



March 2011

OmniNews

Some Buses Leave Part of 14th



As of Monday, February 28, all PM OmniRide buses that serve the State Department and two AM trips have been re-routed away from several blocks of 14th Street.

The portion of 14th Street between H and Pennsylvania is no longer being served by afternoon and evening buses. Instead, PM OmniRide buses are being routed along 15th Street.

The only morning trips impacted by the change are two Manassas OmniRide trips with reverse routing, the M-8R and the M-11R, which are following the new routing.

The re-routing, done in partnership with the District DOT, was designed to lessen extreme traffic congestion along that section of 14th Street, which has plagued PRTC's bus operation and compromised schedule adherence.

Online schedules have been revised to reflect this change, and it will be reflected in printed schedule brochures when they are reprinted later this spring.

These routes are affected:

- Dale City – Washington PM OmniRide (Dale City OmniRide trips that previously started at 14th and

New York now start at H and Madison.)

- Lake Ridge – Washington PM OmniRide
- Manassas AM OmniRide (Only the M-8R and M-11R trips.)
- Manassas PM OmniRide
- Route 1 OmniRide

As of February 28, the affected routes no longer serve these bus stops:

- 14th and New York
- 14th and F

Alternate bus stops are:

- Commerce Department
- A new bus stop at 15th and New York.

The re-routing has prompted one other change for passengers on the Dale City – Washington and Lake Ridge – Washington routes. Because buses on these two routes run every 10 minutes from approximately 4 p.m. until 6 p.m., (and every 20 minutes on Modified Holidays), the Commerce Department is no longer a timepoint, meaning that bus operators do not have to wait until a specified time to leave the bus stop.

Although it may take a little while to get used to these changes, PRTC is confident that they will benefit our passengers in the long run. Avoiding the intersection of 14th and H will greatly improve service reliability, allowing everyone to get home a little more quickly and with less stress!

For additional information please contact Customer Service at 703-730-6664 or visit PRTCtransit.org. ■

Inside this issue:

New Commuter Parking	2
Proposed FY 2012 Budget	2
Omni SmartCommute Awards	3

New Commuter Spaces to Open

Rosslyn OmniRide Will be Re-routed Starting March 14

New parking spaces for 370 commuters will open to the public on March 14, helping to ease the recent loss of 725 spaces at Potomac Mills Mall.

First Baptist Church, at Minnieville and Elm Farm Road in Woodbridge, has agreed to lease the spaces to Prince William County for use by commuters. The Virginia Department of Transportation will reimburse the county for the \$288,600 annual cost.

As of March 14, all of PRTC's Rosslyn OmniRide trips will be re-routed to serve the new commuter spaces. As a result, several existing bus stops will no longer be served and two bus stops will be added. The exact routing had not been determined at the time this newsletter was published. Please visit PRTCtransit.org for the most up-to-date information.

To accommodate expansion plans, the Mall reduced its commuter parking from 1,000 to about 275 spaces in February. As a result, only the

sluglines for 14th Street / 18th Street and L'Enfant continue to meet at Potomac Mills.

Sluglines for the Pentagon and for Rosslyn / Crystal City have been relocated from the Mall to the Dale City Commuter Lot. To see a map and diagram of the traffic flow within the Dale City Commuter Lot, please visit www.slug-lines.com.

While the commuter parking changes have received quite a bit of publicity, some lesser-noticed changes at Potomac Mills have also affected local and Metro Direct bus services.

This winter, Potomac Mills requested that PRTC relocate a bus stop that is used by Prince William Metro Direct, OmniLink and Cross County Connector buses. The local bus stop and bus shelters were relocated in late January from a spot between the main entrance to the Food Court and Costco to a spot outside F&M Furniture, near Marshalls / HomeGoods. Metro Direct buses continue to serve the bus stop at Pier 1. ■

Proposed FY 2012 Budget Process is Under Way



By Alfred H. Harf,
Executive
Director of PRTC

I'm pleased to report that PRTC has fashioned a proposed budget for FY 2012 that protects what is most important for its customers despite the challenging times we're weathering financially.

The budget as proposed calls for no service cuts or fare increases in FY 2012, and continuation of timely mid-life bus overhauls and replacements of

"The budget as proposed calls for no service cuts or fare increases in FY 2012, and continuation of timely mid-life bus overhauls and replacements of retirement age buses."

retirement age buses.

The proposed budget has been transmitted to PRTC's member governments for consideration, marking the start of the annual appropriations process.

As much as PRTC would have liked to budget for service ex-

pansion, regrettably budget constraints are such that expansion was (is) not possible.

Hopefully those constraints will ease as the economy improves, augmented by increased assistance from PRTC's funding partners (the federal and state governments).

There are encouraging signs of increased state assistance as the General Assembly session enters its stretch run, so look for more on that subject in a future issue of *OmniNews*. ■

SmartCommute Awards Presented

PRTC's Omni SmartCommute program recently presented awards to two area companies for the variety of commuter benefits and programs they offer their employees. Employers in the Prince William County area can receive free commuter consultations through Omni SmartCommute. The employers recognized by Omni SmartCommute are:



***George Mason University's** (GMU) Prince William campus, which achieved the status of Gold Level employer; and




***IKEA's** Woodbridge store, which was honored as a Silver Level employer.

To meet the Gold Level standard, employers must offer at least four different benefits or programs to improve their employees' commutes and must encourage alternatives to driving alone. Suggested benefits and programs include starting a telework program, providing preferential parking for carpools and vanpools, offering flextime or compressed workweeks, and installing shower facilities for bicyclists and walkers.

For example, GMU's Prince William campus has no direct form of public transportation, so the university operates a shuttle bus system that links the Prince William and Fairfax campuses and allows connections to PRTC buses in Manassas. In addition, staff members at all campuses are eligible for the monthly federal transit benefit of up to \$230.

As a Silver Level employer, IKEA currently offers three different benefits or programs including bike racks and shower facilities.

"By encouraging alternatives to driving alone, these employers have increased employee satisfaction while helping to reduce traffic congestion," said Sam Salkin, employer services representative at Omni SmartCommute.


To learn how to help your employees with their commutes, call (202) 293-1391. 

Outstanding Operators


First Transit, the contract provider for PRTC's bus services, chooses one outstanding operator each month for special recognition. If you have a compliment about your operator, please let us know.




Tiawana Medley— September 2010

Ms. Medley is a safe and punctual operator who enjoys working as a hair stylist in her off time. She has been working at PRTC for more than four years and currently operates a Manassas OmniRide trip in the mornings and operates Cross County Connector trips in the afternoons/evenings. 


Rowena Holloway— October 2010

A PRTC operator for more than two years, Ms. Holloway is polite and always greets her customers with a smile, even on the cloudiest of days. She currently operates two commuter trips in the mornings: a Route 1 OmniRide trip and a Lake Ridge OmniRide trip. In the afternoons/evenings, she operates a Dale City OmniRide trip. 

Sonny Reynolds— November 2010

Mr. Reynolds, who joined PRTC in November 2009, is a relief operator for afternoon OmniLink trips, five days a week. His colleagues appreciate his calm and pleasant demeanor. 

Salvador Navarro— December 2010

Celebrating three years working at PRTC, Mr. Navarro is known for his sense of humor as well as his professional manner. He currently operates two Dale City OmniRide trips in the mornings and operates Cross County Connector trips in the afternoons/evenings. 



Potomac and Rappahannock
Transportation Commission

PRTC
14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192
Phone: 703-730-6664
Fax: 703-583-1377
Website: www.PRTCtransit.org

**Serving Prince William County,
Manassas and Manassas Park**

Did You Know...

Did you know that PRTC periodically holds tabletop training exercises to test the emergency response of staff members?

These training exercises are designed to:

- Fine-tune the execution of established plans and procedures;
- Strengthen staff members' response to challenging situations;
- Foster cross-departmental cooperation; and
- Identify areas where more planning and training are needed.

The most recent—and largest—

exercise was held in the winter with 25 representatives from PRTC, First Transit and Prince William County. During that tabletop exercise, participants had to react to fictional scenarios including a hostage situation on a bus, the evacuation of the Transit Center and a regional emergency that impacted bus operations and threatened people's safety.

It's not uncommon for PRTC buses to follow a detour because of a road closure or suspicious package, but the scenarios in the tabletop exercise were atypical events designed to test PRTC's crisis response.

"For the safety of our passengers and staff members, it is vi-

tal that we conduct exercises such as these to test the speed and appropriateness of our response," said PRTC Executive Director Al Harf.

"Mindful of the critical role that local law enforcement and emergency response staff play in incident situations, we appreciate Prince William County's willingness to participate in the exercise to improve our emergency procedures," Harf added.

PRTC will continue working to improve its emergency planning procedures so it can be prepared if crisis strikes. ■