New OmniRide app provides accurate real-time information

OmniRide now has its own mobile app to provide passengers with real-time bus arrival information and updates.

The OmniRide app, which was developed by Ride Systems, is free and can be found by searching for OmniRide in your mobile device’s app store.

The app has a bus tracker that enables riders to see a map with an icon showing the exact location of their bus within about 30-seconds accuracy. Using the location data, the app predicts the actual arrival time of the bus at all but the first bus stop along the route. This fall the app will be updated so that all OmniRide buses – including those that are not yet picking up passengers – will be tracked.

“Everyone who has ever used public transportation knows there's an element of uncertainty about when the bus will arrive. People waiting at a bus stop are constantly looking down the road to see the first sign of their bus, but this new app takes away that uncertainty,” said Prince William County Supervisor Ruth Anderson, who also serves as chair of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), which oversees OmniRide.

Riders can select the routes and bus stops they use most often and receive one-time or regular reminders to leave for the bus stop based on the bus’s real-time predicted arrival.
Paratransit service coming to western area local routes
Pilot project could expand to eastern Prince William County

OmniRide will introduce a separate paratransit service in the Manassas and Manassas Park areas this winter as part of a nine-month pilot project.

The OmniRide Access paratransit service will provide transportation specifically for people who are unable to use public transit due to disability. Paratransit service will be provided in vans with a maximum of eight passengers, and riders will need to be certified in order to use the service.

Paratransit vehicles will pick up and drop off passengers within 3/4 mile of the regular OmniRide Local bus route, the same distance that’s now in place for off-route trips as required by the federal law.

If the pilot project is a success, OmniRide Access may be extended to serve residents in eastern Prince William County.

The cost for a one-way paratransit trip will be $3.10—double the current local bus fare — which may be paid with cash or with specialized paratransit tokens, at least during the pilot phase.

Look for more information about OmniRide Access paratransit this fall.

Get the OmniRide app
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Having an alert feature is a great convenience for riders traveling after the sun sets or during extreme weather, Anderson said, noting that riders can stay in their offices in the afternoons until receiving the alert and have peace of mind that they won’t miss the bus or wait for a long time at the bus stop.

Another feature enables riders to receive notifications about changes affecting their favorite routes, such as road construction that has temporarily closed a bus stop.

The app is expected to reduce the waiting time to speak with OmniRide customer service agents. For user convenience, the app also has a direct link to OmniRide’s website and to the OmniRide Trip Planner.

Real-time OmniRide bus information also is available on Google Transit.
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

Ruby Oliver — February 2019
Originally from Texas, Ms. Oliver has operated buses at OmniRide for 15 years and is currently assigned to trips on the Woodbridge OmniRide Local route. She says the best part of her job is meeting people. Ms. Oliver enjoys cooking and sports. She lives in Fredericksburg, is married and has a daughter.

Deborah Peregrina — March 2019
When she retires someday, Ms. Peregrina hopes to earn a certification in wildlife rescue. But until then she’s enjoying her work at OmniRide, where she’s been an operator for 12 years and is currently assigned to trips on the Prince William Metro Express route. Ms. Peregrina has two adult children and says the thing she most enjoys about her job is being outdoors. In her free time she rescues cats (mostly seniors), does research for the labor union and helps her mother.

Yirdaw Ejabo — April 2019
Mr. Ejabo has worked at OmniRide for about 18 months and currently operates trips on the Dale City OmniRide Local route. He’s originally from Ethiopia and has lived in Woodbridge for five years. Mr. Ejabo is married and has two sons.

In his spare time, he enjoys reading the Bible, playing with his children and listening to church songs.

Eric Bonnah — May 2019
"Just be good to your fellow human beings and show respect for all people" - that’s a motto Mr. Bonnah likes. A native of Ghana, Mr. Bonnah has been in this area for two years. He’s married with children and enjoys music in his free time. He’s currently assigned to trips on Gainesville and Dale City OmniRide Express routes.

Efrem Hiwot — June 2019
The best thing about working at OmniRide is being with people who care about doing a good job, said Mr. Hiwot, who has been with OmniRide for one year. He currently operates trips on the Montclair and Dale City OmniRide Express routes. Originally from Ethiopia, Mr. Hiwot has lived in the Prince William area for 15 years. He is married and has two sons. In his free time, he enjoys listening to music, going to church, and playing and watching soccer.

Brigetta Wilson — July 2019
A New York City native, Ms. Wilson moved to this region 15 years ago and now lives in Spotsylvania. She has operated buses at OmniRide since 2006 and is currently assigned to trips on the Route 1 OmniRide Local route. A mother of three, Ms. Wilson says the thing she likes best about her job is meeting new people. When she’s not at work, she enjoys reading and family time.
Comment on Commuter Choice Funding Projects

The Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) and Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) will host an open house and public hearing on Thursday, September 5, to discuss proposed projects that may be funded by the I-395/95 Commuter Choice Program in FY2020.

The program is designed to distribute funding for projects in the corridor that maximize the number of people who can travel through the area as well as implement multimodal improvements which would provide travelers with a wide variety of options to get where they want to go.

Demonstrating an urgent need for transit and multimodal projects to reduce congestion in the busy I-395/95 corridor, NVTC received 17 applications from eight applicants requesting more than $30 million in funding. NVTC expects to fund a $22 million program.

Applications were received from: OmniRide; the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC); the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Prince William and Stafford; and the cities of Alexandria and Fredericksburg.

The September 5 Open House will be held at 6 p.m. at the OmniRide Transit Center, prior to the monthly meeting of the PRTC Board of Commissioners. Feedback on the Commuter Choice program will be taken during the meeting’s public comment time. The meeting begins at 7 p.m.

Those who don’t attend the meeting can get details about the Commuter Choice program and make comments on the project proposals at the Commuter Choice website. Learn more at novatransit.org.

NVTC is accepting comments on the proposed projects through September 6, 2019.