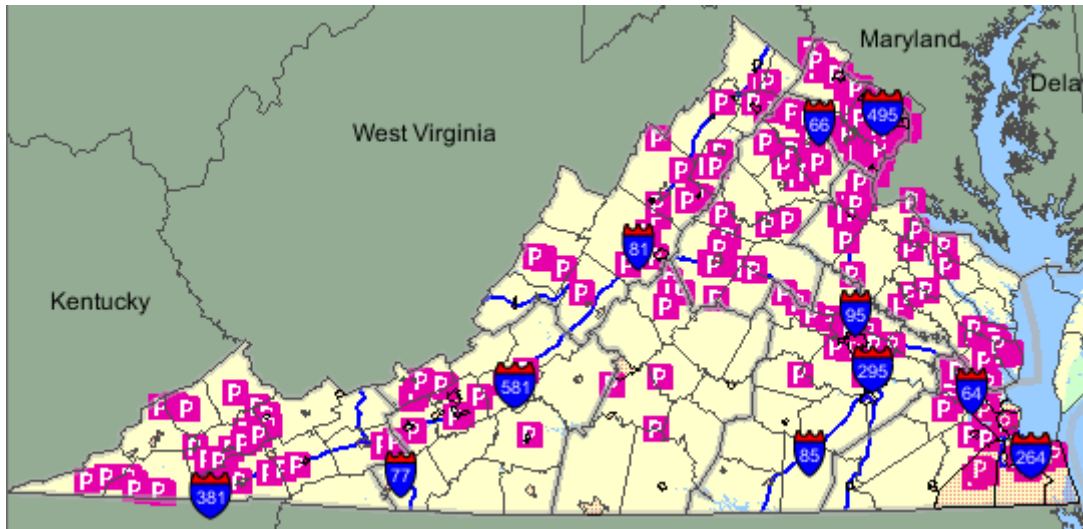


Commonwealth Regional Council Park-n-Ride Study March 2011



Adopted by the CRC July 7, 2011



COMMONWEALTH REGIONAL COUNCIL
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Introduction

The Commonwealth Regional Council, Planning District 14 region include the counties of Amelia, Buckingham Charlotte, Cumberland, Lunenburg, Nottoway and Prince Edward. This region encompasses 2,811square miles of land area.

County	Land Area (sq miles)
Amelia	357
Buckingham	581
Charlotte	475
Cumberland	298
Lunenburg	432
Nottoway	315
Prince Edward	353
TOTAL	2,811 Square Miles

According the 2010 Census, the population of the region is 104,609. This region is very rural in nature and does not include any Interstate highways.

There are 7,141 miles of roads in the region. The current strain on budgets to maintain roads and highways and the rising cost of fuel may make utilizing Park and Ride Lots more appealing to the public. Therefore, the Commonwealth Regional Council has completed an analysis of where these future Lots may be located in the Region.

Purpose

Park and Ride Lots are locations where persons can leave their vehicles and share a ride with another commuter to their destination. Official Park and Ride Lots are usually marked as such and are for day use only; commuters cannot leave their vehicles there overnight. VDOT has inventoried 340 Park and Ride Lots statewide. Of those VDOT owns and maintains approximately 115. Other entities such as localities, private owners, colleges, transit companies, etc. own and maintain 120 lots. In addition, there are 106 “unofficial” Park and Ride Lots that have not been officially established but commuters are aware of them and use them regularly.

Because of the rural nature of the region this Study proposes the use of existing commercial parking lots, public pull-off areas, as well as other privately owned smaller lots adjacent to the road that already have an established use by commuters of the region. The use of these lots would provide the most cost effective way of providing Park and Ride Lots in the Region. It is important to note that some of the businesses cited in this report have not been contacted concerning their willingness to participate in providing a park and ride lot for public use. The areas cited are for planning purposes only. Owners would need to be contacted before any action is taken further.

In order to evaluate potential sites for Park and Ride Lots several criteria have been determined for use in this report.

Site Accessibility – Potential Park and Ride Lots need to be easily visible and easily accessible by the commuting public. Lots need to be on a good surface that is traversable by motorist (gravel or paved lot).

Site Location: Park and Ride Lots need to be located along major thoroughfares in order to be viable. Commuters should not have to deviate too much from their normal travel patterns to access the Lots.

Safety: Potential Park and Ride Lots should be well lit and visible from the main road. It is also advantageous for Park and Ride Lots to be located next to businesses, homes or locations that have reoccurring foot traffic that will also assist in self policing of the area.

Study Area

For the purpose of this report the entire Planning District 14 region was analyzed for potential Park and Ride sites.



Current Park and Ride Lot: Within the PD14 region, there is currently only one Park and Ride Lot. This lot is owned and maintained by VDOT. The Lot is located along U.S. Route 360 in Amelia County, east of Amelia Courthouse not far from the Chesterfield County line. Traffic counts for this location indicate that the Annual Average of Daily Traffic for this intersection was 18,000 in 2009. According to VDOT this lot has 50 spaces. The lot is paved and well lit for safety purposes. This lot is currently well used by commuters.

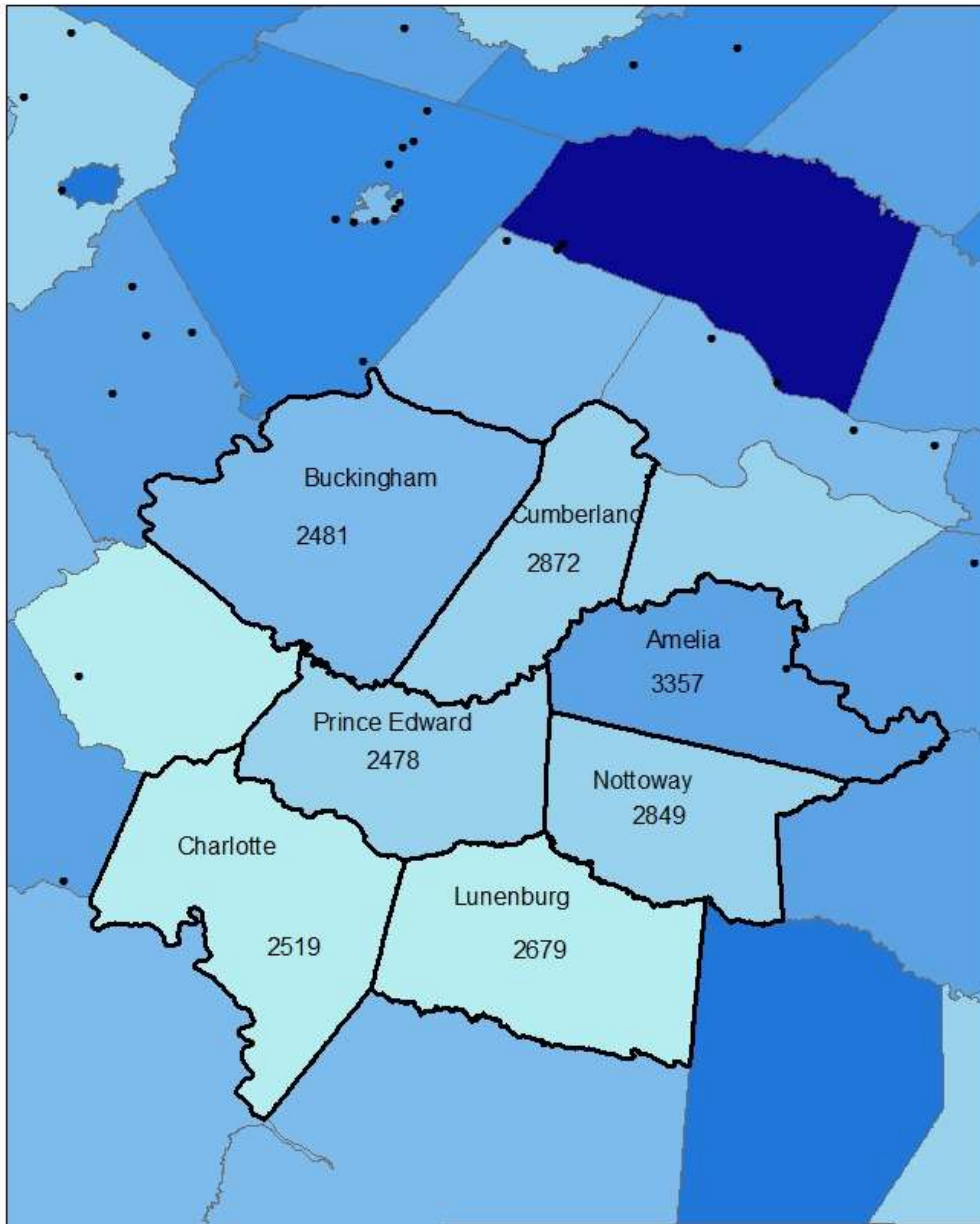


Commuting Patterns:

The region has 38,801 workers who are 16 and over. Of these, 19,235 (50%) commuters travel outside their home county to gain employment with only 19,152 (49%) commuters traveling within their county to work.

Locality	Total Workers 16>	Work in County Residence	Work Outside County Residence	Work Outside State
Amelia	5,417	2,060	3,357	0
Buckingham	4,321	1,758	2,481	82
Charlotte	4,808	2,145	2,519	144
Cumberland	3,811	925	2,872	14
Lunenburg	4,874	2,137	2,679	58
Nottoway	6,526	3,628	2,849	49
Prince Edward	9,044	6,499	2,478	67
Totals	38,801	19,152	19,235	414
Source: ACS 2005-2009				

Commonwealth Regional Council - PD 14



Legend

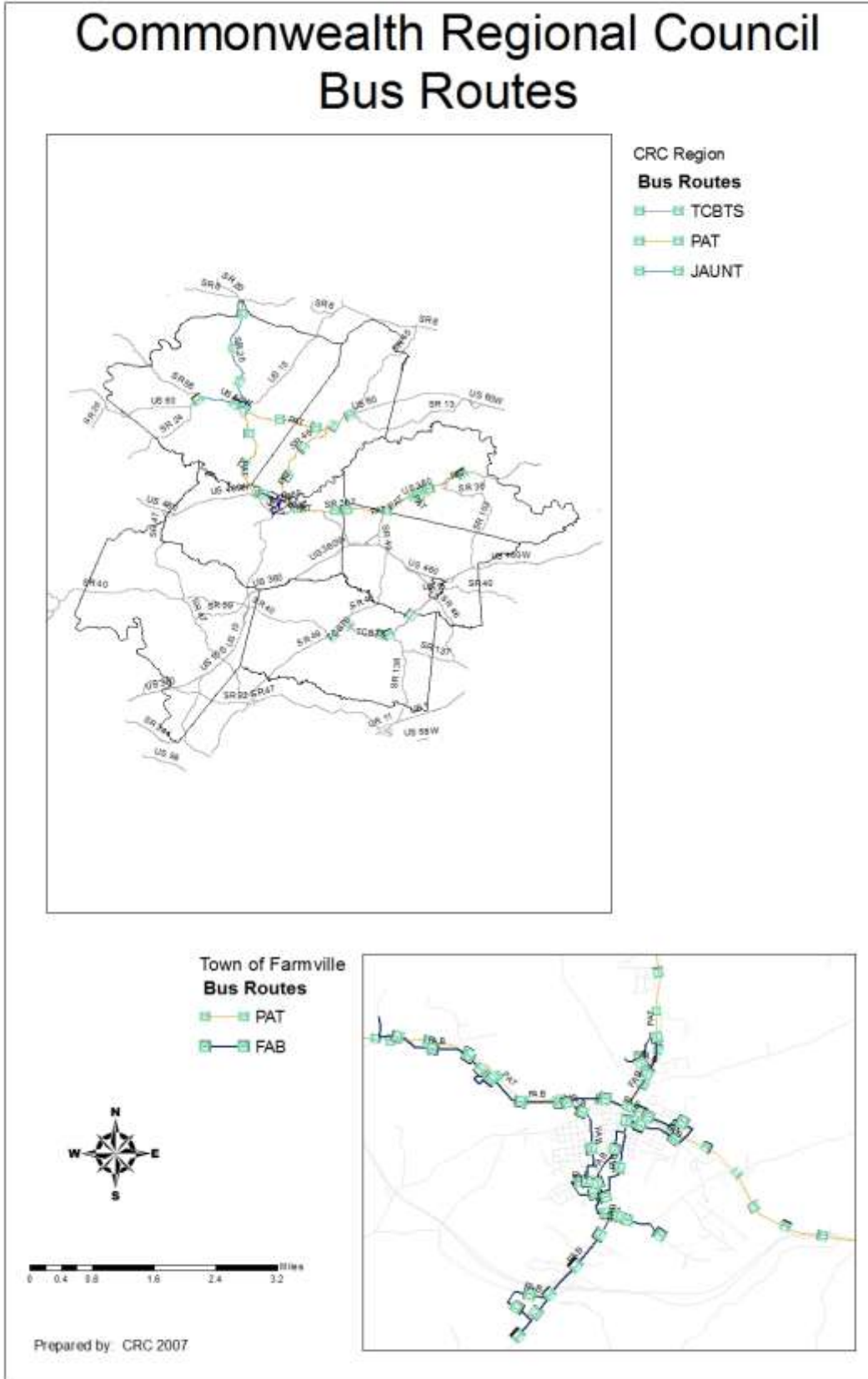
● Park and Ride Lots

Number 16 > Working Outside County of Residence

Source: U.S. Census - American Community Survey - 2005-2009, Commuting Characteristics

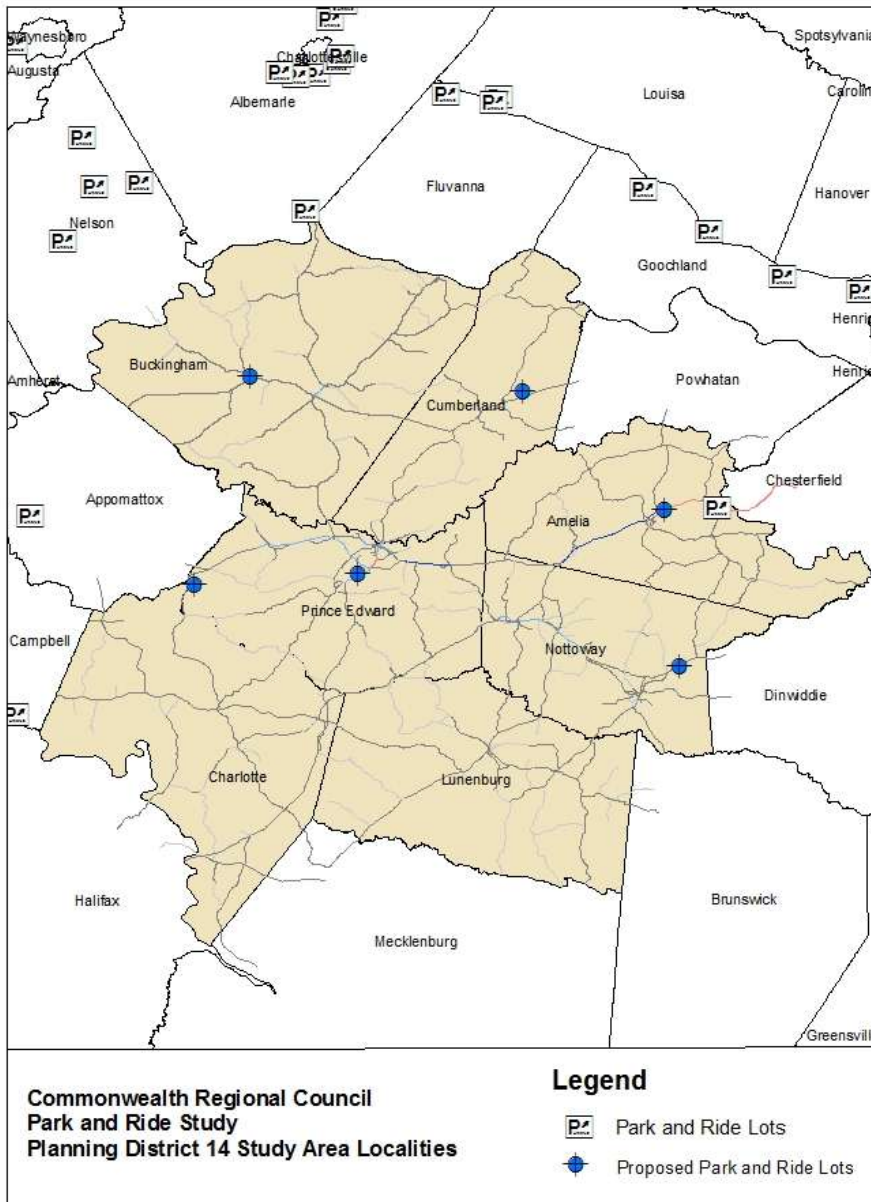
Public Transportation:

Strategically located Park and Ride Lots across the region will alleviate some of the stress on the roadways. The region is also fortunate to have three public transit providers: Farmville Area Bus (FAB), Blackstone Area Bus (BABS) and JAUNT.



Current Unofficial Park and Ride Lots:

CRC staff contacted officials from around the region to provide feedback on possible future locations for Park and Ride Lots. We received feedback on many “unofficial” sites that are currently being used around the region. Below is a map of sites.



Most are at local gas stations or grocery stores along well traveled routes. Commuters probably may have an agreement with the owner to leave their vehicle there during the day to commute to work. Sites that were specifically mentioned as “unofficial” are listed below in the report.

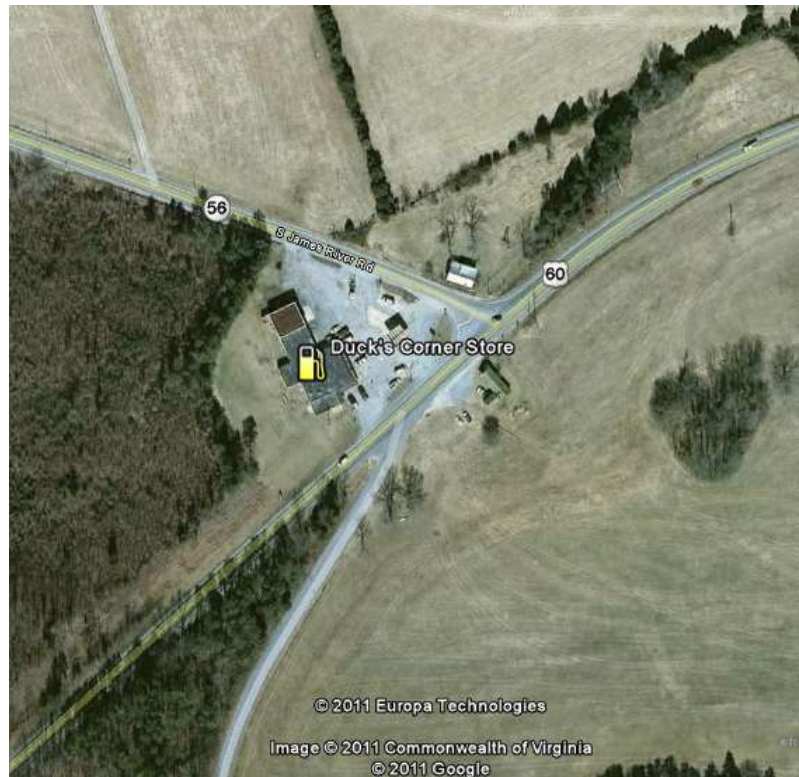
Duck’s Corner Store
10442 S James River Hwy
Buckingham, VA

Strengths: This site is a crossroads of two major highways; U.S. Highway 60 and VA Primary Highway 56. Traffic counts for this location indicate that the Annual Average of Daily Traffic for this intersection was 2,300 in 2009. Currently travelers are using this site unofficially.

Weakness: This site is privately owned. The owner may be concerned of liability issues to opening it up to the general public as opposed to commuters he may know.

Potential: This site has good potential because of its location and also because commuters are already choosing this site for their own reasons.

Recommended Improvements: The owner of the store should be contacted to get permission to utilize a designated area as a commuter parking lot. Install Park and Ride Signs to alert commuters of the Park and Ride Lot on the highways as well on the site itself to designate the space to not interfere with the businesses customers.



Lowes
South Main Street (U.S. 15)
Farmville, VA

Strengths: This site is very visible from U.S. Highway 15 and is very near the exit ramp to U.S. Route 460. It is accessible at two entrances, with one being a stoplight. The parking lot is a commercial parking lot that has significant amount of spaces and is well lit for safety.

Weakness: It is privately owned and permission will need to be obtained from the owner to identify the location as a Park and Ride Lot.



Potential: This location has good potential and is already being used unofficially by commuters.

Recommended Improvements: Contact the Owner to seek permission to install Park and Ride Signs to alert commuters of the Park and Ride Lot along U.S. Route 15 and U.S. Route 460. Also spaces should be marked within the lot to ensure commuters use these spaces as opposed to other spaces that can be utilized by shoppers.

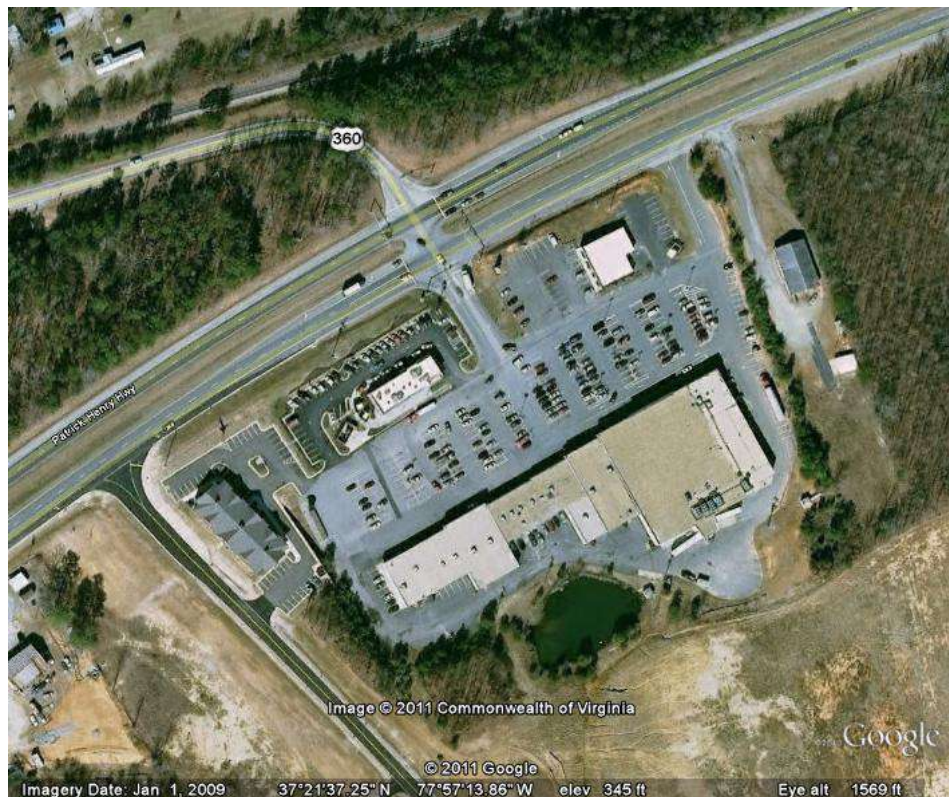
Possible New Locations for Park and Ride Lots:

Because of the rural nature of the region, current parking lots that may be suitable locations along the roadway were identified. Please note the owners of these sites have not been contacted to find out their willingness to participate in a Park and Ride Lot Program. These areas are noted due to the location on well traveled roads, documented traffic volume counts or may have been indicated by local officials as an ideal location. Owners of the property will need to be contacted to gauge their interest in providing a location for a Park and Ride Lot if these sites are determined to be feasible.

The following are potential locations that could be utilized as Park and Ride Lots in the District:

Food Lion Shopping Center U.S. Route 360 Amelia, VA

Strengths: This site is very visible and is located along U.S. Route 360. It is accessible at the stoplight along this route and therefore already provides a safe alternative for commuters to slow down an exit the main road. The parking lot is a commercial parking lot that has a significant amount of spaces and is well lit for safety. There are also a number of stores located in the shopping center which provides a number of people coming and going which also helps to create an atmosphere of safety for commuters.



Weakness: There are potentially several owners of businesses at this location which will mean the Commuter Coordinator will have to coordinate with multiple businesses to keep tabs on commuter parking spaces.

Potential: Potentially one point of contact can be established in setting up the agreement to establish a commuter Park and Ride Lot at this location, thereby, cutting down on the coordination with multiple businesses. This could be marketed as a plus to

the businesses as commuters are likely to frequent their businesses once they are reaching this location both coming and going.

Recommended Improvements: Install Park and Ride Signs to alert commuters of the Park and Ride Lot along U.S. Route 360. Also mark spaces as commuter spaces within lot.

Southworth Power Equipment 1273 Anderson Hwy. Cumberland, VA

Strengths: This site is located along State Route 60 just north of State Route 13 in Cumberland County. This road is well traveled by commuters en route to Richmond to work. It is accessible by two different entrances to the business. The site offers plenty of space for parking.

Weakness: This site does offer some lighting but is not well lit.

Potential: This site is located near the intersection of Route 13/60. There are many travelers who enter Route 60 from Route 13 and this location would be a good meeting point.



Recommended Improvements: Install Park and Ride Signs to alert commuters of the Park and Ride Lot. Spaces be marked to make sure private lot is not infringed upon by commuters. Also, if the business is willing, install additional lighting for safety.

460 Self Storage
20975 East Colonial Trail Highway
Blackstone, VA

Strengths: This site is located along U.S Route 460, northeast of the Town of Blackstone. It is easily visible from the highway and offers plenty of space for parking.

Weakness: Some of the lot is paved while other sections have a gravel surface. It also appears that while there is lighting it is not that well lit of an area.

Potential: It appears that commuters are already using this lot unofficially. This lot is along a major road that is well traveled. Traffic counts for this area indicate that the Annual Average of Daily Traffic for this location was 3,300 in 2009.

Recommended Improvements: Install Park and Ride Signs to alert commuters of the Park and Ride Lot. Spaces be marked to make sure private lot is not infringed upon by commuters. Also, if the business is willing, install additional lighting for safety.



**Pull Off (Vacant Lot)
U.S. Route 460
Exit to Pamplin**

Strengths: This site is very visible from the highway and is currently in VDOT right-of-way. Annual Average Daily Traffic counts for this location area is 6,700. This site used to be one of the locations for green boxes in Prince Edward County. Prince Edward County now has regional recycling centers, therefore this site has been cleaned up and has a graveled surface. It currently is not been utilized for any specific need. This site is also along the High Bridge State Park Trail.



Weakness: This site does not have any light poles to offer light for security of the commuters and is limited access.

Potential: This site has a lot of potential because of its location in relation to the High Bridge State Park Trail. Possibly funds could be used to improve the site to serve dual purpose of being a Park and Ride Lot while also a parking lot for Trail users. Therefore, funds could be obtained through either VDOT funding or DCR.

Recommended Improvements: Install lighting for commuter and trail user safety. Install signage on lot as well as along U.S. Route 460 to alert motorists of site.

Conclusion

Based on commuting patterns, the data supports a sufficient number of travelers available to support an increase in Park and Ride Lots in the region. In the CRC Region, 50% of workers are traveling outside their home county to work. More and more the public is being inundated with information on “green” alternatives which includes saving gas. Many travelers are already downsizing their vehicles to more economical, fuel saving vehicles.

Because there is only one official Park and Ride Lot in the region and many unofficial lots, the key to success of new Park and Ride Lots will be in educating the public on the availability and use of these Lots. This could be accomplished through advertising in the local newspaper and strategically placed billboards throughout the region.

Funding to support new Park and Ride Lots can be obtained through a variety of ventures. A partnership could be established of tourism/economic development officials and private businesses to obtain funding through the Virginia Department of Tourism or the Tobacco Commission to fund improvements to the proposed lots to encourage commuters to utilize them as well as increasing tourism in the region. Some of the new Lots could also be multi-purpose in use for commuter as well as destination tourism locations (ex. High Bridge State Trail Park, Lee’s Retreat, etc.).

Another strategy would be for VDOT to contact the owners of the lots to request that they be utilized as Park and Ride Lots. VDOT then could invest in purchasing and installing the signage for these sites as well as any other amenities needed to meet the needs of the site. The owners would maintain the physical sites with VDOT maintain the signage and amenities infrastructure. This strategy could provide Park and Ride Lots at minimal costs.