then be secured to enable the federal reimbursement of eligible costs; any costs incurred prior to execution of these documents will not be reimbursed.

Following the execution of a PAA and receipt of the required phase-appropriate federal authorization (PE, RW or CN), many project-specific costs are eligible for reimbursement with VDOT approval to proceed:

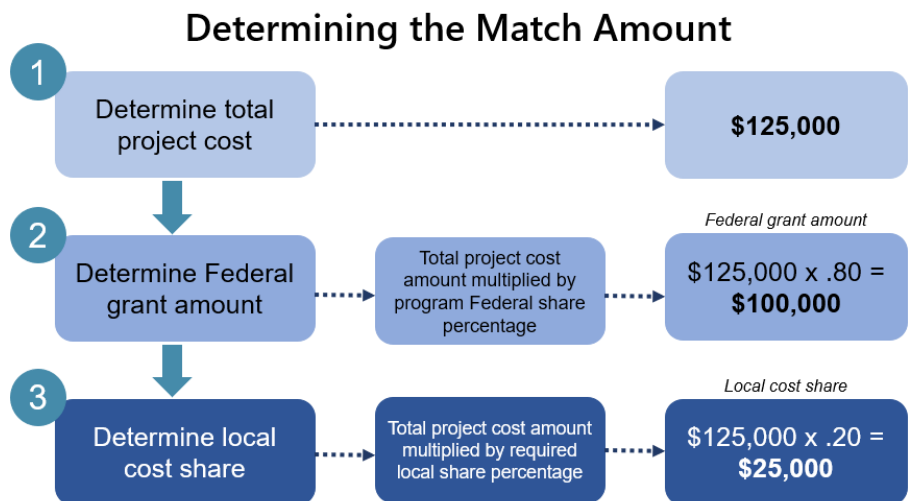
- Preliminary Engineering (PE) activities, including plan preparation, public participation meetings, environmental coordination, survey, title searches, cost estimation, and geotechnical studies;
- Right of Way (RW) activities, including utility relocation (not betterment or aesthetic undergrounding) and property acquisition necessary for construction;
- Construction (CN) activities, including the required construction engineering, inspection, and materials testing.

Refer to the [LAP Manual](#) for detailed descriptions of required documentation and processes to secure federal authorization.

3.3 LOCAL MATCH REQUIREMENT

TAP funding can reimburse up to 80% of eligible project costs. A minimum local match of 20% is required. Any expenditures toward the local match are required to meet the same project eligibility as the federal portion of the project.

The match requirement can be met using eligible local, state, or federal funds. However, state and federal transportation funds are not eligible as match, including state Revenue Sharing funds. State and federal transportation funds may supplement the TAP award and pay excess project costs outside of the TAP-funded amount; it is the LPA's responsibility to verify eligibility.



All planned supplemental project funding should be available at the time of award.

3.4 THIRD-PARTY CONTRIBUTIONS AND DONATIONS

The required 20% local match may be met in full or in part by third-party contributions and donations, including approved services, materials, and land. Third-party contributions must be an eligible project cost, as approved by VDOT, and cannot be made by VDOT or the LPA. To be eligible, the contribution must be a donation wherein no cash or payment was made in exchange. For more information, refer to [this supplemental guidance](#).



As with other eligible expenses, third-party contributions must not be incurred before federal authorization has been secured for the appropriate project phase. For example, if construction services are donated toward the match, then donated work may not be performed until after the federal construction authorization is secured. Similarly, third-party contributions provided during an earlier project phase, such as PE, cannot be carried over for use in a later phase, such as construction. The only exception to this rule is property donation, in which case the donated value can be used as match for all three developmental phases.

Localities are responsible for securing approval for the use of in-kind contributions prior to phase authorization for the applicable phase. Localities must submit an estimate of the anticipated in-kind contributions and provide justification for their valuation through the assigned VDOT project coordinator.

Staff time provided by the project sponsor is not eligible as a third-party contribution. Refer to the [LAP Manual](#) for information about cost allocation plans and overhead rate eligibility.

3.5 COST OVERRUNS

When project costs exceed the total TAP funding amount (federal allocation and local match), these costs are the LPA's responsibility per the Project Administration Agreement (PAA). However, LPAs may be able to request a transfer of additional TAP funds pursuant to the current transfer policy.

If project elements are ineligible (e.g., picnic grills and tennis courts), the LPA is responsible for paying the additional costs with an eligible fund source; these expenses are not eligible for reimbursement under the TAP program.

3.6 FOUR-YEAR POLICY

CTB policy requires TAP projects to reach the construction phase within four years following initial allocation. This policy ensures expedient use of federal funds and supports project completion. Projects have until June 30 of the fourth year following allocation to reach advertisement, at a minimum. For example, a project awarded fiscal year 2025 funding by the CTB beginning on July 1, 2024, will be required to reach the construction phase by June 30, 2028.

It is the responsibility of the LPA to manage project progress and ensure compliance with the four-year policy. It is incumbent on the LPA to provide notice to VDOT as soon as it finds a project will not meet the four-year deadline, and to request an appropriate extension, if needed.

Projects that do not demonstrate progress within four years or do not reach the construction phase by the fourth year are subject to cancellation and [deallocation](#) unless the LPA provides, and VDOT is in agreement with, valid reasons supporting the delay along with a schedule to complete the project. In the event of cancellation, the LPA may be required to repay federal funds expended on the project.

Examples of circumstances that might delay a project and are not considered valid include, but are not limited to:

- Lack of preliminary public involvement;
- Prioritization changes at the local level, including lack of support from the current governing body;
- Staff turnover and attrition;
- Local regulation changes; and
- Difficulty funding the local match or additional local portion of the project.



In the case of a segmented or phased project, each segment or phase that is awarded separately and established with a unique project number will have a four-year timeframe associated with each project number.



4 APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

4.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT REQUIREMENT

The [LAP Manual](#) provides details about public involvement requirements for locally administered federal-aid projects. The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) requires public involvement in advance of the application process, in addition to the federal requirements described in the [LAP Manual](#).

Initial public involvement for a TAP project is required to occur within the year preceding the application, and documentation is required with the application. The applicant must hold a public information meeting to notify the public about the project to ensure there is adequate public support for the project. Any preliminary studies and conceptual designs should be available for review. The meeting should be publicly advertised following local procedures, and a copy of the public notice/advertisement should be attached to the application along with any public comments received about the project.

Examples of eligible TAP public involvement activities include:

- Public information meetings or workshops where project plans and information are displayed with opportunities for citizens to ask questions and provide feedback.
- Charrettes, collaborative planning processes that support the design of a project. Charettes may take place over one day or several weeks, and include participation from design experts, community groups, developers, and citizens.
- Public hearings, where information is presented to a policy or governing board about a planned project, with a dedicated opportunity for public comment on the proposal.

Supplemental outreach may include websites, fact sheets, press releases, listening sessions, availability sessions, and more.

4.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN A METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) AREA

If a proposed TAP project is located within the boundaries of an MPO, a letter of endorsement or resolution from the appropriate MPO issued within the previous three years is required with each application, unless waived by the MPO.

4.3 SITE VISIT

Site visits provide invaluable project information and details, especially regarding anticipated costs. The site visit can provide insights into safety considerations, terrain and drainage issues, ADA accommodations, environmental mitigation needs, and utility conflicts. Information gathered through the site visit should be accounted for in the cost estimate and project schedule.

Site visits should include locality and VDOT staff, with participation from engineering, environmental, maintenance, planning, and other departments as appropriate.



4.4 LOCAL RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT

A local resolution of support from the governing body is required with the full application. The resolution content is required to follow the [LAP Manual](#). A resolution template is provided within the [LAP Manual](#) and applicants are strongly recommended to utilize this template at the time of application to prevent delays in the award and execution process.

4.5 APPLICATION PROCESS

VDOT solicits TAP applications every two years, in the spring of odd-numbered years, for a two-year funding cycle. Applications are solely accepted through the SMART Portal until the submission deadline. Applications that are not in submitted status by the deadline are not eligible for selection. The application process includes a mandatory pre-application submitted in the summer, followed by a full application in the fall for eligible pre-applications.

Applicants may submit up to eight pre-applications and five full applications in a single application cycle.

Pre-applications are screened for eligibility upon submission. VDOT staff will either screen the application in or out or provide a conditional screen-in based on elements to resolve in a full application. If VDOT poses questions or requests additional information from a pre-application, then these should be resolved expediently and within the full application, if applicable, to be considered. Applications that have not resolved conditional elements by the application deadline may be screened out. Email alerts are automatically generated through SMART Portal when applications receive questions or comments or are screened in.

Projects that are screened in during the pre-application period must maintain the eligible elements in a full application, such as scope, description, and termini. Changing these elements will require review, assistance, and approval from VDOT.

4.5.1 SMART Portal

[SMART Portal](#) is VDOT's application intake and record system. In addition to account-based access to current and past applications, [SMART Portal](#) provides public access to application records and information.

A [SMART Portal](#) account is required to submit a TAP application. Accounts are assigned by locality/organization, and each account has a designated organization administrator.

If no account exists for a prospective applicant locality/organization, contact the appropriate [VDOT District Representative](#) listed in [SMART Portal](#) to request an account. Provide the funding program name(s) the organization is interested in applying under.

If an account already exists for a prospective applicant, the designated organization administrator may provide access to additional staff. VDOT recommends that all accounts have at least two active users, and that organizations review access needs biannually to make changes, as needed. If the designated organization administrator is no longer with the organization, contact the appropriate [VDOT District Representative](#) listed in [SMART Portal](#) to request that this access be changed.

4.5.2 Pre-Application Process

Before each funding cycle, VDOT announces the timeline for the application cycle and provides guidance on the process, including a list of required attachments. To be considered for funding and able to submit a full application, LPAs must first submit a complete, successful pre-application. Applicants are limited to eight pre-applications in a single cycle.



Pre-applications are intended to provide VDOT staff the opportunity to evaluate project eligibility and provide guidance to applicants on scope and cost refinements, and to request other needed information. Pre-applications must provide sufficient detail, including an anticipated TAP funding request, and all required attachments to be considered. Pre-applications that do not include all required elements may be screened out. Project information and estimates may be tweaked between the pre- and full applications to support successful project delivery if awarded.

4.5.3 Full Application

LPAs may begin work on full applications for projects submitted in successful pre-applications once the pre-applications reopen in the portal and before the submission deadline. Applicants are limited to five full applications in a single cycle.

The funding strategy, including source of the local match, must be finalized within the full application. If third-party donations are planned to fulfill any portion of the required 20% match, the application will again be required to provide a Third-Party Contribution Plan. If an application including third-party contributions is awarded, this does not provide automatic approval for the Third-Party Contribution Plan.

LAD will provide guidance and a list of required attachments for each application cycle.

4.5.4 Cost Estimating

All TAP projects are required to follow the current VDOT requirements for cost estimating, as described in the [LAP Manual](#).

The base cost estimate entered into the SMART Portal application will be escalated pursuant to the scheduled phase start date included in the application. For projects that require TAP funding to move forward with a particular phase, the start date should be no sooner than July 1 of the award year. For example, applications submitted in the 2023 cycle would receive funding no sooner than July 1, 2024; a TAP-dependent phase should not be scheduled to start sooner than July 1, 2024.

For projects requesting VDOT administration, coordinate with the appropriate VDOT District in advance of the application to determine the process for establishing a cost estimate.

For locally administered projects, the applicant must provide a cost estimate for each project application. VDOT staff will validate the estimate and ensure that appropriate VDOT oversight and environmental costs are included in the estimate.

Final submitted applications, including cost estimates, are reviewed by internal technical staff and must be fully validated to move forward into the scoring process. Validation helps to ensure information in the application is accurate, reasonable, and consistent with CTB policy and state and federal regulations. If there is disagreement concerning the cost estimate or other application data that impacts validation and scoring and cannot be resolved between the applicant and the VDOT TAP Point of Contact, the applicant may request resolution from the VDOT District Engineer/Administrator.

4.6 PROJECT SELECTIONS

Application scoring begins once the full application period has closed.

All applications will be reviewed for completion. Complete, eligible applications will be evaluated and scored by VDOT District and LAD staff using qualitative and quantitative metrics based on responses and attachments provided with the application.

For projects within a TMA/MPO area, VDOT will provide the scores to the MPO and support the MPO review process of submitted applications. MPOs can choose to utilize VDOT scores or establish their own scoring and review system. MPO selections are required to be made in consultation with the state. Project selections take place in the spring of even-



numbered years following the application cycle. The CTB will receive information about all scored projects. Projects may receive funding from both MPOs and Commonwealth Transportation Board members, depending on their location and availability of funding. All CTB members utilize the scores and additional project indicators to make determinations about funding. FHWA expects funds to be awarded to projects that include elements to proactively address racial equity, workforce development, economic development, and removing barriers to opportunity, including automobile dependence in both rural and urban communities as a barrier to opportunity. District CTB members focus allocations within their respective highway districts. At-Large CTB members make selections to meet population-area funding requirements and then to fill in additional projects statewide.

4.6.1 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) and Funding Award

Tentative project selections are included in VDOT's draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP), which goes through a public hearing process each spring. MPO projects may be excluded from the public hearing process depending upon MPO timelines for project selection.

After the SYIP public hearings, the CTB approves final project selections typically at its June meeting.

Any MPO selections unavailable at the June meeting undergo an MPO-coordinated public hearing process and are then presented for approval at a subsequent CTB meeting.



5 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 PROJECT ADMINISTRATION AGREEMENT (PAA)

All Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) projects require a Project Administration Agreement (PAA) between the local public agency (LPA) and VDOT. The [LAP Manual](#) is the primary source for guidance regarding PAAs. The agreement identifies the administration terms and specific responsibilities of the agreement parties, funding sources, estimated VDOT charges, general project estimates by phase, and anticipated reimbursement amounts. Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) policy requires that all agreements be signed at the local level and returned to VDOT for execution within six months of receipt or risk project deallocation.

Any project work conducted prior to execution of a PAA is not eligible for reimbursement.

5.2 FEDERAL AUTHORIZATION

Prior to the LPA initiating any work or incurring costs on a federal-aid project, federal authorization for the specific phase (PE, RW, and CN) and VDOT notice to proceed must be obtained. There are various requirements for federal authorization and to ensure that project expenditures are eligible for reimbursement. Refer to the [LAP Manual](#) for specific guidance.

Any project work conducted prior to federal authorization is not eligible for reimbursement.

5.3 DEALLOCATION

A project may be considered delinquent and subject to deallocation if it does not progress toward meeting the four-year policy. Examples that indicate delinquency include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to execute project agreement within six months following VDOT transmittal to locality;
- Failure to demonstrate reasonable progress, including PE expenditures of at least 50% by year two of the year of first allocation;
- Failure to reach the RW phase within three years of first allocation; and
- Failure to reach construction within four years of first allocation. See [Four-Year Policy](#).

VDOT District staff regularly monitor TAP projects for progress. By the third project year, the VDOT Local Assistance Division (LAD) may send a letter to LPAs with projects that have not yet reached construction as a reminder of the four-year policy and the date by which the project is required to reach construction. If a project has not reached construction by the fourth year, or is otherwise considered delinquent during its lifecycle, LAD may send a letter notifying the LPA that the project is at significant risk of deallocation and additional action is required.



APPENDIX A: ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym/Abbreviation	Explanation
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
BIL	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, also known as IIJA
CN	Construction
CTB	Commonwealth Transportation Board
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
IIJA	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as BIL
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act
K-12	Kindergarten through 12th grade
LAD	VDOT's Local Assistance Division
LAP	Locally Administered Projects
LPA	Local Public Agency
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PAA	Project Administration Agreement
PE	Preliminary Engineering
RtA	Request to Administer Form
RTP	Recreational Trails Program
RW	Right of Way
SRTS	Safe Routes to School
STBG	Surface Transportation Block Grant
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program
SYIP	Six-Year Improvement Program
TAP	Transportation Alternatives Program
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMA	Transportation Management Area
TMPD	VDOT's Transportation and Mobility Planning Division
TPB	Transportation Planning Board, specifically the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
VDOT	Virginia Department of Transportation



APPENDIX B: USEFUL LIFE SCHEDULE

Type of Project	Minimum Maintenance Expectation	100% Return of Federal Investment	Annual Reduction after 5 Years
Any project < \$200,000	5 Years	5 Years	0
Landscaping	5 Years	5 Years	0
Un-paved Trail	10 Years	5 Years	20%
Streetscape	15 Years	5 Years	10%
Sidewalks Only	15 Years	5 Years	10%
Paved Trails	15 Years	5 Years	10%
Historically Preserved Structure	15 Years	5 Years	10%
New Structure Associated with an Eligible Transportation Alternatives Use	20 Years	5 Years	5%



APPENDIX C: ELIGIBLE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Transportation Alternatives	
Activity Type	Eligibility
Access enhancements to public transportation (benches, bus pads)	\$
ADA/504 Self Evaluation/Transition Plan	\$ ¹
Barrier removal for ADA compliance	\$
Bicycle plans	\$ ¹
Bicycle lanes on road	\$
Bicycle parking	\$
Bike racks on transit	\$
Bicycle repair station (air pump, simple tools)	\$
Bicycle share (capital and equipment; not operations)	\$
Bicycle storage or service centers (example: at transit hubs)	\$
Bridges/overcrossings for pedestrians and/or bicyclists	\$
Bus shelters and benches	\$
Crosswalks for pedestrians, pedestrian refuge islands (new or retrofit)	\$
Curb ramps	\$
Data collection and monitoring for pedestrians and/or bicyclists	\$ ¹
Emergency and evacuation routes for pedestrians and/or bicyclists	\$ ¹
Historic preservation (pedestrian and bicycle and transit facilities)	\$ ³
Landscaping; streetscaping (pedestrian/bicycle route; transit access); related amenities (benches, water fountains); usually part of a larger project	\$
Lighting (pedestrian and bicyclists scale associated with pedestrian/bicyclist project)	\$
Maps (for pedestrians and/or bicyclists)	\$ ¹
Micromobility projects (including scooter share)	\$
Paved shoulders for pedestrian and/or bicyclist use	\$
Pedestrian plans	\$ ¹
Rail at-grade crossings	\$ ²
Resilience Improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists	\$ ¹



Road Diets (pedestrian and bicycle portions)	\$ ²
Road Safety Assessment for pedestrians and bicyclists	\$ ¹
Separated bicycle lanes	\$
Shared use paths/transportation trails	\$
Sidewalks (new or retrofit)	\$
Signs, signals, signal improvements (incl. accessible pedestrian signals)	\$
Signing for pedestrian or bicycle routes	\$
Spot improvement programs (for pedestrian and bicycle facilities)	\$
Stormwater impacts related to pedestrian and bicycle project impacts	\$
Traffic calming	\$
Trail bridges	\$
Trail/highway crossings and intersections	\$ ¹
Trailside/trailhead facilities (restroom, water, not general park amenities)	\$
Training	\$ ¹
Tunnels/underpasses for pedestrians and/or bicyclists	\$
Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment	\$ ¹
SRTS-NI	
Activity Type	Eligibility
Bicycle helmets (project or training related)	\$\$SRTS-NI
Bicycle helmets (safety promotion)	\$\$SRTS-NI
Coordinator positions (state or local)	\$\$SRTS-NI
Safety education and awareness activities and programs to inform pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists on ped/bike traffic safety laws	\$\$SRTS-NI
Safety education positions	\$\$SRTS-NI
Safety enforcement (including police patrols)	\$\$SRTS-NI
Safety program technical assessment (for peds/bicyclists)	\$\$SRTS-NI
Training for law enforcement on ped/bicyclist safety laws	\$\$SRTS-NI

1. Transportation Alternatives Program Planning Grant Assistance Program.
2. Not eligible as a standalone project.
3. Historic preservation is limited to the in-place preservation of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit structures that are on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and have been reviewed by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), which serves as the State Historic Preservation Office, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Projects that would affect a historic property with religious or cultural significance by an Indian tribe must also coordinate with the tribe. DHR oversees federal aid historic preservation projects to ensure compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Applicants that do not provide evidence of coordination with DHR and evidence of eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places at the time of pre-application will not



be eligible for consideration. TAP funds may only be used to preserve eligible facilities according to historic preservation standards; funds may not be used for operating costs, upgraded amenities, museum exhibits, and other non-preservation expenses. Any ineligible use of the preserved property will affect the eligibility of the preservation activities. Any property that is preserved with TAP funding is required to carry sufficient commercial insurance to protect the federal investment in the property; FHWA will be reimbursed for its federal investment on all buildings that are sold or destroyed within their useful life, according to [Appendix B: Useful Life Schedule](#).

