



OmniRide breaks ground on new Manassas facility

New and expanded mobility services are one step closer to reality in western Prince William County following the January 23 groundbreaking for a new \$49.8 million OmniRide facility in Manassas.

The new Western Bus Maintenance and Storage Facility, on Doane Drive near I-66 and the Route 234 Bypass, will enable expanded services for residents and commuters in Prince William County, the City of Manassas and the City of Manassas Park.

When construction is complete in summer 2020, the 15-acre property will feature administrative and dispatch offices, parking for 100 buses, eight bays for routine bus maintenance, and an area where vehicles will be fueled and washed.

The OmniRide bus fleet and staff will be split between the new facility and the Transit Center in Wood-



Participating in the ceremonial groundbreaking on January 23 were: Tracie Brentley, First Transit; Thomas Boykin, First Transit; Ian Lovejoy, City of Manassas Councilman; Ric Canizales, PWC Transportation Director; Jeanine Lawson, PWC Brentsville Supervisor; Jennifer Mitchell, DRPT Director; Ruth Anderson, PRTC Chair and PWC Occoquan Supervisor; Martin Nohe, NVTA Chairman and PWC Coles Supervisor; Norm Catterton, Alternate PRTC Member; Todd Johnson, First Transit General Manager; Bob Schneider, OmniRide Executive Director; and Joy Himes, OmniRide transit planner.

bridge.

“The OmniRide Western Maintenance and Storage Facility we’re celebrating today is going to be more than a building, Martin E. Nohe, Chairman of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) and Prince William County’s Coles District Supervisor, said during the groundbreaking ceremony.

“Upon completion of this regionally significant project impacting com-

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New facility will add maintenance bays and parking

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muters, residents and the business community alike, OmniRide's bus capacity will expand and improve on-time performance, add more options for commuters on the I-66 corridor, and reduce congestion, allowing people to get back home to their families faster," Nohe said.

Funding for this project demonstrates the region's collaborative efforts to reduce traffic and help get people where they need to go. NVTA contributed \$16.5 million, or one-third of the project funding; the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) contributed another \$11.6 million; and \$11 million came from the I-66 Express Lanes concessionaire payment.

"The completion of this facility will ensure OmniRide can continue to provide the safe and reliable commute their customers deserve."

—DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell

Although no bus routes will serve the new facility, it will significantly impact riders' experiences. That's because for the first time, buses serving the western part of OmniRide's service area will park in and be dispatched directly from Manassas, enabling better on-time performance and quicker response times in emergencies.

The facility also will add greatly-needed parking capacity for buses and will more than double the space that mechanics have to perform routine maintenance and basic repairs on the bus fleet, said Ruth M. Anderson, PRTC Board Chair and Prince William County's Occoquan District Supervisor.



This rendering shows the future administration building in Manassas.

Additional bus parking capacity is vital because OmniRide expects to expand existing mobility services and add new state-funded routes in future years as thousands of commuter parking spaces are built in the I-66 corridor, said Jeanine M. Lawson, a PRTC Board Member and Prince William County's Brentsville District Supervisor.

"As Express Lanes are built over the next four years on I-66 outside the Beltway, drivers will look for alternatives to riding alone or paying tolls," said OmniRide Executive Director Bob Schneider. "We expect to see increased demand for transit services, for new carpools and vanpools to spring up, and for slugging to gain a foothold in the region, especially when I-66 is converted from HOV-2 to HOV-3."

OmniRide first considered the idea of building a western facility 15 years ago, and the groundbreaking had once been planned for 2015 but was postponed due to financial restraints.

"Because of bumps in the road, we've waited a long time for this to come to fruition," said DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell. "The completion of this facility will ensure OmniRide can continue to provide the safe and reliable commute their customers deserve."

Outstanding Employees

First Transit has a contract to provide bus operators and mechanics for OmniRide's transportation services. First Transit recognizes one outstanding operator each month, and an Operator of the Year is named annually. If you have a compliment about First Transit personnel, please tell us!

Operator of the Month

Waheed Ullah — September 2018

Originally from Pakistan, Mr. Ullah is now a Woodbridge resident and has lived in this area for three years. He has operated buses at OmniRide for about 1 1/2 years and says the best part of his job is meeting people. He currently operates trips on the Dumfries OmniRide Local route. In his free time, he enjoys reading and playing cricket and soccer. Mr. Ullah requested that his photo not be included.

Dominique Crosby — October 2018

Professionalism and punctuality are keys to success, according to Ms. Crosby, who has operated buses at OmniRide for 2 1/2 years. She currently operates trips on the South Route 1 and Dale City OmniRide Express routes. Ms. Crosby is a native of Prince George's County who now lives in Prince William. She has two children and says the thing she most enjoys about her job is serving the public. Her favorite pastime is reading the Bible and inspirational books.



Akilie Asrat — November 2018

Ms. Asrat has worked at OmniRide for about 6 months and currently operates trips on the Dale City OmniRide Express route. She's originally

from Ethiopia and moved to Prince William County last fall. She says she truly enjoys driving and making sure her passengers are satisfied. Ms. Asrat is a married mother of two and believes in giving back, so she spends some of her free time volunteering in the community. She also enjoys swimming and reading.



George Dwamena — December 2018

Being an OmniRide operator has enabled Mr. Dwamena to meet people from diverse cultural backgrounds, which is what he said he likes most about his job. Mr. Dwamena has worked at OmniRide since 2004 and currently operates trips on the Woodbridge OmniRide Local route. A father of four, he is originally from Ghana and now lives in Fairfax. Aside from meeting new people, he enjoys politics, soccer, traveling and reading.



Marguerite Taylor — January 2019

"Ms. Tee" as she prefers to be known, comes from a family of professional drivers and worked at Hampton Roads Transit before joining OmniRide 16 years ago. She was raised in Hampton, VA and now lives in Prince William, where she operates trips on the Manassas North OmniRide Local route. Meeting people from all walks of life is what she most enjoys about her work. In her free time, she enjoys decorating, the arts, and listening to jazz. Ms. Tee requested that her photo not be included.



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Event connects agencies and small businesses

When OmniRide has work that can't be done by staff members, such as installing a new phone system or replacing the chiller for the facility's air conditioning, it seeks bids from companies that are qualified to do the work.

OmniRide is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in conducting business, and that includes the procurement of goods and services. Our Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program complies with U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations and is required as a condition of receiving federal funds. OmniRide's policy creates a level playing field on which certified DBEs (small businesses that are owned and controlled by socially and/or economically disadvantaged individuals) can compete fairly for contracts that receive federal funding.

OmniRide's goal for Federal Fiscal Years 2019-2021 is to award at least 11.3 percent of contracts, based on the amount spent, to companies that qualify as DBEs. To help achieve that goal, OmniRide participated in a January event sponsored by the Prince William County Chamber of Commerce.

Matchmakers—Bringing Small Business and Government Buyers Together was an opportunity for small businesses to meet with procurement officers at various agencies and learn about the



Cynthia Porter-Johnson, OmniRide's Transportation Administration Project Manager, attended the Matchmaker event and met with prospective contractors.

types of contracted work they need. At OmniRide for example, businesses have recently won awards to do work including new construction, facility repairs, and to provide security guard services.

During the event, small business owners representing a variety of industries met face-to-face with prime contractors and government-affiliated agencies during 10-minute interviews.