

Understanding the Commuter Parking Situation in the I-95 Corridor

As of Monday, February 14, the parking spaces available to commuters in the Potomac Mills Mall lot will be reduced to 275.

Why are the commuter spaces being reduced at Potomac Mills?

For the past several years, Potomac Mills has graciously provided 700+ additional commuter spaces beyond their requirement of 275. They did so because of the significant availability of their parking. However, they are experiencing growth and have a number of restaurant tenants interested in locating at Potomac Mills. This is a great benefit to the community, but puts Potomac Mills in the position of having to reclaim those spaces to market the property to new potential tenants.

Where is available parking in the I-95 Corridor?

Although there are currently more vacant public parking spaces available than the number of spaces we are losing at Potomac Mills, they are spread out across a multitude of existing lots. Affected commuters are encouraged to consider the following lots for possible solutions:

These lots have *significant* capacity:

- Route 123 & I-95 - Off Annapolis Way
- Dale City - Dale Blvd & Gemini Way
- Harbor Drive - Minnieville Road and Harbor Drive (*No Bus Service*)
- Hillendale - Dale Boulevard & Hillendale Drive
- Lindendale - Dale Boulevard & Quate Lane

These lots have *some* capacity:

- Brittany Park - Exeter Drive near Route 234
- Dale City Kmart - Dale Boulevard near Gideon Drive
- Good Sheppard - Cherrydale Road & Dale Boulevard
- Montclair- Route 234 Near Stockbridge Drive
- Rippon VRE- Rippon Boulevard & Farm Creek Drive (*No Bus Service*)

There are other commuter lots in the vicinity but they are at or near capacity.

What is the County doing to increase the number of commuter parking spaces?

Prince William County has funded a number of commuter parking lots within the County. Over the past eight years, we have added 3,000 new spaces. We currently are in the process of expanding the Horner Road commuter lot to bring another 500-600 spaces, however this will not be completed until 2012.

We are currently working with the private sector to secure parking for 300-600 spaces at a central location with bus access to lessen the impact of the diminished parking at Potomac Mills. These efforts are targeting areas with easy access to HOV lanes.

Sluggers

Visit: <http://www.slug-lines.com/> to find out where sluggers are meeting. Sluggers should also be aware of PRTC's OmniMatch program, which is a free ride-matching service that uses a regional database to find people who live near each other and have similar destinations and work schedules. For more information on OmniMatch, visit <http://www.prtctransit.org/ridesharing/index.php>.

Bus Riders

To find out additional bus routes or alternatives for PRTC and OmniRide/OmniLink, visit <http://PRTCtransit.org>

Where can I get more information?

- Prince William County
 - Web site, <http://www.pwcgov.org/commute>
 - Prince William Department of Department of Transportation
703-792-6825
- Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT): 703-383-VDOT (8367)
- Potomac & Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), www.PRTCtransit.org - subscribe to "Rider Express" to receive information & updates
 - [PRTC System Map](http://www.prtctransit.org/system-map.php) (<http://www.prtctransit.org/system-map.php>)
 - [PWC Commuter Lot Map](http://www.pwcgov.org/docLibrary/PDF/13554.pdf)
(<http://www.pwcgov.org/docLibrary/PDF/13554.pdf>)
 - [Commuter Parking Lot Availability](http://www.pwcgov.org/docLibrary/PDF/13553.pdf)
(<http://www.pwcgov.org/docLibrary/PDF/13553.pdf>)
- Virginia Railway Express (VRE) (<http://www.vre.org/>)
- Other sites of interest
 - [Washington Metro System](http://www.wmata.com) (www.wmata.com)
 - [Amtrak](http://www.amtrak.com) (www.amtrak.com)

Why didn't the County negotiate with Potomac Mills to prevent this from happening?

The County negotiated with the Mills Corp. in the 1980s when the property was originally rezoned. The Board at that time made certain commuter space was available for our residents. At the time, 275 spaces were more than sufficient. Obviously, the region has grown immensely since then. Potomac Mills has been gracious with the use of its parking, but has never been under any obligation to provide parking beyond 275 spaces. They have by-right use of their property to build more commercial space. There is nothing the Board can do to prevent them from exercising their rights as property owners to provide any more spaces than the 275 spaces they proffered in the 1980s.

Why does the County not just build another lot?

As noted earlier, the County is currently in the process of building additional parking. However, it is important to understand that this is a costly endeavor. Building new surface parking typically costs between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per *space*. Structured parking (parking garages) typically cost between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per *space*. The range is dependent upon whether the land is site-ready, needs to be acquired, utilities need moved, etc. So, for a new 300 space surface parking lot, the cost to taxpayers would be between \$1,500,000 and \$6,000,000.

Why doesn't PWC simply charge a fee for parking?

Most of the existing lots are owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia and paid for with state and Federal funds. Federal regulations generally prohibit fees for commuter lots constructed with Federal dollars. Therefore, Prince William County has no authority to unilaterally charge fees to users of these lots.

Why not build a parking garage?

As discussed earlier, structured parking costs \$15,000 to \$20,000 per space. A sufficient parking garage would require 500 to 1,000 spaces, which means we're looking at anywhere between \$7.5 million and \$10 million for a 500 space garage, and between \$15 million and \$20 million for a 1,000 space garage. We will certainly have to consider this moving forward, but we do not have the revenues currently to fund such a project, and it would require a bond referendum to incur debt. This simply is not an option for the local government at this point in time.

Why can't we prevent people from other counties parking in Prince William Lots?

These are public access lots funded by federal and state dollars, so we have no authority to limit access to commuter lots.

Are public commuter lots patrolled for safety?

Yes, Prince William County Police regularly patrol all commuter lots. Staff from the Prince William Department of Transportation, PRTC, and VDOT are committed to making certain lots are safe. If you have any concerns do not hesitate to contact us.

If I ride my bicycle to a Commuter lot, is there bike rack?

County/VDOT lots all have bike racks as required by regulations. Private sector lots (churches, shopping centers, etc.) are not required to provide bike racks, so they may not be available at those lots.