



MEDIA RELEASE

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NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSIT AND RIDESHARING MATCH SINGLE-OCCUPANT VEHICLES IN MORNING COMMUTES ON I-95 OUTSIDE THE BELTWAY

Arlington, VA— The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) has released a new report on morning commuting in one of the region's major corridors—I-95 just outside the Beltway. The report shows that nearly half of all commuters in this corridor are ridesharing or using transit.

With funding from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), staff of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) counted traffic crossing a screen line stretching from just west of I-95 all the way to the Potomac River in the fall of 2007. The traffic counts also included bus and rail passengers.

Nearly half (47%) of the persons traveling during the peak hours of the morning commute (6:00 am – 9:00 am) across a screen line were using transit or ridesharing. The remaining travelers were driving alone.

Previous studies by MWCOC for VDOT and NVTC found significant shares of commuters were using transit and ridesharing. In the I-395 corridor in fall of 2006, inside the Beltway at a Glebe Road screen line (stretching from the George Washington Parkway in the east to Columbia Pike west of I-395), 34% of persons traveling inbound during the morning peak period used transit and another 31% were ridesharing. Only 35% drove alone.

Similarly, in the I-66 corridor at a 2005 screen line inside the Beltway at Glebe Road (stretching from Route 29 to the north to Route 50 to the south), during the inbound morning peak period, transit carried 37% and ridesharing comprised another 26%. Only 36% drove alone.

In the newly released report on the I-95 screen line, rail and bus passengers comprised 19% of the total and persons who were ridesharing totaled 28%.

Many people assume that there is little use of transit in areas outside the region's core employment locations. However, the screen line for this study was 10 miles away from the central employment area. Therefore it is particularly noteworthy that nearly half of the inbound morning peak travelers were not driving alone but in fact were either ridesharing or using bus and rail while crossing the screen line, indicating that both suburban and ex-urban commuters traveling in this corridor are relying heavily on ridesharing and transit.

Another significant finding was that the two I-95 HOV lanes carried an average of 3,100 persons per lane per hour during the 6:00 to 9:00 A.M. peak -- more than twice as many persons per lane per hour than those using the four northbound unrestricted lanes.

The full 40-page report contains detailed tables of data from the fall of 2007. It is available on NVTC's website at www.thinkoutsidethecar.org.

MWCOG recently completed another count in early October, 2008 at a screen line crossing I-66 just outside the Beltway. This information is now being compiled and analyzed.

NVTC is the leading source of information about public transportation issues in Northern Virginia. NVTC is a regional agency with the mission of managing traffic congestion, restoring clean air, boosting the economy and improving the quality of life for all of Northern Virginia's citizens through effective public transit and ridesharing networks. NVTC includes the counties of Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church covering over 1,000 square miles with a population of 1.6 million. The agency manages up to \$200 million of state and federal grant funds each year for public transit and serves as a forum for its board of 20 state and local elected officials to resolve issues involving public transit and ridesharing. **For more information please visit www.thinkoutsidethecar.org or call 703-524-3322.**

NVTC