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VDOT to expand commuter parking

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TEXT OF PRESS RELEASE FROM VDOT'S KELLY HANNON

Virginia Secretary of Transportation Sean T. Connaughton announced a multi-million dollar initiative for the expansion of commuter parking facilities in the Fredericksburg region today to meet overwhelming demand along the Interstate 95 corridor.

Three projects will add up to 3,000 new parking spaces in the region. As many as 1,000 parking spaces will be added to an existing Virginia Department of Transportation commuter lot at Staffordborough Boulevard near Garrisonville Road in Stafford County. Another 1,000 parking spaces are planned for a VDOT commuter lot at the intersection of Gordon Road and Route 3 in Spotsylvania County, and 1,000 parking spaces at a planned Virginia Railway Express train station in Spotsylvania.

“Commuting to work is hard enough without worrying about whether you will find a parking space to meet your bus, carpool, vanpool or train,” said Secretary Sean T. Connaughton. “This investment will bring peace of mind to the hard-working residents of the Fredericksburg area, who seek to reduce congestion by sharing a ride.”

Design work will be underway this spring on the expansion of the Staffordborough Boulevard parking lot. Construction completion dates for the Staffordborough lot will be available by late spring. Design work will begin in 2012 on the Gordon Road parking expansion, with construction expected in 2017.

Secretary Connaughton also announced the commonwealth will provide funding to design a new Virginia Railway Express station in Spotsylvania, with 1,000 parking spaces for commuters.

Two VDOT commuter lots existing in the Garrisonville Road corridor in Stafford, at Staffordborough Boulevard and Mine Road, have more than 1,600 parking spaces combined. The Gordon Road lot in Spotsylvania has 600 spaces.

The lots are a meeting point for buses, vanpools, carpools, and informal carpooling, also known as “slugging.” Along Garrisonville Road, commuter parking lots are filled most weekday mornings by 7:30 a.m. The Gordon Road lot is nearing capacity.

Thousands of commuters use these parking facilities for slugging, meeting buses, and carpooling through informal channels.

Limited commuter numbers are collected by GWRideConnect, a free ride matching service for commuters in the Fredericksburg area, which tracks registered carpools, vanpools and buses.

In the Garrisonville Road commuter parking lots, GWRideConnect estimates users include at minimum:

- 70 vanpools based from the parking lots, plus 19 vanpools that pick up passengers in the corridor, carrying a total of 795 vanpool passengers
- 180 commuter bus passengers
- 76 carpools

In the Gordon Road commuter parking lots, GWRideConnect estimates users include at least:

- 31 vanpools based from the parking lot, plus 17 vanpools that pick up passengers in the facility, carrying a total of 395 passengers
- 3 commuter bus routes
- 6 carpools, plus 8 carpools that pick up passengers in the lot

Together, at least 1,540 identified people rideshare from the existing Garrisonville Road and Gordon Road commuter lots each day, removing at least 3,080 vehicle trips from the interstate daily, which equals 770,000 vehicle trips a year, according to GWRideConnect.

“We have waited long enough to expand the number of commuter parking spaces at these locations, so close to I-95. There simply is insufficient capacity to meet the desire on the part of Fredericksburg area residents to carpool and ride the VRE – saving them time and money,” said Commonwealth Transportation Board member Cord Sterling, representing VDOT’s Fredericksburg District.

“This investment will promote free-flowing traffic on I-95 at a time when additional workers will be traveling to Northern Virginia military facilities as part of the BRAC process, and our population continues to increase as workers are drawn to professional opportunities and the quality of life in Virginia,” Sterling said. “I want to thank Governor McDonnell and Secretary Connaughton for helping to make this happen.”

Fredericksburg area residents seeking to join a carpool or vanpool, or ride public transit, can contact a free ridematching service, GWRideConnect, at 540-373-POOL (540-373-7665).

To find real-time traffic and travel information on Interstate 95 or any road in Virginia, commuters can visit VDOT’s 24-hour website at www.511virginia.org. Travelers can also obtain information by calling 511 from any phone in Virginia.

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