

## **Livable Delaware**

Activity/Policy/Program name: Highway Operations Maintenance Policy

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Purpose: To take care of what we own, so it will last longer and work better, reducing the need for major renovations or new construction.

Enabling Laws: 17 Del. C. § 132, 132 (f)

### Policies:

- Bike
- Long Range Plan
- Sidewalk policy
- Sweeping
- Traffic Calming

History: Until the recent past, there have been relatively few bike paths and sidewalks within the state's right-of-way, which needed to be addressed and/or cared for. Public input was relatively infrequent, requests for service were handled individually, and actions were very specific to satisfy only the scope of the complaint being responded to.

### Current Situation:

- **Bike Paths**: For those bike paths which have been, or will be created within the paved surface of the roadway, and designated by paint striping, cleaning and repair of these facilities will be accomplished within the existing established procedures and policies governing highway sweeping and pot hole repair. Where bike paths are constructed as separate, stand-alone facilities, there is no current policy guiding frequency of cleaning, or standards defining an acceptable level of maintenance. Such a policy needs to be developed. Specialized equipment not currently in the Department's inventory or contracted services will be required to properly maintain separate paths. Existing equipment is designed for roadway service, and is too large and heavy to be utilized on stand-alone bikeways without damaging the physical structure of the path. There is no current effort to begin the process of developing a maintenance policy for bike paths.
- **Sidewalks**: Sidewalks located within the state's right-of-way along maintenance numbered roadways outside of municipal boundaries have long been given minimal attention. There are no standards or policies that define frequency of cleaning or serviceability. Where failures occur, they are not addressed unless significant public input is received. There is a committee formed to address the specific concern of clearing snowfall from sidewalks leading to established bus stops which have been equipped with shelters. The committee has held three meetings, and is still in the information-gathering phase. It is anticipated that initial recommendations will be forthcoming by late fall of the year.

Revisions/Actions Needed: The effort currently underway to address snow removal from sidewalks and bus stops needs to be broadened to include overall maintenance policies for sidewalks outside of subdivisions in general. Similar efforts need to be initiated to address the maintenance of bike paths.

Resources needed to create/revise: At least two independent committees are necessary to develop the sidewalk and bikeway policies. I recommend two because they address different constituencies, and therefore need different representation.

Process for creation/revision: The committees need to be appointed by the Directors of Highway Operations, Pre-Construction, and Planning since there are planning and design considerations which must be considered if an adequate and rational maintenance policy is to be developed. Where a sidewalk and/or bike path is placed relative to the roadway will have significant impact on the ease of cleaning and maintaining the facility, requiring that these long-term activities be fully considered in the project development phase.

Schedule: One year will be required to develop, circulate, and approve any maintenance policies for sidewalk and bikeway maintenance.

Measures to guide progress: These need to be developed subsequent to the adoption of a policy, though initial drafts could be a commentary for the policy review process.

Interaction or inter-relationships with other agencies: The development of this policy will need to include contact with and input from the Delaware Bicycle Council, with all three County governments, and with numerous municipalities. A comprehensive review of the Department's legal responsibilities is needed to set the parameters for addressing the assignment of maintenance responsibilities for sidewalks within state right-of-ways. There are numerous city-state agreements that address this issue in a site-specific basis, but there is no overall agreement between municipalities and the state on how to proceed in the future. This problem is even more severe in the case of subdivision streets.