

# **Transportation and Housing Alliance Toolkit – Second Edition**

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Welcome to the THA Toolkit! This resource contains tools to carry out an inclusive process **to create plans that lead to livable communities for all citizens**. The Toolkit is organized into sections to guide teams through the process. Each tab contains information and step-by-step guidance. A Compact Disk (CD) is also included with census data and the checklist in electronic form.

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# Transportation and Housing Alliance Toolkit – Second Edition

## Acknowledgements

The Transportation and Housing Alliance came about through the work and vision of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD). VBPD identified the need to develop collaboration between housing and transportation stakeholders and professionals for the purposes of building the capacity of transportation and housing access and choice in communities throughout Virginia. VBPD articulated their vision for the full inclusion of people with disabilities in their communities through improving transportation and housing opportunities in their Grant Funding Announcement for 2005, issued in December 2004. The proposed Transportation and Housing Alliance project included the development of a tool to assess housing and transportation needs, project future needs, and identify overlapping issues and opportunities. VBPD identified Planning District Commissions (PDCs) as principal players in this statewide effort, working with state agencies and other organizations throughout Virginia. VBPD continued the grant for 2 years to June 30, 2009 and provided funding to utilize the Toolkit in 12 planning projects. This second edition incorporates comments and lessons learned from those projects.

## Partners

The Transportation and Housing Alliance (THA) has been established as a standing committee of the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions (VAPDC). The goal of the THA is to serve as a conduit of information, resources, technical assistance and education. The THA will make public policy recommendations and work to build and improve accessibility and interconnection between housing and transportation in localities and statewide. The THA Steering Committee consists of stakeholders across the state, including representatives of:

- Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit (DPRT)
- Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
- Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA)
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs)
- Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)/Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
- Fair Housing
- Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD)
- Planning Districts in Virginia

## Purpose of Toolkit

The main product of the Transportation and Housing Alliance (THA) is this Toolkit. The purpose of the Toolkit is to assess housing and transportation needs, project future needs and identify overlapping issues and opportunities. **The key outcomes of using the Toolkit are plans that create livable communities for all citizens.**

## Grantee

The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) is the grantee for the THA. You can contact TJPDC at [info@tjpd.org](mailto:info@tjpd.org) or (434) 979-7310. Our web site is [www.tjpd.org](http://www.tjpd.org). Our mailing address is P.O. Box 1505, Charlottesville, VA 22902-1505. We are located at 401 East Water Street in Charlottesville.

# Transportation and Housing Alliance Toolkit – Second Edition

## Introduction

The Transportation and Housing Alliance (THA) is a statewide initiative for Virginia linking public and private leaders in the areas of housing and transportation. Linking transportation and housing together in the planning process is essential, since home is either the origin or destination for most personal trips. The THA developed this toolkit and also makes recommendation for policy changes that will shape communities in a way that provides for the transportation and housing needs of all citizens.

The Toolkit is best used as part of a planning effort for a region, community or neighborhood. It gives planners additional tools to analyze data numerically and through mapping. It also provides a checklist to assess the study area by a variety of criteria to evaluate the livability of its transportation systems and housing stock. The Toolkit provides a way to consider the needs of people who are often excluded from the planning process.

The THA Toolkit can help give a voice to people who cannot or choose not to participate in public workshops or meetings, who rarely respond to surveys, and who are difficult to reach through formal channels. Including a wide range of needs in the planning process makes it more likely that the resulting plans will result in livable communities for all citizens.

## Partners

The goal of the THA is to serve as a conduit for information, resources, technical assistance and education. The THA will make public policy recommendations and work to build and improve accessibility and interconnection between housing and transportation in localities and statewide. The THA Steering Committee consists of stakeholders across the state, including partners from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit (VDPRRT), the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA), the Disability Commission, the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), transit providers, Fair Housing advocates, the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD), and representatives from five of the twenty-one Planning Districts in Virginia. The THA is primarily funded through a grant awarded by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD).

## Toolkit

The main product of the Transportation and Housing Alliance (THA) is this Toolkit. **The purpose of the Toolkit is to create plans that lead to livable communities for all citizens.** The Toolkit provides approaches to assess housing and transportation needs, project future needs and identify overlapping issues and opportunities. The THA Steering Committee is pleased to present this toolkit as a planning tool to assess needs, and as a guide to incorporating what has been learned into a plan, creating an action agenda, and implementing the plan. This process may also result in recommendations for modification of existing policies, or proposed new policies, at the state and local level. The THA Steering Committee is a conduit for policy recommendations to reach state decision-makers.

# Transportation and Housing Alliance Toolkit

## Getting Started

### **What is the Transportation and Housing Alliance?**

The Transportation and Housing Alliance (THA) is a Virginia statewide initiative linking public and private leaders in the areas of housing and transportation. Linking transportation and housing together in the planning process is essential, since home is either the origin or destination for most personal trips. The THA developed this Toolkit and also makes recommendation for policy changes that will shape communities in a way that provides for the transportation and housing needs of all citizens.

This Toolkit presents an inclusive model for planning to help planners and policy makers ensure that plans lead to livable communities for all citizens.

### **How could we use the THA Toolkit?**

The Toolkit is best used as part of a planning effort for a region, community or neighborhood. It gives planners additional tools to analyze data numerically and through mapping. It also provides a checklist to assess the study area in a variety of dimensions to evaluate the livability of its transportation systems and housing stock. The Toolkit can be used:

- As a part of a locality's Comprehensive Planning
- As part of a community plan or transportation study
- As an element in a Needs Assessment for people with disabilities
- To help determine desirable locations for housing or services
- To evaluate proposed projects and their impact on the surrounding area

### **Why would we use the THA Toolkit?**

The Toolkit provides a way to consider the needs of people who are often excluded from the planning process. Barriers that prevent people from engaging in the public process include:

- Lack of access to a car or the ability to drive
- Limited income
- Disability
- Age (young or old)
- Limited access to public information
- Limited education
- A feeling of being disconnected from the system

**The THA Toolkit can help give a voice to people who cannot or choose not to participate in public workshops or meetings, who rarely respond to surveys, and who are difficult to reach through formal channels.** Including a wide range of needs in the planning process makes it more likely that the resulting plans will create livable communities for all citizens.

### **It sounds difficult. How much time and effort will it take to use the Toolkit?**

The Toolkit is not a single instrument, but a collection of tools. Many of the tools use widely available data, such as Census data, and fairly simple analysis and mapping techniques to provide useful input into the planning process. The Toolkit does assume a basic level of GIS skill for the mapping work. Additional tools are included for more in-depth analysis, including walking tours to evaluate an area and more sophisticated mapping techniques to hone in on particular issues or

problem areas. A small team could complete a simple analysis in a few weeks. A more sophisticated analysis will take more time and effort. The size of the study area will also affect the time and effort needed.

### **We don't have GIS capability. Can we still use the Toolkit?**

The Toolkit relies on ArcGIS Desktop (not ArcReader) for much of the work described. Using mapping is recommended to give a more objective analysis. If your locality does not have mapping capabilities, you should contact your Planning District Commission to explore ways of working together. A directory of PDCs is included in this section.

Some value can be achieved by convening a team and using the questions in the checklist. Most questions can be answered by assembling a team of people who are knowledgeable about the study area to answer by consensus.

### **How do we use this in a rural area or at the regional level?**

Rural area projects and regional projects that include substantial rural areas require a different approach than do community or neighborhood projects. A site-specific analysis is often not realistic in rural study areas and at the regional level. As a result, not all sections of the full checklist are applicable. A regional analysis requires more reliance on mapping – different data layers, as explained in this Toolkit, may be overlaid to see trends at the regional level. For example, by overlaying mapped data on locations with high incidences of people with disabilities (both physical and cognitive) against locations with a lack of affordable housing and against locations with a lack of public transportation (whether fixed route or demand-response), the locations where an increased focus on housing and transportation emerge.

For projects for which minimal quantitative data is available, data may be supplemented by qualitative input from citizens and public officials. The facilitator's toolbox and article on public involvement best practices in the Meeting the Needs section can provide guidance on planning for and conducting a public meeting to gather this input.

In a region, a two-stage process may prove effective. The evaluation at the regional level may reveal some "hot spots" where additional study is warranted. These areas may be more narrowly tailored, and provide the opportunity to use more of the tools in the Toolkit.

### **How do we get started?**

This section outlines several steps to get started. These include:

#### **Assessing Capability**

Using the THA Toolkit, like any planning effort, requires resources. Before getting started in earnest, take some time to assess your area's readiness to plan. The assessment needs to look at capabilities in several areas: Technical, Fiscal, Administrative and Political. In addition to resources in your own locality, consider looking to the Planning District Commission for your area and the Disability Services Board for information and assistance. Merchants and homeowner associations can also provide data, analysis, and input.

**STEERING COMMITTEE**  
Citizens, policy makers and staff participate together

Assembling a Steering Committee or Advisory Committee is a key step in the overall success of the project. This helps to ensure that multiple perspectives and knowledge bases are included in the project. The size, composition and formality of the committee will need to be tailored to the size and scope of the project. If the Toolkit is used only to create maps as part of another project, a steering or advisory committee may not be required; however, the planners for the project may want to consider a larger role for the THA Toolkit beyond simply

producing maps. For small projects, the Steering/Advisory Committee may consist of a few members and may meet only once to scope out the project, identify sources of information, other related studies, and individuals to be consulted as part of the work. For large projects, the Steering Committee will be more formal and may meet several times during the process at key milestones. Potential partners include:

- Policy-makers participate as partners
- Civic partners, including key agency and organization representatives
- Citizens, representing various perspectives
- A representative from Project/Technical Committee

### **Assembling Project/Technical Team**

The bulk of the work will be carried out by a Project/Technical staff team. Staff members may be from one organization or from multiple organizations. Staff will conduct the necessary data collection, research, fieldwork, and analysis and present findings to the Steering Committee/Advisory Council periodically for review and comment. Key staff to implement toolkit in study area:

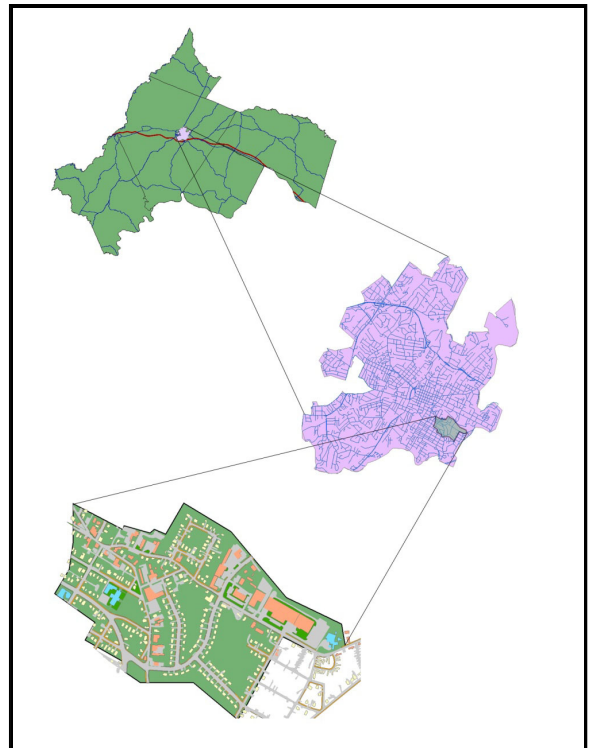
- Technical staff to gather data
- Senior staff to evaluate data
- May include member of Steering Committee

### **Determining a study area**

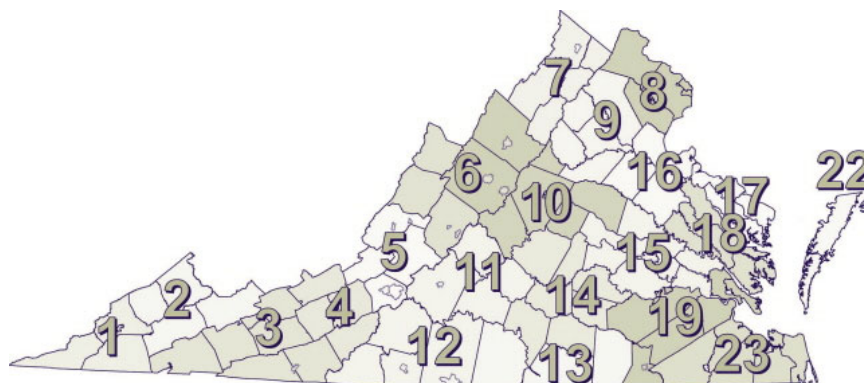
The Toolkit can be used for an entire region to identify areas that warrant more detailed study. The mapping exercises can reveal patterns that can assist in the identification of smaller areas for study. The checklist, specialized tools and implementation portions of the Toolkit work best when applied to a locality, project study area or neighborhood. In general, these portions of the toolkit are not easily applied to a region. Potential study areas include: a locality, a designated growth area from the Comprehensive Plan, a study area for a transportation planning grant, or a neighborhood.

In selecting a study area, a good strategy is to piggyback on an upcoming study or plan. The data collection, data analysis or mapping exercises can be used to incorporate the needs of citizens, including those who may not be able to directly participate, into the planning process.

**PROJECT TEAM**  
Technical and planning staff collect and analyze data



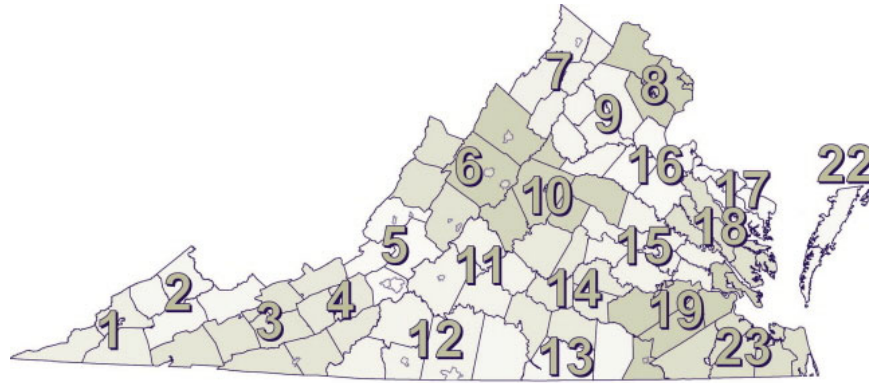
## Directory of Planning District Commissions



### Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions

1	<b>Lenowisco PDC</b> P.O. Box 366 Duffield, VA 24244 276-431-2206, Ext. 0, Fax 276-431-2208 Email: <a href="mailto:lenowisco@lenowisco.org">lenowisco@lenowisco.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.lenowisco.org">www.lenowisco.org</a>
2	<b>Cumberland Plateau PDC</b> P.O. Box 548, 950 Clydesway Road Lebanon, VA 24266 276-889-1778, Fax 276-889-5732 Email: <a href="mailto:contact@cumberlandbroadband.com">contact@cumberlandbroadband.com</a> Website: <a href="http://www.cppdc.org">www.cppdc.org</a>
3	<b>Mount Rogers PDC</b> 1021 Terrace Drive Marion, VA 24354 276-783-5103 Fax 276-783-6949 Email: <a href="mailto:staff@mrpdc.org">staff@mrpdc.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.mrpdc.org">www.mrpdc.org</a>
4	<b>New River Valley PDC</b> 6580 Valley Center Drive, Ste 124 Radford, VA 24141 540-639-9313 Fax 540-831-6093 Email: <a href="mailto:nrvpdc@nrvc.org">nrvpdc@nrvc.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.nrvpdc.org">www.nrvpdc.org</a>
5	<b>Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission</b> P.O. Box 2569, 313 Luck Avenue, SW Roanoke, VA 24010 540-343-4417 Fax 540-343-4416 Email: <a href="mailto:rvarc@rvarc.org">rvarc@rvarc.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.rvarc.org">www.rvarc.org</a>
6	<b>Central Shenandoah PDC</b> 112 MacTanly Place Staunton, VA 24401 540-885-5174 Fax 540-885-2687 Email: <a href="mailto:CSPDC@cspdc.org">CSPDC@cspdc.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.cspdc.org">www.cspdc.org</a>

7	<b>Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission</b> 103 East Sixth Street, Front Royal, VA 22630 540-636-8800 Fax 540-635-4147 Email: <a href="mailto:mweaaver@shentel.net">mweaaver@shentel.net</a> Website: <a href="http://www.nsvrc.virginia.gov">www.nsvrc.virginia.gov</a>
8	<b>Northern Virginia Regional Commission</b> 3060 Williams Drive, Suite 510 Fairfax, VA 22031 703-642-0700 Fax 703-642-5077 Email: <a href="mailto:info@novaregion.org">info@novaregion.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.novaregion.org">www.novaregion.org</a>
9	<b>Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission</b> 420 Southridge Parkway, Suite 106 Culpeper, VA 22701 540-829-7450 Fax 540-829-7452 Email: <a href="mailto:planinfo@rrregion.org">planinfo@rrregion.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.rrregion.org">www.rrregion.org</a>
10	<b>Thomas Jefferson PDC</b> P.O. Box 1505, 401 East Water Street Charlottesville, VA 22902 434-979-7310, Fax 434-979-1597 Email: <a href="mailto:info@tjpd.org">info@tjpd.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.tjpd.org">www.tjpd.org</a>
11	<b>Region 2000 Local Government Council</b> 828 Main Street, 12 <sup>th</sup> Floor Lynchburg, VA 24504 434-845-3491 Fax 434-845-3493 Email: <a href="mailto:info@region2000.org">info@region2000.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.region2000.org">www.region2000.org</a>
12	<b>West Piedmont PDC</b> 1100 Madison Street Martinsville, VA 24115 276-638-3987 Fax 276-638-8137 Email: <a href="mailto:staff@wppdc.org">staff@wppdc.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.wppdc.org">www.wppdc.org</a>



**Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions**

13	<p><b>Southside PDC</b>          P.O. Box 150, 200 South Mecklenburg Ave., S          South Hill, VA 23970          434-447-7101, Ext. 0 Fax 434-447-7104          Email: <a href="mailto:lcmc@spdc.state.va.us">lcmc@spdc.state.va.us</a>          Website: <a href="http://www.southsidepdc.org">www.southsidepdc.org</a></p>
14	<p><b>Commonwealth Regional Council</b>          P O Box P, ½ High Street          Farmville, Virginia          434-392-6104 Fax 434-392-5933          Email: <a href="mailto:marketing@virginiasheartland.org">marketing@virginiasheartland.org</a>          Website: <a href="http://www.commonwealthregionalcouncil.org">www.commonwealthregionalcouncil.org</a></p>
15	<p><b>Richmond Regional PDC</b>          9211 Forest Hill Avenue, Suite 200          Richmond, VA 23235          804-323-2033 Fax 804.323.2025          Email: <a href="mailto:pfisher@richmondregional.org">pfisher@richmondregional.org</a>          Website: <a href="http://www.richmondregional.org">www.richmondregional.org</a></p>
16	<p><b>George Washington Regional Commission</b>          406 Princess Anne St          Fredericksburg, VA 22401          540-373-2890 Fax 540-899-4808          Email: <a href="mailto:donley@gwregion.org">donley@gwregion.org</a>          Website: <a href="http://www.gwregion.org">www.gwregion.org</a></p>

18	<p><b>Middle Peninsula PDC</b>          P.O. Box 286, 125 Bowden Street          Saluda, VA 23149          804-758-2311 Fax 804-758-3221          Email: <a href="mailto:dkavanagh@mppdc.com">dkavanagh@mppdc.com</a>          Website: <a href="http://www.mppdc.com">www.mppdc.com</a></p>
19	<p><b>Crater PDC</b>          P.O. Box 1808, 1964 Wakefield Street          Petersburg, VA 23805          804-861-1666, Ext. 231 Fax 804-732-8972          Email: <a href="mailto:craterpd@cpd.state.va.us">craterpd@cpd.state.va.us</a>          Website: <a href="http://www.craterpdc.state.va.us">www.craterpdc.state.va.us</a></p>
22	<p><b>Accomack-Northampton PDC</b>          P.O. Box 417, 23372 Front Street          Accomac, VA 23301          757-787-2936 Fax 757-787-4221          Email: <a href="mailto:anpdc@a-npdc.org">anpdc@a-npdc.org</a>          Website: <a href="http://www.nnpdc17.state.va.us">www.nnpdc17.state.va.us</a></p>
23	<p><b>Hampton Roads PDC</b>          723 Woodlake Drive          Chesapeake, VA 23320          757-420-8300 Fax 757-523-4881          Email: <a href="mailto:kgrauberger@hrpdc.org">kgrauberger@hrpdc.org</a>          Website: <a href="http://www.hrpdc.va.org">www.hrpdc.va.org</a></p>



## Assessing Capability

<b>TECHNICAL, FISCAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL CAPABILITIES</b>		
<b>Technical Capability</b>	<b>Yes or No?</b>	<b>Narrative / Explanation</b>
Does your community maintain a Geographic Information System (GIS)?		
Is GIS capability available through your Planning District Commission?		
Does your community maintain adequately trained staff to manage the GIS?		
If your community does not have the staff resources, can the Planning District be used?		
Has your community created a digitized parcel layer?		
Does your community maintain or have access to detailed data on existing housing stock?		
Does your community maintain or have access to detailed documentation of existing and planned transportation improvements?		
Does your community's GIS program have the ability to analyze density of populations and features?		
Does your community have GIS layers showing sidewalks, bus stations, bicycle lanes and other non-TIGER related files?		
Does your community have a detailed E-911 layer that differentiates between housing units and non-housing units (eg. offices)?		
Does your community have a detailed E-911 layer that includes occupied and vacant housing units?		
How would you classify your community's overall technical capability to implement the THA Toolkit (HIGH, MODERATE or LOW)?		
<b>Fiscal Capability</b>	<b>Yes or No?</b>	<b>Narrative / Explanation</b>
Does your community dedicate any local funds to address affordable and accessible housing? If yes, please describe.		
How would you classify your community's overall fiscal capability to implement housing and transportation strategies (HIGH, MODERATE or LOW)?		

<b>Administrative Capability</b>	<b>Yes or No?</b>	<b>Narrative / Explanation</b>
Is there a high level of intergovernmental cooperation among local departments? Please describe the potential level of cooperation in the context of transportation and housing related programs.		
How would you classify your community's overall administrative capability to implement housing and transportation strategies (HIGH, MODERATE or LOW)?		
<b>Political Capability</b>	<b>Yes or No?</b>	<b>Narrative / Explanation</b>
Political capability can be generally measured by the degree to which political leadership is willing to enact policies and programs that enhance choice, affordability and accessibility in housing and transportation. Examples may include guiding development into growth areas or adopting policies on affordable housing or transit-oriented development. Please identify specific examples of these efforts and reference where more documentation can be found.		

## **Build the Steering Committee/Advisory Committee**

The Steering Committee/Advisory Committee is a key element in the overall success of the project. Any successful project needs broad support from elected officials, as well as local and regional agencies, organizations and citizens. The Steering/Advisory Committee will need to meet at critical milestones to provide input into the process and to comment on work to date. Meetings may be scheduled quarterly, or to coincide with completion of phases of the project. The Steering/Advisory Committee can serve as a sounding board before releasing information to the public and can be a valuable source of input throughout the process. The Steering/Advisory Committee should be designed to include a wide range of individuals with diverse interests, skills, and backgrounds. It need not be a fixed group; participation on the Steering/Advisory Committee may continue to grow throughout the planning process. Members of the Technical Team should also be invited to Advisory Committee meetings.

In order to ensure that a broad range of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives are included in the Steering Committee/Advisory Committee, suggestions for committee team members are detailed below.

### **Creating a Steering Committee: Suggestions for committee members**

#### **Administration**

- County and/or City Executive's office
- Planning District Executive Director
- Local Planning Director

#### **Policy and Advocacy**

- Disabilities Services Board (DSB) member(s)
- Community Services Board member(s)
- Staff from Department of Social Services
- Representative(s) of housing foundations and non-profits
- Elected official(s)
- Local Planning Commissioner(s)
- Virginia Department of Transportation representative(s)
- Virginia Board for People with Disabilities representative(s)
- Area Board on Aging representative(s)
- Community Services Board representative(s)
- Developer(s)

#### **Consumers**

- Neighborhood Association Member
- People with Disabilities
- Elderly
- Low-Income Resident
- Advocates for People with Disabilities

## **Build the Project/Technical Committee**

For most projects it will be advantageous to create a Project/Technical Committee to conduct the day-to-day work of the study. The Committee collects, prepares and analyzes data, performs necessary research, carries out fieldwork, conducts GIS mapping and completes the THA. The Project/Technical Team will present work to the Steering Committee/Advisory Council periodically in order to receive input and feedback.

The Project/Technical Committee will have a variety of tasks to undertake during the planning process. The team needs to include:

- Technical staff to gather data
- Senior staff to evaluate data
- Include member of Steering Committee

The Committee will need to have team meetings at various stages of the process. Depending on the timeframe of the overall project, monthly meetings should be adequate.

## **Creating a Technical Committee: Suggestions for committee members**

- ❑ GIS Technician
- ❑ Data Analyst
- ❑ Local Planning Staff
- ❑ Regional Planning District Staff
- ❑ Local Zoning Staff
- ❑ VDOT District Planner
- ❑ Non-Profit Housing Foundation/Housing Authority
- ❑ Disability Services Board Staff
- ❑ Transit/Para-Transit staff
- ❑ Healthcare provider
- ❑ Area Board for the Aging staff
- ❑ Parks and Recreation staff
- ❑ Chamber of Commerce staff
- ❑ Commuter Matching representative
- ❑ Department of Public Works
- ❑ Community Services Board staff
- ❑ Mental Retardation/Developmental Disability Organization staff