



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

October 12, 2006

Contact: Kala Quintana
703/ 524-3322 ext. 104
Mobile: 703/597-4970
kala@nvtdc.org

MORE PEOPLE COMMUTING ALONG I-66 CORRIDOR INSIDE THE BELTWAY ARE USING HOV AND TRANSIT THAN DRIVING ALONE

NEW COMMUTER COUNTING PROGRAM MEASURES TRANSIT USAGE --

6 OUT OF 10 INBOUND COMMUTERS

IN THE I-66 CORRIDOR (I-66, US 50, US 29, VA 237, WILSON BLVD)

INSIDE THE BELTWAY ARE USING HOV OR TRANSIT IN THE A.M. PEAK PERIOD

Arlington, VA – Area commuters and transportation planners have long thought that the easiest way to travel the I-66 corridor was to use transit and high occupancy vehicles (HOV). But until now we didn't know how many people were actually taking advantage of the extensive transit and HOV opportunities in this corridor... Now we know!

The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) requested a pilot study to measure the usage of various commute modes in the I-66 corridor inside the Beltway at a Glebe Road screenline, piggy-backing on the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) annual HOV traffic counting program. NVTC provided the transit data for the corridor, VDOT provided the funding and the vehicle occupancy counts, and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOCG) performed the study. The study was based on data collected in the fall of 2005.

The findings confirm that this approach is sound statistically and provides a realistic picture of commuter behavior in this important corridor including the shares of travel by transit ridesharing and single-occupant vehicles. NVTC and its partners are now applying the approach to Northern Virginia's other corridors, starting this fall on I-395 inside the Beltway.

The completed study of the I-66 corridor inside the Beltway showed that on any single work day during the peak commuter period of 6:15 am to 9:15 am approximately 63,000 people traveled inbound on major roads and transit routes, measured at Glebe Road.

During this time period:

- People traveling in shared use modes (transit or HOV 2+) accounted for about 64 percent of the total inbound travel;
- Thirty-seven percent of commuters rode transit (roughly 24,000 people);
- Twenty-six percent used HOV 2+ (roughly 17,000 people); and
- Thirty-six percent (roughly 23,000 people) drove alone.

Transit options in this corridor include Metrorail's Orange Line, the Virginia Railway Express, and commuter and local buses (Omniride, Loudoun County Transit, Fairfax Connector, WMATA and ART). During the morning peak hours, Metrorail carried 80%, or 19,000, of the total transit trips in this corridor. VRE carried 10% of the transit trips and the commuter and local buses carried the remaining 10%.

The HOV lanes on I-66 inside the Beltway were found to move more people in fewer vehicles than parallel routes. The HOV lanes on I-66 inside the Beltway carry an average of 2,800 people per lane, per hour during the restricted period (6:30 am – 9:00 am), compared to an average of 1,200 people per lane per hour on parallel routes (US 50, US 29, VA 237, and Wilson Blvd.) During the peak period, I-66 carried 3,000 more people in 2,000 less vehicles than US 50.

"This just proves what we've been saying all along," said NVTC and Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman **Gerald Connolly**. "Smart investments that facilitate transit and ridesharing pay off. Our hope is that this study will help us convince the House of Delegates to provide funding for the balanced transportation system that Virginians deserve. And the sooner the better," said Connolly.

For more information contact the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission by going to www.thinkoutsidethecar.org.

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 over \$120 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 information about NVTC, please visit www.thinkoutsidethecar.org or call 703-524-3322.

NVTC