



Statewide Park & Ride Program Vision

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Introduction:

The Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) Park & Ride Program is one facet of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) identified by VDOT to reduce vehicle-miles traveled, congestion, and demand on the existing transportation network. Park & Ride lots provide the most benefit when co-located with other modes of transportation, such as on transit routes or near High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) facilities. This document articulates VDOT's vision for Virginia's Park & Ride Program.

Over the next several years, the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) Park & Ride Program will evolve into an integrated, statewide program that will be guided by the strategic vision described in this document. It is envisioned that the VDOT Park & Ride Program Administrator will reside in the VDOT Transportation and Mobility Planning Division (TMPD). Leadership in VDOT TMPD recognizes the role of the statewide Park & Ride Program for advancing the use of alternative transportation modes.

VDOT's Vision Statement for the Park & Ride Program:

The VDOT Park & Ride Program will be fully aligned with other Statewide Transportation Demand Management (TDM) initiatives to provide the greatest benefit to the travelling public and help reduce demand on Virginia's transportation system.

This proposed program Vision Statement will be posted on the VDOT Park & Ride Program website. The Vision Statement inspires the actions that the VDOT Park & Ride Program will focus on to align with TDM initiatives. The Vision Statement should be modified as needed to adapt to future changes in traveler needs and VDOT's approach to service delivery.

VDOT's Park & Ride Program Vision Framework:

To fulfill the Park & Ride Program Vision, VDOT has established a strategic framework that will be used to guide the Department's Park & Ride Program, which will keep the program focused on long-term priorities and will help provide clear, future direction. This strategic framework articulates specific program goals and related action step strategies to pursue. It is understood that many of the strategies as detailed in the VDOT Park & Ride Program will require additional resources before they can be implemented.

The strategic framework recommendations are organized into three main categories:

- 1. Organization of the Park & Ride Program:** *How the VDOT Park & Ride Program is organized within VDOT and as part of Virginia's TDM Community*
- 2. Policies and Procedures of the Park & Ride Program:** *The policies that guide decision-making related to VDOT's Park & Ride Program*
- 3. Program Operational Action Steps:** *The specific recommended action steps that will help make Virginia's Park & Ride Program a national model.*

Collectively, implementing the proposed strategies across these three categories will enable VDOT to realize the Park & Ride Program's vision.

The remainder of this Program vision document is organized around these three areas. It is important to note that proposed strategies related to organization and policies can be implemented in conjunction with the formalization of the VDOT Park & Ride Program and are feasible within the current VDOT organizational structure and resources. The VDOT Park & Ride Program Procedures Manual, which is a companion document, describes the specific steps for how the Park & Ride Program should operate on a day-to-day basis.

The proposed strategies for the Park & Ride Program action steps were developed to guide the Park & Ride Program over the next several years. The implementation of these action steps requires additional research to determine feasibility and could be pursued once the VDOT Park & Ride Program is formalized.

1. Organization of the Park & Ride Program

Strategy: Establish clear roles and responsibilities for VDOT staff

The proposed roles and responsibilities for VDOT operating units and staff supporting the Park & Ride Program should be identified and formalized. To this end, the proposed roles and responsibilities for VDOT staff affiliated with the Park & Ride Program and other Park & Ride stakeholders are clearly described in the VDOT Park & Ride Program Procedures Manual. These proposed roles and responsibilities will likely alter the current organizational structure of VDOT and likely require additional resources to implement. Creating a focused TDM program should start with and always include a close working relationship with Park & Ride Lot stakeholders

Strategy: Integrate the Park & Ride Program into an overarching Travel Demand Management (TDM) Program

The organization of the VDOT Park & Ride Program has historically been loosely integrated with other Travel Demand Management efforts. VDOT's Park & Ride Program should be integrated into an overarching program covering the full array of TDM strategies and related programs. Park & Ride lots support other TDM strategies, including carpools, vanpools, transit, and HOV lanes. Operating a dedicated TDM program would be consistent with how Park & Ride Programs operate in large metropolitan areas. It is vital to align Park & Ride facilities with transit services and other alternative modes of transportation. A focused TDM program could also generate additional funding opportunities and increase VDOT's focus on increasing the use of alternative modes of transportation.

Strategy: Work with Park & Ride stakeholders to formalize roles and responsibilities of the various public and private entities involved in Park & Ride lots to avoid duplication of effort

The VDOT Park & Ride Program Administrator should work closely with Virginia's Park & Ride stakeholders to formalize the proposed roles and responsibilities. This will help identify proper communication chains, as well as identify which functions parties are carrying out. The goal in establishing formal roles and responsibilities for Park & Ride stakeholders would be to avoid the duplication of efforts.

The VDOT District Park & Ride Coordinators should work closely with localities and RideShare agencies to develop TDM and parking demand management strategies and plans. These plans would likely include the construction, expansion, or leasing of Park & Ride lots. The District Park & Ride Coordinators would be able to provide technical assistance as well as assistance regarding policies and funding under the guidance of the Park & Ride Program Administrator, when applicable.

Proposed roles and responsibilities for the various Park & Ride Stakeholders can be found in the VDOT Park & Ride Program Procedures Manual, which was developed as part of this study.

Strategy: Develop and maintain one master inventory of Park & Ride lots throughout Virginia

Currently in Virginia, the various commuter assistance agencies, transit providers, and rail providers track and report different information pertaining to Park & Ride lots. To improve coordination with VDOT, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), the local Park & Ride stakeholders, and other organizations associated with Park & Ride lots should use the same master database and report the same information (e.g., lot location, lot occupancy, etc.).

The master database was created in 2012 by Virginia's Park & Ride lot stakeholders. VDOT and DRPT should continue working together to support this single database and reporting system to ensure uniform and consistent reporting of the Commonwealth's Park & Ride assets. Uniform reporting will improve the usability of information for Park & Ride lots to assist in the planning process as well as every day needs.

Future refinement of this single database system should include asset management data collection tools and programs compatible with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to follow the current direction VDOT is taking with their asset management program.

2. Policies and Procedures of the Park & Ride Program

Strategy: Establish a Park & Ride Task Force

VDOT should develop a Park & Ride Task Force to oversee the establishment of a formal Park & Ride Program for Virginia. This task force would be charged with evaluation and recommending changes to department policies, procedures, and practices related to Park & Ride facilities. The Park & Ride Task Force would, at a minimum, be comprised of both district and central office representatives from the following functional areas:

- i. Planning
- ii. Maintenance
- iii. Location and Design
- iv. Traffic Engineering
- v. Right-of-Way

Strategy: Establish Park & Ride Accommodations Review Team

A VDOT Park & Ride Accommodations Review Team should be developed as a multi-disciplinary team within VDOT. This team should have knowledge of Park & Ride lot planning, design, and safety to provide reviews of proposed Park & Ride lot design plans. This review team will promote consistency among Park & Ride lot designs. The team would be responsible for reviewing accommodations on proposed Park & Ride lots to be sure current standards and best practices are instituted. The committee should meet on an as-needed basis to review and comment on pending design plans.

The Review Team should include, at a minimum, representatives from the VDOT Park & Ride Program, the VDOT Location and Design Division and the VDOT Traffic Engineering Division. The committee should meet regularly to review and comment on pending design plans.

Strategy: Increase coordination between the Park & Ride Program Administrator, District Park & Ride Coordinators, and local transit providers

The Park & Ride Program Administrator and the District Park & Ride Coordinators should work closely with DRPT and local transit providers to be aware of transit routes. This coordination would be done in partnership with DRPT, whose mission includes, "Increase communication to the general public, businesses, and community decision-makers on transportation choices and telecommuting." Coordination between VDOT and DRPT would also create a system to facilitate a streamlined exchange of information. Ideally, this information would be provided to transit and Park & Ride lot users via the Park & Ride Program website or other mobile device applications.

It would be beneficial for Park & Ride lot planners to be aware of the transit service being provided at every Park & Ride lot. Some of the most successful Park & Ride Programs are within metro regions where Park & Ride lot operators also operate transit services, which allow for an awareness of how transit relates to Park & Ride

effectiveness.

Google maps currently provides transit information for use in transit trip planning for no charge. Similar information could be provided via the Park & Ride Program website.

Strategy: Establish and implement a Park & Ride lot classification system to support planning, operations and maintenance functions

A Park & Ride lot classification system for planning, operations, and maintenance prioritization purposes should be developed for the Park & Ride Program. Lot classification would establish a hierarchy of Park & Ride lots based on functional characteristics of the individual lots. Once established, lot classification is useful for determining the appropriate level of public investment in the facility with regards to planning, operations, and maintenance of lots. The AASHTO Guide for Park-and-Ride Facilities, November 2004, classifies lots as follows:

- Informal – On-street or open area parking without public investment. Minimal or no public investment required. Many Park & Ride lots of this type form along the side of the road.
- Opportunistic or Joint-Use – Shared-use lots through partnerships. Investment varies with agreement.
- Park-and-Pool – For carpool and vanpool formation. Investment varies with agreement.
- Suburban – Transit collector located on the outer edges of an urban area. Usually a public investment with opportunities for private development investment.
- Transit Center – High demand location at location with multiple transit options. High public investment.
- Satellite Parking – Alternative to on-site parking place on the outer edge of an activity center (i.e., central business district, sports complex, airport). Low investment that can take advantage of the free market/private development.

Strategy: Develop a methodology for estimating future Park & Ride lot demand

A methodology for determining future Park & Ride lot demand should be developed for the Park & Ride Program and incorporated into the program's policies. Before a public investment is made for construction of a new Park & Ride lot or expansion of an existing Park & Ride lot, projected demand for the lot should be determined. Park & Ride lot demand varies from region to region based on lot function and location, but the methodology for establishing future demand estimates should be consistent throughout the state. The Park & Ride Program policies and guidelines should outline a recommended travel demand forecasting methodology.

Relevant data useful in determining Park & Ride lot demand include:

- Census data;
- Land use maps;
- Traffic and congestion data;
- Thoroughfare Plans and Planned Road Improvements;
- Transit/commuter surveys; and
- Ride matching databases with origin and destination information.

Strategy: Establish consistent practices and methods for evaluating the effectiveness of proposed and existing Park & Ride lots

Criteria for determining the optimal location of Park & Ride lots should be developed. A checklist or ranking system could be used to determine which lot locations best meet the established set of criteria.

Best practices for locating Park & Ride lots are to:

- Locate along primary commuter travel routes;
- Locate directly upstream from congestion on major corridors;
- Locate in proximity to HOV and High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) facilities;
- Locate in proximity to transit service;
- Locate close to city centers and activity centers;
- Locate near transit connections or major arterials such as interstates or primary routes;
- Locate to serve the greatest number of users;
- Locate in areas with good visibility, access and near compatible land uses; and
- Place at junctions of major corridors.

The location of proposed Park & Ride lots should be based on meeting some of the following criteria:

- Is the proposed lot location near highly-utilized Park & Ride lots where occupancy rates approach capacity?
- Is the proposed lot location near areas where informal Park & Ride activity is already occurring, such as vanpools meeting at commercial locations without leasing agreements or roadside parking?
- Is the proposed lot location near areas where high levels of population growth and/or congestion are expected based on long-range transportation modeling?
- Is the proposed lot location near areas with densely populated residential areas such as planned communities?
- Is the proposed lot location near areas with a concentration of employment such as central business districts, industrial parks or large office complexes?
- Is the proposed lot location proposed along major travel corridors between major residential areas and major employment centers?
- Are current and projected levels of service (LOS) on nearby roadways LOS D or

worse?

- Does the proposed lot location have a positive impact on freeway congestion (level of service improvement)?
- Does the proposed lot location provide connectivity to transit such as light-rail or bus lines?
- Will proposed lot location provide a tangible and measurable increase in transit/vanpool/carpool ridership?
- Does the proposed lot location support nearby TDM facilities such as HOV lanes or HOT Lanes?
- Does the proposed lot location have the support from a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Planning District Commission (PDC), Locality, or Transit Provider?
- Does VDOT own or have option rights to purchase land for the proposed Park & Ride lot?
- Can state funds with matching federal funds, including grant funding, be utilized in the development of the lot?

Sites for new Park & Ride lots should be selected based on meeting appropriate location evaluation criteria, but consideration should be given to reducing environmental impacts as much as possible.

As part of this study, a questionnaire was distributed to members of the Study Advisory Group (SAG) and other VDOT staff. The intent of the questionnaire was to obtain information on how the current Park & Ride Program operates. Topics in the questions included funding, maintenance, policy, communication, and VDOT responsibilities. Each respondent had the opportunity to identify areas for improvement in each category.

Responses from the Park & Ride questionnaire provided information on who currently uses Park & Ride lots and where potential lots should be located if funding was available. Using this information and data from the best practices research, the VDOT Park & Ride Program's policies, and guidelines for Park & Ride lots should outline specific criteria for locating Park & Ride lots. Using existing guidelines and best practices from the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), specific guidelines for projecting Park & Ride lot demand should be developed prior to implementing evaluation measures for proposed and existing Park & Ride lots.

Existing practices for identifying the need for Park & Ride lots and locating Park & Ride lots vary significantly throughout the state. VDOT should work toward setting up a consistent practice for evaluating proposed and existing Park & Ride lots.

Strategy: Establish formal guidance on a minimum parking space threshold that can be used when a new Park & Ride lot is being planned

Guidance on a minimum parking space threshold to be used when a new Park & Ride lot is constructed should be developed for the Park & Ride Program. An evaluation needs to be conducted to determine whether or not new construction of a Park & Ride lot is economically feasible, in comparison to a leasing arrangement. This minimum threshold will differ throughout the state due to variable construction costs and land values.

Exceptions may also be required when suitable leasing agreements cannot be found. Similarly, guidance on an appropriate maximum parking space threshold for leasing agreements should be developed for the Park & Ride Program. It may make more sense to construct a new lot rather than leasing spaces when the construction of a new Park & Ride lot is required. Situations should be avoided where fair market rent for leasing spaces over the short-term would cost more than engineering design, right-of-way costs, and Park & Ride lot construction. When evaluating the economic feasibility of a Park & Ride lot, some value should be placed on the ability to replace a leased Park & Ride lot. From past experience in Northern Virginia, when a leasing agreement is terminated for larger lots, it may be difficult to replace the spaces in a similar location and at a single location.

Strategy: Develop evaluation criteria to identify underperforming Park & Ride lots

Evaluation criteria should be developed for the Park & Ride Program to identify underperforming Park & Ride lots, such as lots with utilization below 20 percent. Underperforming lots may be caused by factors such as poor location, poor awareness, safety concerns, or limited transit options. A list of potential strategies should be developed to increase lot utilization. For example, incorporating transit service at an underutilized Park & Ride lot may be more economical than expanding an over-capacity lot. Park & Ride lots with limited opportunity for improvement should be evaluated for closure if they are no longer economical to maintain and operate.

Strategy: Establish requirements for evaluating the potential need for Park & Ride lots when determining off-site transportation improvements for private development projects

The Park & Ride Program Administrator should coordinate with other staff in the Transportation and Mobility Planning Division responsible for developing and maintaining the current Traffic Impact Analysis Regulations to establish requirements for evaluating the potential need for Park & Ride lots when determining off-site transportation improvements for private development projects. Current Chapter 527 report guidelines and Chapter 870 revisions do not address Park & Ride lot needs; but they do require TDM-type information to be incorporated in the Traffic Impact Analysis Report. The following excerpts from the Chapter 527 guidelines exemplify TDM in the current requirements (note that the numbering format below follows source document):

3) Analysis of Existing Conditions

- c) When the type of development proposed would indicate significant potential for walking, bike or transit trips either on- or off-site, analyses of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and bus routes(s) and segment(s), tabulated and presented on diagrams, if facilities or routes exist.**

3) Analysis of Future Conditions Without Development

- c) When the type of development proposed would indicate significant potential for walking, bike or transit trips either on- or off-site, analyses of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and bus routes(s) and segment(s), tabulated and presented on diagrams, if facilities or routes exist or are planned.**

7) Analysis of Future Conditions With Development

- c) When the type of development proposed would indicate significant potential for walking, bike or transit trips either on- or off-site, analyses of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and bus routes(s) and segment(s), tabulated and presented on diagrams, if facilities or routes exist or are planned.**

8) Recommended Improvements

- a) Description and diagram of the location, nature, and extent of the proposed improvements, with preliminary cost estimates as available from VDOT.*

- d) When the type of development proposed would indicate significant potential for walking, bike or transit trips either on- or off-site, analyses of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and bus routes(s) and segment(s), tabulated and presented on diagrams, if facilities or routes exist or are planned.**

** The level of analysis and information provided depends on site generated peak hour traffic. See page 2 of these forms; 24 VAC 30-155-60.C. Required Elements table.*

The following sections of the traffic impact analysis reports should be revised to include an evaluation of Park & Ride lots within the vicinity of the proposed development:

- Analysis of Existing Conditions;
- Analysis of Future Conditions without Development;
- Analysis of Future Conditions with Development; and
- Recommended Improvements.

VDOT should establish requirements for when and how existing, planned, or proposed Park & Ride lots should be evaluated in traffic impact analysis reports. During the site plan review process, the District Park & Ride Coordinators will be made aware if a Park & Ride lot could be associated with the proposed development(s). Through coordination with localities, VDOT may recommend that rezoning applications consist of proffers to dedicate a number of parking spaces for Park & Ride purposes, the dedication of land for Park & Ride needs, or the construction of new or expanded Park & Ride lots.

Projects with traffic impacts should seek to manage travel demand and reduce congestion using alternative modes of transportation in addition to widening roads. Proposed developments should complement Park & Ride lots by including new, expanded, and modified Park & Ride lots, if applicable. Transportation studies may also include recommendations for developers to proffer a specific number of Park & Ride spaces in commercial lots or to provide specific Park & Ride amenities such as lighting, bus shelters, etc. In some situations, Park & Ride lots may increase peak hour trips at certain intersections on weekdays; however, the best and most economical candidates are shared-use lots used for Park & Ride purposes. Ideal land uses for shared-use lots typically feature peak hours that do not coincide with traditional weekday peak periods for Park & Ride lots, such as churches and retail stores where traffic is highest on evenings and weekends.

3. Program Operational Action Steps

Communication and Outreach Strategies

(Note: Recommendations related program operational strategies cover communications and outreach, partnerships, and funding)

Strategy: Establish a Statewide Park & Ride Advisory Committee (SPRAC)

VDOT should establish a Statewide Park & Ride Advisory Committee as a forum for open communication and information exchange between VDOT, other state agencies, federal agencies, RideShare agencies, and advocates. Discussion topics could range from Park & Ride issues across the state to the future plans for the Park & Ride Program. Members of this committee would meet regularly to discuss VDOT policies, procedures, and practices that affect Park & Ride lot users. The SPRAC will regularly identify and prioritize projects for improving the Park & Ride Program and will assist in developing strategies to promote Park & Ride lot usage throughout Virginia.

Regional Park & Ride committees managed by MPOs and PDCs could also be formed to provide similar functions as the SPRAC, but will instead focus on regional and local Park & Ride priorities.

Strategy: Maintain the VDOT Park & Ride website as a communication hub for the Park & Ride community and stakeholders

The Park & Ride Program website is a hub for communicating to and educating the Park & Ride community and should continue to serve as a primary resource in the future. As the website expands, new functionality should be added to deliver information such as a trip planner, a cost savings calculator, identification of lot amenities, transit system service/links, vanpools, and lot-user fees. Park & Ride use is often correlated to transit availability at the Park & Ride lot. Cooperation between commuter assistance agencies, transit providers, vanpool providers, and lot owners will allow for additional functionality to be added to the Park & Ride Program website. The website will provide Park & Ride lot diagrams and layout maps; directions to Park & Ride lot entrances; and notification of whether or not an entrance sign is posted.

The Park & Ride Program website should contain important contact information, such as the entity responsible for maintaining each lot so that users are able to report issues (i.e., VDOT, RideShare agencies, transit providers, vanpool operators, private property owners, etc.). It would also be helpful for the VDOT website to contain frequently asked questions such as "How to Use a Park & Ride Lot?", "How Much Does It Cost?", "What Is Slugging?", "Can I Park Overnight?", "Lot Security Report?", and "Who Is Responsible for Damages?". VDOT should also place any necessary legal disclaimers on Park & Ride use such as liability for property damage while using the lot. A legal disclaimer should also be posted stating that VDOT is not liable for slugging activity. Though permitted, slugging is not officially endorsed by VDOT.

Park & Ride lot information, as well as transit and vanpool information, should be made available on 511 Virginia along with other traffic and travel information. An evaluation of whether or not this information exchange would be worthwhile should be conducted as 511 Virginia's capabilities improve and become more robust.

Strategy: Establish a smartphone friendly version of the Park & Ride website

A mobile version of the Park & Ride website should be developed to allow Park & Ride users to locate lots; find information on amenities and transit services provided; and eventually determine real-time Park & Ride use information using mobile phones. Mobile solutions, such as specialty applications and mobile web can provide much of the same information on the Park & Ride Program website with increased accessibility. If available, popular third-party mobile applications could also be incorporated in the Park & Ride Program to improve the Park and Ride lot user experience (e.g., Google Maps and Google Transit provide transit routing information).

Strategy: Investigate the establishment of traveler information systems that can transmit lot usage data in real-time

A parking space monitoring system should be evaluated to inform commuters of Park & Ride lot availability on their mobile devices. With real-time parking management systems eventually being installed at more Park & Ride lot locations, commuters will want to receive real-time information about parking space availability. Additional functionality could eventually allow lot users to reserve a parking space in a particular lot. Free use of this feature could reduce single occupancy vehicles on the road. For non-VDOT lots that require a fee for use, mobile devices could be used to pay lot user fees.

Strategy: Develop a Park & Ride lot marketing plan

A marketing plan targeted at users more likely to frequent Park & Ride lots should be developed with assistance from marketing professionals. This plan should include the development of messages that promote the use of Park & Ride lots. Throughout Virginia, RideShare agencies and transit providers have developed very strong brand identification to effectively promote their services using advertising funds.

The Park & Ride Program will benefit from the marketing efforts of RideShare agencies and transit providers since the users of these services ultimately use Park & Ride lots. It would also be beneficial for the Park & Ride Program to promote the use of the VDOT Park & Ride website. The Park & Ride Program should include provisions that could be used by the TDM and transit agencies that advance ridesharing. These materials could include:

- Press releases;
- Social media;
- Local radio spots;
- Television Commercials;
- Web Advertisements;
- Flyers;
- Posters;
- Exhibitions;
- Promotional videos;
- Internet promotions;
- Direct contact (meetings with major employers);
- Special offers;
- Inclusion in general traveler information; and
- Other successful marketing platforms used by VDOT.

Strategy: The Park & Ride Program should pursue green initiatives to encourage the use of Park & Ride lots

The Park & Ride Program should incorporate a plan for developing or joining a conservation task force that would work in coordination with the State Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, localities, RideShare agencies, transit providers, and other environmental organizations to reduce emissions from automobiles. The Park & Ride Program could prioritize accommodations for zero-emissions modes of transportation including bicycles, electric vehicles, electric buses, and electric trains. The initiative for creating or joining this task force could also be handled through TMPD, DRPT, or a newly created transportation demand management organization.

The Park & Ride Program should create incentive programs with electric power companies and/or equipment manufacturers, such as solar panel and wind turbine producers, to outfit Park & Ride lots with electricity and electric charge stations to prepare infrastructure for future use of electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles. These arrangements could also be achieved through partnership agreements; however, an incentive program may be required to establish the practice. This incentive would also attract electric and plug-in hybrid vehicle owners to use Park & Ride lots that are to be equipped with amenities.

Strategy: The Park & Ride Program should pursue an incentive program to encourage the use of Park & Ride lots

The Park & Ride Program should incorporate strategies to obtain funding for an incentive program to attract Park & Ride lot users and alternative modes of transportation. An incentive program similar to Telework! VA that provides tax credits and financial assistance to businesses should receive a portion of Park & Ride Program's operating funds. These incentive programs can be geared to offset the costs of providing employees with services such as Guaranteed-Ride-Home or vehicle access for employees during the workday. This program could also be implemented regionally where congestion mitigation strategies require additional attention. The focus of travel incentives should be in higher traffic volume regions, such as Northern Virginia, where transportation projects on major corridors significantly impact travel patterns.

Incentive programs that pay single-occupant vehicle commuters to use alternative forms of transportation could encourage the use of ridesharing, vanpools, and transit and subsequently increase the use of Park & Ride lots as meeting places. Funding from the Park & Ride Program could be used to pay incentives in the form of cash, gas cards, or gift cards.

The Park & Ride Program incentives should work in cooperation with DRPT incentive programs when possible. The Park & Ride Program should incorporate strategies that reach out to employers to promote awareness of Park & Ride lots, their amenities, and available transit/vanpools in conjunction with travel demand agencies. Both the VDOT Park & Ride Program and DRPT TDM programs should allow for technical assistance to be

provided to businesses promoting alternative modes of transportation.

The Park & Ride Program should use information obtained from employer outreach as another data point to determine the location of Park & Ride lots. Analyses could be conducted using employee address information to evaluate potential areas for Park & Ride facilities and identify potential vanpools. Partnerships with RideShare agencies should be created as many of them also maintain this information.

Partnerships

Strategy: Establish public-private partnership agreements for Park & Ride lots

Public-private partnership agreements should be pursued to fulfill Park & Ride lot demand. It may be more economical to meet Park & Ride lot demand through partnership agreements compared to constructing a new Park & Ride lot.

The following excerpt from the VDOT Park & Ride Program Procedures Manual suggests parking space thresholds for lease agreements:

*"Formal agreements should be considered when providing for less than **200** parking spaces. Park & Ride lots along a corridor should not exceed **500** parking spaces acquired through formal agreements to reduce the risk of losing too many spaces when lease agreements expire. To avoid this situation, permanent Park & Ride lots should be constructed."*

However, benefit-cost analyses should be performed when weighing the options of publicly constructing a Park & Ride lot versus fulfilling Park & Ride needs through the use of public-private partnership agreements. In some situations, it may be more economical to construct a new Park & Ride lot rather than obtaining spaces through a lease agreement. In Virginia, these decisions could vary from district to district based on different costs of living and land values.

Strategy: Incorporate the consideration of Park & Ride needs as part of land development and rezoning reviews

The Park & Ride Program, DRPT, and/or travel demand agencies, such as commuter assistance agencies, should be brought in by localities to review zoning modifications proposed with new development. Localities could be encouraged by VDOT to recommend that spaces be designated for Park & Ride use. Proffers for new Park & Ride lots, lot expansions, and lot amenities reduce VDOT and locality expenditures to fulfill Park & Ride and roadway infrastructure needs.

Strategy: Consider the development of commercial businesses in conjunction with Park & Ride lots to attract commuters to use Park & Ride lots and provide additional lot amenities

While not allowed under current regulations, opportunities to incorporate the development of commercial businesses adjacent to Park & Ride lots should be pursued to attract commuters to use Park & Ride lots. Rather than simply developing a Park & Ride lot for commuter parking, transit and vanpools, Park & Ride lots could feature nearby retail stores, such as convenience stores or dry cleaning establishments, to provide lot amenities, lighting, and a security presence.

Park & Ride lots will likely attract additional customers for these businesses. The retail store's security presence, which would likely include employees, lighting, and security cameras, will also improve security. One of the criteria for Park & Ride lot locations to identify the need for proposed Park & Ride lots is to be located along major corridors and at major roadway junctions, which provides an attractive location for retail development.

Strategy: Conduct a study that evaluates the monetary benefit to businesses that provide Park & Ride spaces to commuters

A study of Park & Ride lot users at commercial businesses should be conducted to determine how much money the lot users spend at retail developments that provide Park & Ride spaces. The Martin Metropolitan Planning Organization in Florida conducted an economic benefit study at retail shared-used Park & Ride lots and concluded that Park & Ride lot users are 1.55 times more likely to shop per week, spending an additional \$1,000 per Park & Ride lot user per year. This study would provide actual numbers to determine the economic impact or benefit of Park & Ride lots to the retailer. Providing retail developers with potential benefits could provide some incentive to partner in providing Park & Ride lot needs.

Funding

Strategy: Champion the establishment of a dedicated funding source and level for Park & Ride lot improvements

The Park & Ride Program should have a dedicated funding source that is earmarked for Park & Ride lot improvements. The dedicated funding source would provide for Park & Ride lot planning studies, emergency maintenance, amenities, lease agreements, and the construction of new or expanded Park & Ride lots. A portion of the Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds could be budgeted for use on Park & Ride lot projects. Dedicated funding for the Park & Ride Program should also be designated in the VDOT Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP).

The Park & Ride Program, or a larger transportation demand management program, should be provided funding to increase the use of alternative modes of transportation. In efforts to reduce congestion as an alternative to widening roads, VDOT should prioritize

transportation demand management funding, which would include a specific sustainable funding source for Park & Ride lot maintenance and construction.

Park & Ride Program funding could be distributed to projects using a competitive process for new construction projects and expansions of Park & Ride lots. The dedicated funding stream would serve as a method of fast tracking or expediting the process for development of Park & Ride lots and expansions. Under the existing process, it often takes two to three years to fund, plan, design, and complete construction of Park & Ride lots.

The dedicated funding source would also serve as a funding source for Park & Ride lease agreements; specific planning studies aimed at determining Park & Ride needs; lot maintenance items such as lighting and signing upgrades; and lot amenities such as bus shelters.

Park & Ride lots should also be funded and planned in conjunction with other roadway projects such as the Virginia Megaproject – I-495 HOT Lanes. Bus rapid transit projects, transit projects, road-widening projects, and HOV improvement projects should evaluate Park & Ride lot needs and identify locations for Park & Ride lots, including remnant parcels.

Strategy: Leverage land development review process to acquire dedicated Park & Ride spaces on private lots

The Park & Ride Program should partner with localities acquiring additional Park & Ride spaces in privately owned lots through the land development proffer process. One method to fund Park & Ride lots is to have developers provide funds to localities for Park & Ride lots to offset transportation impacts to VDOT roads. These funds could then be put back into locality and VDOT-owned Park & Ride lots within the locality to provide for additional spaces and amenities. VDOT should assist localities with identifying potential Park & Ride proffer agreements to pursue.

The District Park & Ride Coordinators should work with localities to obtain proffers for Park & Ride lots, when necessary. District Park & Ride Coordinators should encourage localities to be proactive when updating their local ordinances to include considerations for Park & Ride lots, such as creating Park & Ride overlay districts, which will be roadway corridors identified through planning studies that require additional congestion mitigation measures.

Strategy: Evaluate and establish criteria for potential revenue generating strategies

It should remain the policy for VDOT-owned lots to be free of charge; however, situations may arise when charging a fee may be required to offset improvements or manage demand on a Park & Ride lot. Any proceeds from lot user fees should be returned back to the public in the form of Park & Ride lot improvements and amenities.

Privately-owned Park & Ride lots may require the use of parking passes or tags to restrict the number of vehicles using the facility. E-ZPass transponders could potentially be adapted for Park & Ride use to provide entrance to facilities and for collection of fees at these facilities.

Partnership agreements to provide amenities, such as vending machines, laundry services, video services (i.e., Redbox or Blockbuster), etc., should be pursued to encourage lot use. Partnerships with power companies, such as Dominion Power, should be pursued to provide electric vehicle charging stations at Park & Ride facilities for a portion of the revenue generated. Partnerships can serve as a means of funding Park & Ride lot improvements, lot expansions, and amenities, such as bike racks and bus shelters for the lots generating revenues.

Strategy: Evaluate partnership opportunities for the maintenance of Park & Ride lots

Programs such as Adopt-A-Lot should be researched with a goal of creating a program that promotes regularly scheduled litter cleanup. Volunteer schedules and procedures would operate identical to the VDOT Adopt-a-Highway program.

The VDOT Park & Ride Program will incorporate guidance on how to assign the regular maintenance responsibility of leased lots to the lot owners.

Strategy: Pursue lot sponsorship opportunities

The Park & Ride Program should pursue sponsorship opportunities for Park & Ride lots similar to how the Virginia Safety Rest Area and Welcome Center program has been able to obtain sponsorships for rest areas. Park & Ride lot signs could include logos of privately owned companies along busy travel routes. The signs would read "Park & Ride Lot Sponsored by Company X" and the fees would help provide funding for the maintenance, amenities, and other improvements at the sponsored lots.

Retail developments with Park & Ride spaces could also benefit by sponsoring highway signs for placement of their logos and producing additional revenue to offset costs for improvements or amenities provided at retail locations.

Summary:

The Park & Ride Program will need to leverage the resources of the various VDOT divisions as well as the various Park & Ride stakeholders around the Commonwealth to advance the adoption and implementation of the strategic pursuits identified in this document. Though many strategic pursuits are designed to centralize functions to improve communication, consistency, and efficiency of the information and resources, key Park & Ride lot priorities are still best identified at the local or regional level. Park & Ride stakeholders such as DRPT, RideShare agencies, transit providers, and localities will be essential in advancing Park & Ride pursuits, especially those involving the adoption of alternative transportation modes. Park & Ride stakeholders will also be

essential in promoting marketing and outreach strategies to encourage the use of Park & Ride lots.

As VDOT continues to emphasize the reduction of travel demand and congestion through measures beyond road construction or road widening, many of the proposed Park & Ride Program strategic pursuits should be considered. To achieve these goals, VDOT will need to identify dedicated, sustainable funding sources for Park & Ride lots. The Park & Ride Program will also need to continue to pursue partnership opportunities with private entities to reduce program costs.

These strategic recommendations serve as a framework for how the Park & Ride Program should be organized in the future. When VDOT identifies further refinements to program policies and procedures in the future, it will be important to keep the focus on the alignment of the Park & Ride Program with other TDM initiatives. As the VDOT Park & Ride Program and travel demand needs evolve over the next several years, the Park & Ride Program Strategic Vision should also evolve.