



## OmniRide breaks ground on Manassas property

**WOODBIDGE, VA** – New and expanded mobility services are one step closer to reality in western Prince William County following yesterday’s groundbreaking for a new \$49.8 million OmniRide facility in Manassas.

OmniRide offers bus services in the Prince William County area, promotes Transportation Demand Management strategies, and helps people to form and maintain carpools and vanpools throughout Northern Virginia. Its new Western Bus Maintenance and Storage Facility, on Doane Drive near Balls Ford Road and I-66, will enable expanded services for residents and commuters in Prince William County, the City of Manassas, the City of Manassas Park, and Fairfax County.

When construction is complete in summer 2020, the 15-acre property will feature administrative and dispatch offices, parking for 100 buses, eight bays for routine bus maintenance, and an area where OmniRide vehicles will be fueled and washed. OmniRide will split its bus fleet and staff between the new facility and its Transit Center in Woodbridge.

“The OmniRide Western Maintenance and Storage Facility we’re celebrating today is going to be more than a building, said Martin E. Nohe, Chairman of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) and Prince William County’s Coles District Supervisor. “Upon completion of this regionally significant project impacting commuters, residents and the business community alike, OmniRide’s bus capacity will expand and improve on-time performance, add more options for commuters on the I-66 corridor, and reduce congestion, allowing people to get back home to their families faster.”

Funding for this project demonstrates the region's collaborative efforts to reduce traffic and help get people where they need to go. NVTA contributed \$16.5 million, or one-third of the project funding; the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) contributed another \$11.6 million; and \$11 million came from the I-66 Express Lanes concessionaire payment.

Although there will be no passenger traffic to and from the new facility, it will significantly impact riders' experiences. That's because for the first time, buses serving the western part of OmniRide's service area will park in and be dispatched directly from Manassas, enabling better on-time performance and quicker response times in emergencies.

This facility also will add greatly-needed parking capacity for buses and will more than double the space that mechanics have to perform routine maintenance and basic repairs on the bus fleet, said Ruth M. Anderson, Chair of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), which oversees OmniRide's operations. Anderson also serves as Occoquan District Supervisor on the Prince William Board of County Supervisors.

Additional bus parking capacity is vital because OmniRide expects to expand existing mobility services and add new state-funded routes in future years as thousands of commuter parking spaces are built in the I-66 corridor, said Jeanine M. Lawson, a PRTC Board Member and Prince William County's Brentsville District Supervisor.

"As Express Lanes are built over the next four years on I-66 outside the Beltway, drivers will look for alternatives to riding alone or paying tolls," said OmniRide Executive Director Bob Schneider. "We expect to see increased demand for transit services, for new carpools and vanpools to spring up, and for slugging to gain a foothold in the region, especially when I-66 is converted from HOV-2 to HOV-3."

OmniRide first considered the idea of building a western facility 15 years ago, and the groundbreaking had once been planned for 2015 but was postponed due to financial restraints.

"Because of bumps in the road, we've waited a long time for this to come to fruition," said DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell. "The completion of this facility will ensure OmniRide can continue to provide the safe and reliable commute their customers deserve."

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