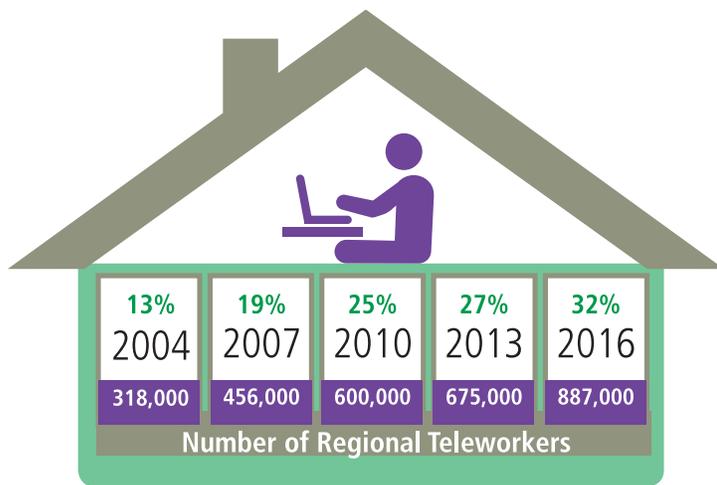


The Commuter Information Source for Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia



## TELEWORKING GROWTH AND COWORKING CENTERS

The Commuter Connections 2016 State of the Commute (SOC), a triennial survey of Washington, DC region commuters showed that nearly a third of area employees are taking advantage of opportunities to work remotely. In 2004, 318,000 area commuters (13%) teleworked, which grew tremendously to 887,000 commuters (32%) teleworking as reported in the 2016 survey.



As part of the SOC survey, teleworkers were asked if they did so under a formal program, or through an informal arrangement with a supervisor. More than half (56%) said they teleworked under a formal arrangement, while 43% did so under an informal arrangement with their supervisor. This represents a continued shift from 2004, when only 32% of teleworkers had a formal agreement.

Most teleworkers work from a home location, while some work at a different remote location, closer to home than their usual commute distance to the office. These other remote locations could be a satellite office, library/community center, telework center, or co-working center. The SOC survey found that the average distance traveled in the Washington, DC region to such locations outside the home is just over 6 miles.

Another growing trend in the region are co-working centers or co-working spaces. Co-working has emerged to address the needs of white collar employees, both corporate and self-employed who work remotely, and do so among peers, within an office type setting.

Currently, there are over a dozen co-working centers already in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. A burgeoning industry, more expansion is coming to the area in 2018. There are even niches within the co-working space industry; some of the new centers are tailoring themselves exclusively to working women, while others include child daycare services.

One such female-focused co-working space located in the Friendship Heights neighborhood within the District is Hera Hub. This international company fashions itself as a shared, flexible work and meeting space where entrepreneurial women can create and collaborate in a professional, productive, spa-like environment. Hera Hub provides members with connections to business experts, access to educational workshops, and visibility within the community.



Some co-working centers who offer child care, are accepting of the needs of the changing family. These centers allow professional parents to network with one another, in a family friendly environment. The children play and interact with each other in one area of the facility, while the parents work separately in the same location.

With the ever-increasing work-life balance demands of a technologically inclined workforce, it is becoming more important to offer employees the opportunity to work remotely. Commuter Connections has helped countless employers set up and grow telework programs, and we are poised to help more.

Visit [www.commuterconnections.org/commuters/teleworking](http://www.commuterconnections.org/commuters/teleworking) to see available resources, and read case studies from employers that have built successful telework programs.

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## I-66 EXPRESS LANES FASTER AND MORE RELIABLE

On its maiden voyage, the new express lanes on I-66, inside the Beltway, saw tolls upwards of \$40, which quickly became a point of contention by toll lane critics. A Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) report of January 2018 Express Lane usage, showed these high toll prices are far from the norm. Just 461 out of nearly 600,000 trips taken on the I-66 Express Lanes in January exceeded \$40. The data indicates the average toll to be \$8.07 for eastbound trips, and \$4.30 for westbound. Regardless, the Express Lanes provide a new option for commuters that wasn't previously available, without taking away any existing lanes. The result is better traffic flow for everyone. Prior to the Express Lanes, single occupant drivers were not permitted on I-66 inside the Beltway, during peak travel times.

In an interview with radio station WAMU 88.5, transportation expert Robert Puentes, president and CEO of the Eno Center for Transportation, explained that the toll lanes are just one piece of Northern Virginia's pioneering approach to traffic congestion. "The experiment was trying to figure out how much drivers are willing to pay for a guaranteed, delay-free trip through one of the densest corridors in the region at the most congested time," said Puentes, "All this is wrapped up in these larger conversations about how the region wants to deal with intractable congestion problems. We're moving away from traditional approaches of just building new lanes, which just fill up with traffic, which then continue this congestion as usual. And I think what they've done on I-66 is a really interesting experiment that's probably going to work long term."

Puentes also said that Northern Virginia is taking a comprehensive approach to traffic congestion planning. There are also high occupancy toll lanes on the Beltway, on I-95 stretching far out into the exurban fringe, and a new project coming for I-66 outside of the Beltway. While all of these projects seem separate from one another, they're actually all designed to work together across the region.

VDOT reported that travel speeds on I-66 are getting markedly better. Morning and afternoon commutes are faster along I-66, and travel times are more reliable than just a year ago, prior to the Express Lanes. Travel speeds on I-66 during morning commutes averaged 42.3 mph in January 2017, and 54.1 miles per hour (mph) in January 2018. Travel speeds on I-66 during afternoon commutes averaged 47.2 mph in January 2017, compared to 57.5 mph a year in 2018.

Drivers on parallel roads are not experiencing an additional volume of cars "spilling over" from I-66. In fact, they're finding similar benefits, less traffic, and less volume on those roads as



well. Travel times on I-66 averaged 3.7 minutes shorter during morning commutes, and 2.8 minutes shorter during afternoon commutes, compared to January 2017. Drivers on parallel arterial roadways including Routes 7, 29 and 50, and the George Washington Memorial Parkway, experienced similar or better travel speeds and times than a year ago.

According to Puentes, the I-66 Express Lanes have resulted in more carpooling, as 43 percent of all vehicle trips on the I-66 Express Lanes were carpoolers. "That's a better and more efficient use of the roadway network, complementing things like Metrorail, which also goes very close to I-66 in Arlington," he said.

To supplement the work by VDOT and other transit agencies, Commuter Connections has developed the CarpoolNow app to allow commuters to find "on-demand" ridesharing opportunities to take advantage of the High-Occupancy and Express Lanes, both inside and outside the beltway.

Commuter Connections also offers a robust Ridematching system, at [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org), that enables commuters to find others that travel the same routes to and from work.

Finally, the Commuter Connections 'Pool Rewards Program offers commuters an added \$100 incentive, on top of the \$130 they can already earn on both I-395 and I-66 outside the Beltway, who start or join new carpools.

For more information on Commuter Connections' Ridematching system, the CarpoolNow app, and 'Pool Rewards, visit [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org). Download the I-66 Express Lanes inside the Beltway toll calculator, or visit [www.vai66tolls.com](http://www.vai66tolls.com).

# PARKING FEE CHANGES AT METRORAIL

Beginning last February, Metro instituted new times and fees for Metro-owned parking facilities.

New hours when parking fees are collected took effect, and higher fees for “non-rider vehicles” are being charged at 10 additional stations, while fees at two stations were lowered as part of a pilot program. Non-rider vehicles are identified as cars who use Metro parking facilities, without a SmarTrip® turnstile transaction. Previously, these non-riders were able to take advantage of Metro parking at rates below that of nearby for-profit commercial parking lots.

Additionally, under a pilot program, a parking fee of \$2 is being charged for Metrorail riders who park at Metro garages and lots on Saturdays; however, parking on Sundays will remain free, except when special event parking rules are in effect. For information on parking fees by station, visit [www.wmata.com/service/parking](http://www.wmata.com/service/parking).

Changes in times and fees include:

- Parking fees are in effect during the following hours
  - Monday - Thursday, 7:30am - 12:30am
  - Friday, 7:30am - 2:00am
  - Saturday, 10:00am - 2:00am
- Saturday daily parking fee is \$2.
- The weekday parking fee at two stations - Landover and West Falls Church - has been lowered to \$3.
- Individuals who park at Metro facilities but do not use the Metrorail system will be charged a higher “non-rider” fee (ranging from \$8.70 to \$10) Monday through Saturday at the following stations:
  - Branch Ave
  - Greenbelt
  - Suitland
  - Huntington
  - Dunn Loring
  - Minnesota Ave
  - New Carrollton\*
  - Franconia-Springfield
  - Largo Town Center
  - Rhode Island Ave
  - Rockville
  - Twinbrook
  - White Flint

- Customers must pay with the same SmarTrip® card used to enter/exit Metrorail and must exit the parking lot within 2 hours of the start of their last Metrorail trip in order to receive the lower parking rate. Metrorail customers who use a credit card at these stations will incur the non-rider fee.

In other Metro changes, Metro's in-person sales office moved inside Metro Center Station and now offers expanded hours.

The new Metro Center Sales Office is open weekdays from 8:00am until 6:00pm. The new location allows customers to conveniently purchase SmarTrip® cards, add value to them, purchase senior and specialty cards, and pick-up bulk sales packages - all without exiting the Metrorail system.



“Metro Center is the center of Metro, making it the ideal location for our sales office,” said Dennis Anosike, Metro's Chief Financial Officer. “Relocating the sales office to a space within the rail system will maximize convenience for visitors and customers, who will now be able to purchase fare products without leaving Metro.”

In related Metro news, the regional transit agency celebrated the grand opening of their new “M Shop” retail store, also at Metro Center, selling Metro apparel and accessories. Now your employees can show up on a rainy day using a Metro umbrella, and sipping coffee from a Metro Map mug.

Visit [www.dcmetrostore.com](http://www.dcmetrostore.com) to see the available merchandise.

# FAIR TRAVEL PROGRAM EDUCATES DRIVERS

Recently, Transurban, the operator of the I-495 and I-95 Express Lanes, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Virginia State Police announced the launch of the Fair Travel Program. The initiative educates high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) drivers who use the I-495 and I-95 Express Lanes on the proper use of E-ZPass and E-ZPass Flex transponders, as well as, HOV requirements. The program includes customer education and enhanced enforcement on the Express Lanes.

“We are committed to ensuring a fair, safe, and reliable travel experience on the Express Lanes for our customers,” said Leigh Petschel, Vice President of Operations at Transurban. “Through the Fair Travel Program, we want to remind our customers of the HOV rules on the I-495 and I-95 Express Lanes, as well as offer tips on how to correctly use the E-ZPass Flex.”

Enhanced enforcement of HOV violations is an additional component of the program because violators who falsely claim to be HOV on the Express Lanes can contribute to increasing toll prices for those drivers who do comply with HOV regulations and choose to pay to use the Express Lanes.



Key elements of the program include:

- Educational emails issued to E-ZPass Flex customers.
- Letters to customers who travel in HOV mode on the I-495 and I-95 Express Lanes.



- Social media campaign advising on how to properly use E-ZPass and the rules of the road.
- Advisory messages on dynamic signs along the Express Lanes corridor.
- Increased Virginia State Police presence in the Express Lanes with focus on HOV enforcement.
- Enforcement system improvements, including new cameras and deploying handheld E-ZPass readers to aid Virginia State Police troopers while enforcing violations and providing patrol to promote highway safety.
- Educational materials for troopers to provide to drivers who are stopped for related infractions.

“Virginia is a leader in offering innovative transportation solutions, such as managed express lanes, to provide travel options, promote carpooling and transit use, and improve regional mobility,” David Caudill, Tolling Division Administrator at VDOT. “The success of express and HOV lane facilities depends upon motorists correctly using their E-ZPass or E-ZPass Flex and following the HOV rules. The Fair Travel Program supports awareness about HOV rules and promotes compliance on the Express Lanes.”

For more information on the Fair Travel Program, visit [www.expresslanes.com/fairtravel](http://www.expresslanes.com/fairtravel).



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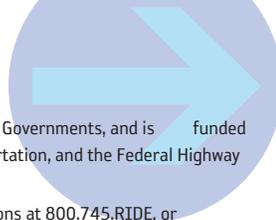
For information or to change your mailing address, contact Commuter Connections at 800.745.RIDE, or 202.962.3213 (TDD). We invite your comments and suggestions. Please send to:

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## FLEXTIME



The FlexTime Rewards Program is for commuters in the Washington, DC region who work for employers that permit the flexibility to stagger arrival and departure times from work on any given day, based on traffic conditions. For more information, or to register for the FlexTime Rewards program, please visit [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org).

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