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Quantico lot open for area workers

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BY KELLY HANNON

A parking lot reserved for commuters has opened at Quantico Corporate Center in North Stafford.

The lot has 35 free parking spaces close to Exit 148 on Interstate 95.

"It's extremely conveniently located. We just need to get some commuters who would need to park there in lieu of parking at the Garrisonville Road commuter lots," said Diana Utz, director of the area's ride-matching service, GWRideConnect.

The Quantico Corporate Center lot expands the supply of commuter parking in North Stafford.

The two North Stafford lots owned by the Virginia Department of Transportation, on either side of Garrisonville Road, are popular with drivers meeting carpools or vanpools or standing on slug lines, which allow for the formation of instant carpools so driver's can use HOV lanes.

The VDOT lots are so popular that drivers park illegally around the lots' margins.

"It is an ongoing issue," said VDOT spokeswoman Tina Bundy. "People are illegally parking in record numbers."

The George Washington Regional Commission wanted to find commuter spaces as close to the existing lots as possible. It had been searching for nearly a year without success.

Many commercial shopping areas along Garrisonville Road turned the commission down.

Enter Quantico Corporate Center.

The new office park campus is on U.S. 1 near Marine Corps Base Quantico.

To park in the lot, a commuter must register his car and get a parking pass from the commission. The pass is a tag that hangs from a rearview mirror, Utz said.

The commission is paying \$1 a day for each space. The parking is paid with federal money that can be used to reduce road congestion and improve air quality.

Permits were necessary so Quantico Corporate Center security staff know the vehicles are part of the commission's program.

Pool vans with permits can be parked in the lot overnight, Utz said.

To get a permit, call GWRideConnect at 540/373-POOL or 373-7665.

"Commuters just need to simply pick up the phone and we will be happy to send them a permit," Utz said.

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