

Overview and Analysis: Transportation Project Timelines

Board Transportation Committee
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Transportation Project Process Phases

After obtaining funding allocation, transportation projects follow the following steps:

- **Project Scoping**
- **Pre-Design/Survey**
- **Design**
- **Land Acquisition**
- **Utility Relocation**
- **Construction**

Under normal circumstances, typical projects may take up to 3 – 6 years to complete from the time funding is allocated to the project.



Innovation Station North Access

Current Process Timeline by Project Type (in months)

Project Type	Project Scoping Phase	Pre-Design Phase	Design Phase* (including Land Acquisition Phase*)	Utility Relocation Phase	Construction Phase	TOTAL (Months)
Small Pedestrian Improvement (No land rights or utility relocation) Value: less than $150K	6-9	7	15	0	6	34-37
Small Pedestrian Improvement (Refuge Island, curb ramps, crosswalk, etc.) Value: $150K - $300K	6-9	7	21	0**	6	40-43
Sidewalk / Trail Value: $500K	6-9	7	24	5	8.5	50.5-53.5
Sidewalk / Walkway Value: $1M	6-9	7	24	5	12	54-57
Intersection Improvements Value: $1M - $3M	6-9	7	28	6	16	63-66

** Timeline for Design and Land Acquisition phase overlap. Design phase begins from survey completion to permit application. Land acquisition begins a few months after pre-design phase and overlaps with design timeline. VDOT land use permit application is subject to completion of land acquisition and VDOT clearance of all review comments.*

*** Minor utility relocation within existing right of way or easement to be completed during Land Acquisition.*

Project Phase: Project Scoping

Initial evaluation and analysis of multiple variables to determine the best solutions for a specific project need. Development of conceptual designs and cost estimates. Activities include:

- Initial Project Review (IPR) Meeting *(includes review by other County agencies and Board offices)*
- Traffic and Feasibility Studies *(each round of VDOT review is 30 days)*
- Initial VDOT (and Other Applicable Authority) Approval of Project
- Coordination of Additional Project Funding *(if needed)*
- Finalization of Concept Design, Cost Estimate and Scoping Package

Common Challenges:

- Receiving timely comments from and reaching agreement with contributing entities
- Scope creep and the need for additional studies
- Workload capacity

Opportunities for Enhancement:

- Establish updated baseline timelines and target dates for tracking
- Consider earlier public engagement to ensure awareness and scope to avoid project changes in later stages

Project Phase: Pre-Design/Survey

Develop details of the scoped project to identify tasks which must be completed to deliver a successful project, including the procurement of professional design and engineering consultants to assist in the design of the project. Activities include:

- Site Research:
  - Field Visits
  - Surveys *(requires a 30-day period for right of entry)*
  - Property Record Research
- Architectural and Engineering (AE) Task Order Negotiations
- AE Notice to Proceed (NTP) Issuance

Common Challenges:

- Survey backlog/workload
- Contract negotiations

Opportunities for Enhancement:

- Begin survey work earlier for smaller projects and use consultants
- Advance the distribution of survey letters prior to pre-design
- Raise authorization limits to reduce time for contract approval

Project Phase: Design

Plans are developed through different stages of detail and reviewed by VDOT and County agencies until a final approved plan is completed. Activities include:

- Preliminary Concept Submission and Review
- Intermediate Design (60% Design) and Review *(VDOT submission has a 30-day review time)*
- Community Information Meeting(s) and Comment
  - Special considerations and addressing public concerns
  - Mandated public hearings as required *(each round adds 2 months)*
- Pre-Final Design (90%) and Review *(VDOT submission has a 30-day review time)*
- Utility Impact Analysis and Relocation Design
- Final Design (100%) and Review *(VDOT submission has a 30-day review time)*

Common Challenges:

- New review comments at later stages
- Scope revisions, modifications
- Utility conflicts
- Workload

Opportunities for Enhancement:

- Consultant performance evaluations to address quality control for design submissions
- Work with VDOT to establish a chief decision maker on comments when projects reach a critical stage
- Prohibiting scope revisions or modifications after a selected timeline point in design phase



Project Phase: Land Acquisition

Land acquisition includes the development of project plats and negotiations with property owners on the necessary land rights to construct the project. This is a phase typically handled by DPWES. Activities include:

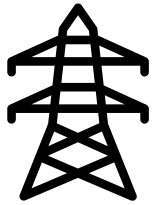
- Project Plat Preparation
- Utility Plat Preparation *(if necessary)*
- Appraisals
- Offer Letters
- Land Acquisition Negotiations

Common Challenges:

- Property owner's opposition to project and/or extended land rights negotiations
- Utility company scheduling
  - Delays in utility design
  - Plat preparation delays
- Condemnation process takes approximately 5 months

Opportunities for Enhancement:

- Earlier coordination with Supervisors' offices regarding design, impacts and potential use of condemnation during land acquisition



Project Phase: Utility Relocation

Approving the final design, cost estimate and utility company relocation efforts. Progress in this phase is dependent on cooperation and capacity of local utilities involved. If no land rights are required for utility relocation work, this phase can begin during the land acquisition phase. Activities include:

- Approval of Plans and Estimates
- Utility Relocation Notice to Proceed Issuance
- Utility Relocations
  (utility companies typically work one at a time)

Common Challenges:

- Delays in relocation timeline
- Land right acquisition delays
- Time of year restrictions
- Outage scheduling

Opportunities for Enhancement:

- Hold regular progress meetings with utilities at a higher level
- Seek assistance from Supervisors to advance high-priority projects with utility companies

Project Phase: Construction

Construction begins with the submission for required permits to begin building a project and concludes with the final completion and release for utilization of a project. The process is guided by the DPWES construction schedule. Activities include:

- Permit Submission
- Final Construction Package
- Construction Bid/Award Process
- Construction

Common Challenges:

- Encountering unknown utilities and unforeseen site conditions
- Constructability issues
- Scheduling restrictions (endangered species and temperature)

Opportunities for Enhancement:

- Work with DPWES on constructability reviews at the pre-final design stage.

Next Steps

- Initiate Internal Process Changes
  - Updating baseline timelines and target dates at the scoping stage
  - Raise contract authorization amounts
  - Modify the timing of survey activities
  - Develop consultant quality control materials
- Discuss Modifications with External Partners
  - Engage with VDOT on decision-making roles
  - Create additional touchpoints with Supervisor's offices on project design, land acquisition, and utilities
  - Collaborate with DPWES on constructability reviews
  - Initiate progress meetings with utilities
- Incorporate Future Findings of the Auditor of the Board's Report
  - Timelines for completion of changes will be codified in report





Feedback Requested from the Board

- Staff has presented considerations for improving project delivery timelines. Are there additional suggestions?
- Staff made a recommendation associated with changes in public involvement, including earlier engagement and limiting changes after a certain stage. Does the Board support these recommendations?