

Ridefinders  
Rural Transit  
Expansion

June 28, 2002

Town of  
*Ashland*  
Counties of  
*Charles City*  
*Chesterfield*  
*Goochland*  
*Hanover*  
*Henrico*  
*New Kent*  
*Powhatan*  
City of  
*Richmond*



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# Richmond Regional Planning District Commission

Planning district commissions make government more efficient and effective through coordinated planning and program analysis. Virginia's General Assembly created planning districts in 1968 under the authority of the *Virginia Area Development Act* - revised as the *Regional Cooperation Act* in 1995 - "to promote orderly and efficient development of the physical, social and economic elements of the districts." Through planning district commissions, now 21 in number, local governments solve mutual problems which cross boundary lines and obtain expertise from professional staffs and advice on making the most of scarce taxpayer dollars through intergovernmental cooperation.

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### **Disclaimer**

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FHWA or VDOT acceptance of this document as evidence of fulfillment of the objectives of the rural transportation planning program does not constitute endorsement/approval of the need for any recommended improvements nor does it constitute approval of their location and design or a commitment to fund any such improvements. Additional project level environmental impact assessments and/or studies of alternatives may be necessary.

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## **Introduction**

This study was prepared by staff of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission for the four rural localities of the Richmond region (Charles City County, Goochland County, New Kent County, Powhatan County), and was financed through the Rural Transportation Planning program, sponsored by the Virginia Department of Transportation through the Federal Highway Administration. The purpose of this report is to analyze the demand for the expansion of an organized commuter system provided by Ridefinders in the rural areas of the Richmond region. This report will identify commuter patterns in the rural areas of the Richmond Region in relation to employment and population centers. This includes analyzing recently released census data and related commuting data as well as identifying commuter parking lots in the rural areas.

The commuter lots assessed were those maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). In addition, park and ride signage surrounding these lots were inventoried, identified, and evaluated based on condition and location relative to the lot. The inventory includes pictures and maps identifying locations and park and ride lots and signs. This combined information will strengthen commuter ride-matching and vanpool formation services that will reduce the number of peak period vehicle trips. Recommendations and analysis of each element are also included within the inventory of the park and ride lots and signs. This overall analysis will illustrate current and projected demands on the commuter system and offer recommendations to achieve greater efficiency to improve the region's commuter program. It is hoped that local governments and transportation providers in the study area will use this information to move forward with a commuter program for the rural areas of the Richmond region.

## Commuting Demands

Low population size and density can make it difficult to locally provide effective transportation services in the rural areas. Low population densities often prohibit commuters in rural localities from taking advantage of transportation services such as transit and carpooling, whereas city and higher density suburban dwellers are offered a multitude of transportation services. (See Table 1 below.) Fixed route bus service requires higher density populations to maintain maximum efficiency and cost-effective levels of service. In the rural communities, the high-density populations essential for maximum efficiency of bus service are not there, but the need for good quality daily transportation remains. Specialized transportation services, such as carpool or vanpool, are a viable solution for overcoming the low population densities while addressing the need for commuter services.

In order to provide effective commuter services to rural areas, members of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission and transportation providers must directly address the transportation requirements of residents. Understanding the necessity for rural transportation services requires an analysis of population growth, employment growth centers, and commuting patterns. Assessing these areas provides an overview of current and future transportation demands.

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>Population Density</b>			
	<b>2000 Population</b>	<b>Land Area (Square Miles)</b>	<b>Persons per Square Mile</b>
Charles City County	6,926	182.5	38.0
Goochland County	16,863	295.0	57.2
New Kent County	13,462	209.8	64.2
Powhatan County	22,377	261.3	85.6
<b>Richmond Regional PDC</b>	<b>865,941</b>	<b>2134.8</b>	<b>405.6</b>
<i>Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population &amp; Housing</i>			

### Population Growth

Population growth in the rural areas far exceeds population growth in urban areas, including the Richmond Regional PDC, the Richmond MSA and throughout Virginia as a whole. In most cases, the population growth rate is double or even triple the rate seen in the urban areas. This rate of growth is expected to maintain pace between 2000 and 2010. While the total population figures are numerically less than in the urban areas, the rate is such that investment in commuting programs will alleviate the rapid rate of growth and number of vehicles on the rural roadways and interstate highways leading into the metro Richmond area.

**Table 2  
Population Growth**

	<b>1970 Census</b>	<b>1980 Census</b>	<b>Growth Rate (1970- 1980)</b>	<b>1990 Census (April 1)</b>	<b>Growth Rate (1980- 1990)</b>	<b>2000 Census (April 1)</b>	<b>Growth Rate (1990- 2000)</b>	<b>2010 Projection</b>	<b>Growth Rate (2000- 2010)</b>
Charles City County	6,158	6,692	8.67%	6,282	-6.13%	6,926	10.25%	7,900	14.06%
Goochland County	10,069	11,761	16.80%	14,163	20.42%	16,863	19.06%	22,003	30.48%
New Kent County	5,300	8,781	65.68%	10,445	18.95%	13,462	28.88%	16,497	22.54%
Powhatan County	7,696	13,062	69.72%	15,328	17.35%	22,377	45.99%	31,004	38.55%
<b>Rural Area</b>	<b>29,223</b>	<b>40,296</b>	<b>37.89%</b>	<b>46,218</b>	<b>14.70%</b>	<b>59,628</b>	<b>29.01%</b>	<b>77,404</b>	<b>29.81%</b>
Chesterfield County	77,045	141,372	83.49%	209,564	48.24%	259,903	24.02%	317,004	21.97%
Hanover County	37,479	50,398	34.47%	63,306	25.61%	86,320	36.35%	106,000	22.80%
Henrico County	154,364	180,735	17.08%	217,849	20.54%	262,300	20.40%	277,003	5.61%
Richmond City	249,431	219,214	-12.11%	202,798	-7.49%	197,790	-2.47%	186,008	-5.96%
<b>Urban Area</b>	<b>518,319</b>	<b>591,719</b>	<b>14.16%</b>	<b>693,517</b>	<b>17.20%</b>	<b>806,313</b>	<b>16.26%</b>	<b>886,015</b>	<b>9.88%</b>
<b>Richmond Regional PDC</b>	547,542	632,015	15.43%	739,735	17.04%	865,941	17.06%	963,419	11.26%
<b>Richmond- Petersburg MSA</b>	676,351	761,311	12.56%	865,640	13.70%	996,512	15.12%	1,095,430	9.93%
<b>Virginia</b>	4,651,487	5,346,818	14.95%	6,189,317	15.76%	7,078,515	14.37%	7,737,597	9.31%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population & Housing

Population growth between the 1970 and 1980 census was greatest in the rural areas of the region, at almost 38 percent (37.89%). This rate far outpaced the urban area, which was at 14 percent (14.16%). The population growth rates between 1980 and 1990 slowed for the rural areas, but increased in the urban areas. Growth rates for the four county rural area again surpassed the urban areas for the period between 1990 and 2000. Another growth surge is expected to hit the rural areas again between 2000 and 2010, where the population will increase to over 77,000 people, or 165 percent (165%) above the 1970 census figures. (Please see Table 2 for detailed statistics.)

Rural counties in the Richmond region grew at a high rate of growth within the past several decades. This leads to the question: Where are all of these people coming from? Statistics from the 2000 census show that between 1995 and 2000, most people resided in the same home. (Please see Table 3 for additional details.) While the percentage of persons residing in the same house is over 50 percent (62.24%), the rate of persons moving into the rural areas is greater than the rate of those moving within the urban areas. The percentage of non-county residents moving is greater than in the urban area of the Richmond region. Much of the movement comes within the state, possibly suburban residents moving further out to the rural countryside. (Please see Table 3 for additional details.)

**Table 3**  
**Residence in 1995**

Population 5 Years & Over															
	Total	Same House in 1995	Percent of Total in Same House	Different House in the US in 1995										Elsewhere in 1995	Percent of Total Elsewhere
				Total	Percent in Different House	Same County	Percent in Same County	Different County							
								Total	Percent in Different County	Same State	Percent in Same State	Different State	Percent in Different State		
Charles City County	6,542	4,863	74.34%	1,658	25.34%	650	9.94%	1,008	15.41%	861	13.16%	147	2.25%	21	0.32%
Goochland County	15,999	9,888	61.80%	6,053	37.83%	1,533	9.58%	4,520	28.25%	3,705	23.16%	815	5.09%	58	0.36%
New Kent County	12,667	7,805	61.62%	4,816	38.02%	1,366	10.78%	3,450	27.24%	2,905	22.93%	545	4.30%	46	0.36%
Powhatan County	21,069	12,473	59.20%	8,580	40.72%	2,125	10.09%	6,455	30.64%	5,219	24.77%	1,236	5.87%	16	0.08%
<b>Rural Area</b>	<b>56,277</b>	<b>35,029</b>	<b>62.24%</b>	<b>21,107</b>	<b>37.51%</b>	<b>5,674</b>	<b>10.08%</b>	<b>15,433</b>	<b>27.42%</b>	<b>12,690</b>	<b>22.55%</b>	<b>2,743</b>	<b>4.87%</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>0.25%</b>
Chesterfield County	242,866	132,994	54.76%	105,869	43.59%	46,993	19.35%	58,876	24.24%	33,248	13.69%	25,628	10.55%	4,003	1.65%
Hanover County	80,643	45,981	57.02%	34,206	42.42%	11,437	14.18%	22,769	28.23%	16,098	19.96%	6,671	8.27%	456	0.57%
Henrico County	244,359	122,320	50.06%	115,971	47.46%	50,610	20.71%	65,361	26.75%	39,285	16.08%	26,076	10.67%	6,068	2.48%
Richmond City	185,379	88,927	47.97%	92,197	49.73%	46,847	25.27%	45,350	24.46%	29,174	15.74%	16,176	8.73%	4,255	2.30%
<b>Urban Area</b>	<b>753,247</b>	<b>390,222</b>	<b>51.81%</b>	<b>348,243</b>	<b>46.23%</b>	<b>155,887</b>	<b>20.70%</b>	<b>192,356</b>	<b>25.54%</b>	<b>117,805</b>	<b>15.64%</b>	<b>74,551</b>	<b>9.90%</b>	<b>14,782</b>	<b>1.96%</b>
<b>Richmond Regional PDC</b>	809,524	425,251	52.53%	369,350	45.63%	161,561	19.96%	207,789	25.67%	130,495	16.12%	77,294	9.55%	14,923	1.84%
<b>Richmond-Petersburg MSA</b>	932,074	493,748	52.97%	420,963	45.16%	181,651	19.49%	239,312	25.68%	150,004	16.09%	89,308	9.58%	17,363	1.86%
<b>Virginia</b>	6,619,266	3,453,486	52.17%	2,960,329	44.72%	1,196,930	18.08%	1,763,399	26.64%	941,661	14.23%	821,738	12.41%	205,451	3.10%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population & Housing

## Commuting Patterns

Daily commuting figures from the 2000 census indicate 84 percent (83.96%) of workers sixteen years and over who live in the rural counties drive alone to work as compared to over 85 percent (85.44%) of workers in the urban area. Additional information shows that 11 percent (11.01%) of workers carpool from the rural area, while only nine percent (9.42%) carpool in the urban area. These rates, for the rural counties, are still below the state average of around 13 percent (12.67%). The increase in carpool rates of the rural areas in contrast to the urban areas may be directly due to the mean travel time to work of 33.9 minutes. Urban commuters enjoy 10 minutes less on the roadway—3.8 minutes. (Please see Table 4 for commuting figures.) Lengthy travel times and the amount of single occupant vehicles indicate a further demand for additional daily commuting choices. Expansion of carpooling and vanpooling services will reduce these commuting figures.

Commuting patterns observed of the rural counties indicate that rural residents are traveling into Richmond City and the larger suburbs of Henrico and Chesterfield counties. While this is an overall pattern for all the rural counties in the Richmond region, there are distinct differences between the eastern and western rural counties. The following discussion details commuting destinations for residents of the rural areas. This information was obtained from the 1990 census. Commuting destination statistics from the 2000 census were limited at the time of this report.

Many rural residents commute into the metro Richmond area. Based on 1990 information from the U.S. Department of Commerce, a full 62 percent of Goochland and Powhatan residents commute into Chesterfield, Henrico, or Richmond City, while only 27 percent of residents commute within their own county bounds. Commuting between these two rural counties is a mere 2.5 percent. (See Appendix A for detailed destination data.) These numbers indicate that residents of Goochland and Powhatan counties are traveling daily into Richmond City and the suburbs of Henrico and Chesterfield counties, thus creating a need for additional commuting programs directly linking the rural counties with the inner core and suburbs of the Richmond region.

The majority of Charles City and New Kent county commuters also travel daily into Richmond City, Chesterfield County, or Henrico County. The factor of equal proximity to metro Richmond area as well as the Peninsula (including James City County, Williamsburg City, Hampton City, Newport News City, and York County) creates another commuting route in an easterly direction. Over 17 percent of commuters in Charles City and New Kent counties travel to Peninsula destinations.

Even though commuters for these two counties travel in varied directions, 47 percent drive into Richmond City, Henrico County, or Chesterfield County daily, while 20 percent remain in their own county and only three percent travel to work between the two counties. Despite the fact that commuters are traveling both east and west from Charles City and New Kent counties, almost 4,000 work in the core localities of the Richmond region.

**Table 4  
Commuting to Work**

Area Name	Workers 16 Years & Over	Car, Truck, or Van -- Drove Alone	Percent Drove Alone	Car, Truck, or Van -- Carpooled	Percent Carpooled	Public Transportation (Including Taxicab)	Percent Public Transportation	Walked	Percent Walked	Other Means	Percent Other Means	Worked at Home	Percent Worked at Home	Mean Travel Time to Work (in Minutes)
Charles City County	3,357	2,681	79.86%	484	14.42%	22	0.66%	25	0.74%	45	1.34%	100	2.98%	34.6
Goochland County	8,299	6,898	83.12%	889	10.71%	17	0.20%	81	0.98%	97	1.17%	317	3.82%	32.1
New Kent County	6,828	5,804	85.00%	801	11.73%	14	0.21%	54	0.79%	20	0.29%	135	1.98%	34.0
Powhatan County	10,423	8,887	85.26%	1,008	9.67%	41	0.39%	67	0.64%	112	1.07%	308	2.96%	34.8
<b>Rural Area</b>	<b>28,907</b>	<b>24,270</b>	<b>83.96%</b>	<b>3,182</b>	<b>11.01%</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>0.33%</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>0.79%</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>0.95%</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>2.98%</b>	<b>33.9</b>
Chesterfield County	134,313	115,298	85.84%	12,734	9.48%	341	0.25%	1,015	0.76%	777	0.58%	4,148	3.09%	26.1
Hanover County	44,460	38,322	86.19%	3,589	8.07%	97	0.22%	600	1.35%	381	0.86%	1,471	3.31%	25.4
Henrico County	136,872	116,062	84.80%	13,425	9.81%	1,492	1.09%	1,294	0.95%	1,098	0.80%	3,501	2.56%	21.6
Richmond City	88,924	62,743	70.56%	11,165	12.56%	7,354	8.27%	3,941	4.43%	1,698	1.91%	2,023	2.27%	22.1
<b>Urban Area</b>	<b>315,645</b>	<b>269,682</b>	<b>85.44%</b>	<b>29,748</b>	<b>9.42%</b>	<b>1,930</b>	<b>0.61%</b>	<b>2,909</b>	<b>0.92%</b>	<b>2,256</b>	<b>0.71%</b>	<b>9,120</b>	<b>2.89%</b>	<b>23.8</b>
<b>Richmond Regional PDC</b>	433,476	356,695	82.29%	44,095	10.17%	9,378	2.16%	7,077	1.63%	4,228	0.98%	12,003	2.77%	28.8
<b>Richmond- Petersburg MSA</b>	491,211	402,938	82.03%	51,037	10.39%	10,225	2.08%	9,147	1.86%	4,857	0.99%	13,007	2.65%	24.7
<b>Virginia</b>	<b>3,481,820</b>	<b>2,685,914</b>	<b>77.14%</b>	<b>441,093</b>	<b>12.67%</b>	<b>124,166</b>	<b>3.57%</b>	<b>80,487</b>	<b>2.31%</b>	<b>40,093</b>	<b>1.15%</b>	<b>110,067</b>	<b>3.16%</b>	<b>27.0</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population & Housing

## Employment Growth

Expansion and growth of the national economy affects metropolitan areas through local growth of industries, both economically and physically. Many researchers have documented the economic restructuring of metropolitan areas, the loss of blue-collar jobs, and the overall shift of employment to the suburbs. As described by John Kasarda:

Fueled by an intense interaction of technological, economic, and social forces, the demographic structures of metropolitan areas were altered significantly during the 1970s and 1980s. Manufacturing dispersed to the suburbs, exurbs, nonmetropolitan areas, and abroad. Warehousing activities relocated to more regionally accessible beltways and interstate highways. Retail establishments followed their suburbanizing clientele and relocated in peripheral shopping centers and malls.<sup>1</sup>

According to Kasarda, national trends since 1970 show that metropolitan employment balance shifted to the suburbs in the mid-1970s and has continued deconcentrating at a rate of approximately one percent a year. The Richmond region mirrors these national trends with employment rates dropping in the City of Richmond, while increasing in the suburbs.

Employer expansions and relocations to the rural areas demonstrate this national trend applies also to the Richmond region. The development of West Creek office park has the potential to be a destination for workers and a major employment center west of the urban area in Goochland County. Carpool and vanpool solution to this site will reduce congestion seen on local roadways. Goochland and other rural counties have developed plans indicating development centers, areas where the county wants to direct growth and development. This land use strategy hopes to keep the remainder of the county rural while providing space for inevitable residential and employment growth.

The recent employment growth seen in the rural areas shows considerable growth, in respect to percentages, but the urban area remains the major employment center. The period between 1990 and 1999 indicates over 17 percent (76.31%) increase in employment for the rural area, adding almost 11,000 new jobs to the region. (See Table 5 for detailed statistics.) Again, the urban localities of the Richmond region retain the largest share of employment. Employment figures between 1990 and 1999 show a rate of almost 14 percent (13.73%) adding over 68,000 (68,521) jobs to the city and suburban area.

The Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) released statistics on employment change in the Richmond region through 2023. These statistics show a large increase in employment occurring within the rural areas, while urban and suburban localities will remain steady or in some cases decrease. While these figures for the rural areas are only for the areas within the MPO, it is telling that just this portion of these rural counties will become future employment centers for the region. Over the 25 year period employment in the rural area will grow at an astounding 267 percent (267.5%) while the urban area maintains a solid growth rate of 22 percent (22.10%). (See Table 6 for details.)

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<sup>1</sup> Kasarda, John D. *Industrial Restructuring and the Changing Location of Jobs, State of the Union: America in the 1990s, Volume I: Economic Trends*. (New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 1995) 234.

**Table 5**  
**Total Full-time and Part-time Employment**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>Change 1990- 1999</b>	<b>Percent Change 1990- 1999</b>
Charles City County	1,365	1,386	1,441	1,520	1,586	1,766	1,883	1,799	2,066	2,044	679	49.74%
Goochland County	5,222	5,411	5,702	5,940	6,304	6,796	7,163	7,557	8,456	9,029	3,807	72.90%
New Kent County	2,901	2,884	2,797	2,879	3,133	3,480	3,575	4,093	4,404	4,181	1,280	44.12%
Powhatan County	4,869	4,851	5,144	5,598	6,122	8,379	8,774	9,248	9,660	10,059	5,190	106.59%
<b>Rural Area</b>	<b>14,357</b>	<b>14,532</b>	<b>15,084</b>	<b>15,937</b>	<b>17,145</b>	<b>20,421</b>	<b>21,395</b>	<b>22,697</b>	<b>24,586</b>	<b>25,313</b>	<b>10,956</b>	<b>76.31%</b>
Chesterfield County	98,961	102,066	104,272	103,820	109,267	114,694	119,378	122,100	125,022	131,948	32,987	33.33%
Hanover County	36,606	35,350	36,309	39,257	40,627	42,970	43,131	44,524	45,351	47,370	10,764	29.41%
Henrico County	142,293	144,117	143,049	146,941	155,167	162,954	169,130	178,455	183,716	192,057	49,764	34.97%
Richmond City	221,241	207,467	204,691	204,719	205,226	201,528	200,702	201,855	201,092	196,247	-24,994	-11.30%
<b>Urban Area</b>	<b>499,101</b>	<b>489,000</b>	<b>488,321</b>	<b>494,737</b>	<b>510,287</b>	<b>522,146</b>	<b>532,341</b>	<b>546,934</b>	<b>555,181</b>	<b>567,622</b>	<b>68,521</b>	<b>13.73%</b>

*Source: Regional Economic Information System (REIS) 1669-1999*

With respect to percentages, these trends seem favorable to the creation of jobs in rural counties, but rural counties have a small employment base and when an industry enters a rural county, employment percentages will increase drastically, but may not increase greatly in aggregate. In respect to aggregate figures, there are still greater numbers of jobs created in suburban areas. Unlike suburban areas, there are fewer total jobs available in rural areas. Major employment centers will continue to be in the urban core and suburbs of the Richmond region. The improvement of transportation options both within and outside of rural communities will create more opportunities for residents of the rural areas while reducing the number of single occupant vehicles on the region’s roadways.

<b>Table 6</b>				
<b>Employment Totals</b>				
	<b>1998</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Change From 1998-2023</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Charles City County	898	2,176	1,278	142.32%
Goochland County	4,359	8,662	4,303	98.72%
New Kent County	902	16,363	15,461	1714.08%
Powhatan County	2,862	5,951	3,089	107.93%
<b>Rural Area</b>	<b>9,021</b>	<b>33,152</b>	<b>24,131</b>	<b>267.50%</b>
Chesterfield County	114,147	176,343	62,196	54.49%
Hanover County	36,265	47,890	11,625	32.06%
Henrico County	178,149	232,254	54,105	30.37%
Richmond City	205,742	195,899	(9,843)	-4.78%
<b>Urban Area</b>	<b>534,303</b>	<b>652,386</b>	<b>118,083</b>	<b>22.10%</b>
<i>Source: Richmond Area MPO 2023 Long-Range Transportation Plan</i>				

While the rural counties are increasing in employment growth percentage, the overall total number of positions available does not compare to that of the employment opportunities in the urban areas. The City of Richmond and the suburbs of Henrico and Chesterfield counties continue to employ the most persons throughout the region. While growth rates may increase in the rural areas the total number of employees in the urban localities will continue to retain the region’s largest employment centers. For this reason and others, the extension and improvement of commuter services throughout the region will play a crucial role in the success of improving the air quality and traffic congestion in the Richmond region.

## Chapter Summary

This analysis of population growth, employment growth, and commuting patterns displays the commuting demands within the rural counties. Commuting patterns prove more rural residents travel daily into the central and suburban core of the Richmond region. Employment analysis shows similar results, and indicates that suburban communities will experience more job openings and will increase the commuting rate from the rural counties into these employment centers. If population and employment growth continue at these levels, there will be more single occupant vehicles traveling on the road daily. Commuting programs in the rural areas will ease the burden on our already overcrowded highways and improve air quality.

## Commuter Transportation Options

A variety of transportation options are available throughout the core of the Richmond region to convey people to their particular destinations, including public transit buses, taxis, vanpools, bikes, and carpools. The following is a summary of transportation services available in the Richmond region with emphasis on the rural counties of Charles City, Goochland, New Kent, and Powhatan. This chapter provides an overview of transportation options in the rural communities as well as primary transportation providers in the Richmond region.



Figure 1 - GRTC Bus

### Fixed-Route Transit Service

Fixed-route services include transit service where vehicles run along an established path at preset times. Buses predominate this type of service within the Richmond region. The GRTC Transit System provides fixed-route service for portions of the region. The primary service area lies within the City of Richmond with some routes extending into Henrico and Chesterfield counties. (Please see Appendix G for a map of GRTC Transit System service area.)

The GRTC Transit System operates buses along fixed routes throughout the City of Richmond and portions of Henrico County and neighboring Chesterfield County. These communities have higher population densities, as well as frequently used origin and destination points concentrated along main arterial roadways. This combination makes fixed-route transportation a good solution for more concentrated populations. Because fixed-route bus services do not extend to all neighborhoods or employment sites, the GRTC Transit System operates several feeder routes, also known as circulator routes in the suburbs of Henrico and Chesterfield counties. The GRTC Transit System bus service does not extend to the rural counties.

### Ridesharing

Ridesharing programs can also meet the needs of many rural commuters. Ridesharing involves setting up transportation by combining known passenger groups in a single vehicle. Ridesharing

can be more readily arranged than fixed-route services and are often cheaper to operate because the driver is not a paid employee but rather a rider in the vanpool. In an unsubsidized vanpool, operating costs are shared equally among passengers. Employers often elect to subsidize vanpool costs for either passengers or an entire vehicle.



**Figure 2 – Ridefinders logo**

In the Richmond region, Ridefinders oversees the majority of carpools and vanpools through a database matching system that links riders with other riders or an established vanpool. Ridefinders is a non-profit organization that provides commuters with free assistance in obtaining transportation services. They maintain a database of existing carpools and vanpools throughout the region and provide discounted transit rates when a client uses transit services.

## **Chapter Summary**

While there are a variety of transportation options throughout the Richmond region, there are no services that unify the rural communities with the remainder of the Richmond region. Large-scale transit service through the GRTC Transit System is currently limited to the larger localities and does not extend into the rural counties. Ridesharing from the rural areas to employment centers is the only option to the single occupant vehicle. This system cannot continue to sustain the transportation needs of rural residents. Expansion of park and ride lots and additional awareness of the ridesharing service is key to getting individuals out of their cars and into a car or vanpool.

## Park and Ride Facilities and Signage

Park and Ride lots offer a convenient meeting place for commuters who share rides to home, to work, or to retail centers, along well traveled routes. These central locations are ideal for commuters in a single occupant vehicle to meet other riders and to combine trips through car or vanpool. Park and ride lots in the rural areas are limited. All are located off Interstate 64 and are accessible from major U.S. routes, such as Route 60 and Route 250. The facilities and signage are maintained by VDOT. While some are paved and lit, many are simple gravel lots with little to no distinguishing characteristics or lighting. VDOT maintains a comprehensive inventory including conditions of commuter lots throughout the state in the *Statewide Park and Ride Inventory*. This inventory identifies three park and ride lots wholly within the Richmond region.

### Bottoms Bridge

The park and ride facility located in the eastern portion of the Richmond region is located in New Kent County at Bottoms Bridge. The lot located in the median of Route 60 is a convenient distance from Interstate 64. (Please see the New Kent County map on the following page for locations.) This location provides access to car and vanpool services for residents of eastern Henrico, New Kent, and James City counties. The paved lot holds approximately 50 vehicles, has trash cans near the entrance, and is kept well maintained. The lot, the largest of the rural park and ride lots, was recently repaved in July 2002.



Figure 3 – Park and Ride sign



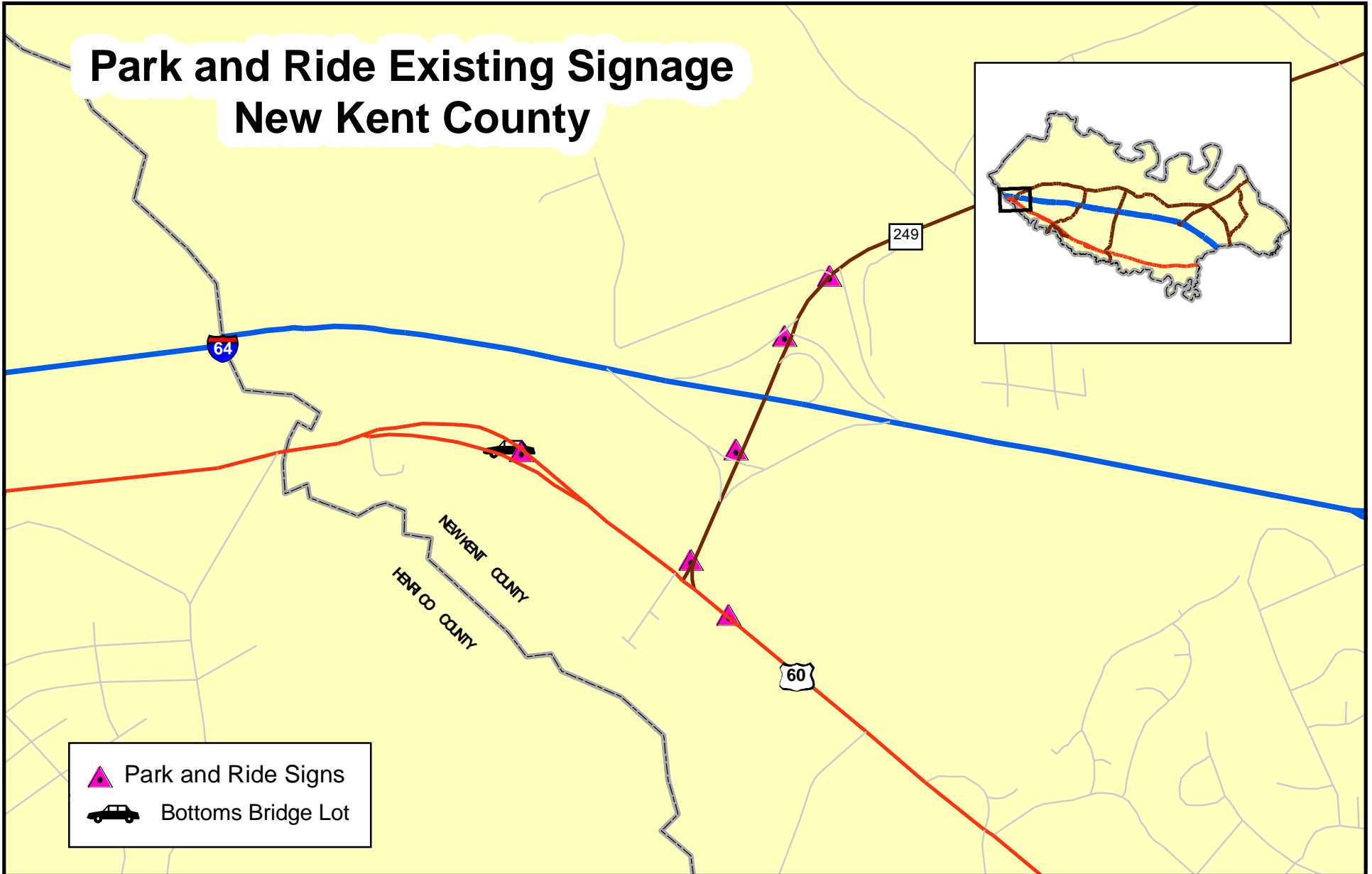
Figure 4 – Sign off I-64



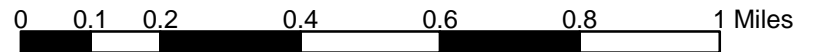
Figure 5 – Sign off I-64

Directional signage on local roadways directs commuters to the lot. Signs are located primarily on Route 249 leading from the interstate. The first is on Route 249 southbound north of the interstate interchange. (See Figure 3.) This directs local traffic from the north of Bottoms Bridge. Several signs are located as drivers exit the interstate in both directions. (See Figures 4-5.) Another sign near the corner of Route 249 and Route 60 directs vehicles through the intersection toward the lot. (See Figure 6.) An additional sign is located on Route 60 westbound before the Route 249 intersection. (See Figure 7.) Finally, an identification sign is located directly at the entrance to the lot indicating it is a commuter facility. (See Figure 8.)

# Park and Ride Existing Signage New Kent County



Prepared by: Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, August 2002





**Figure 6** – Sign near intersection



**Figure 7** – Sign on Route 60



**Figure 8** – Identification sign

### Oilville and Centerville

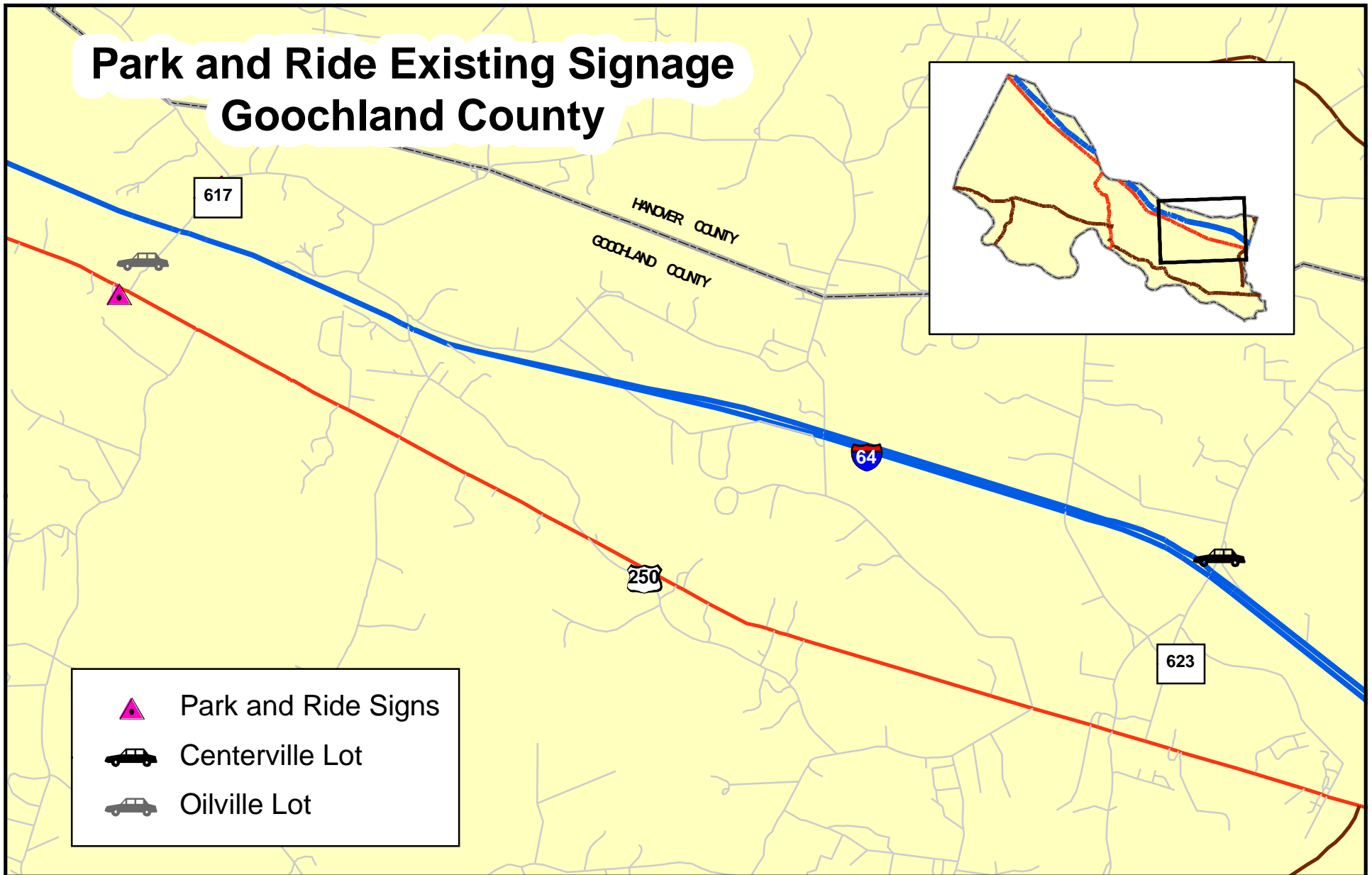
The Oilville lot, located on Route 617 is small, parking is available for 15 vehicles, but it is not paved. There are trash cans available but the lot maintenance is poor and should be regraded or paved. The lot can be seen from the highway, but it is isolated from businesses and a telephone. During a site visit to this lot, it was discovered that the lot did not have adequate signage. The green park and ride sign is near the intersection of Routes 617 and 250 and is only visible from Route 250 eastbound. (See Figure 9.)






**Figure 9** – Oilville park and ride signage

The Centerville lot containing 60 spaces for vehicles is normally only half full. The gravel lot should be regraded or paved. Trash cans are available but the area needs a telephone for emergencies. A stop sign should be located at the entrance/exit to lot. During a site visit to the Centerville lot at the intersection of Route 623 and Interstate 64, it was noted that the lot had no signage visible, even at the lot itself. It should be noted that both lot locations are near road construction and the signs may be temporarily removed during the construction period. (Please see Goochland map for locations.)

# Park and Ride Existing Signage Goochland County



-  Park and Ride Signs
-  Centerville Lot
-  Oilville Lot



## Recommendations

The rural counties of Charles City, Goochland, New Kent, and Powhatan are fortunate enough to have an existing infrastructure of commuter services provided through Ridefinders. Implementing programs to increase the awareness of transportation options available will benefit not only the rural community, but also the suburban community, as commuters learn and become familiar with the alternatives to driving alone. Expansion of park and ride facilities in the rural areas and maintaining existing lots will provide attractive and safe meeting points for daily commuters. Proper signage immediately surrounding the lots will inform local drivers of the park and ride lots. Placing additional signage on the interstate will inform long distance commuters and travelers alike. Additional efforts to improve existing services should include:

- Raising the level of awareness about existing transportation services through outreach programs - Informing potential riders about transportation services will lead to more ridership and a more, effective transportation system. Recently Ridefinders launched the Get Aware of Your Air campaign. This campaign broadcasted, on television and radio, is getting the message out about commuting on code red ozone days.
- Promoting Ridefinders to rural residents and encouraging individuals to join existing car/vanpools, or start new ones - The promotion of car and vanpools will benefit commuters, employers, and the region with the reduction of traffic and emissions. Again, existing campaigns along with their expansion will continue to get the word distributed across the region.
- Promoting the establishment of new park and ride lots in the community, either formal or informal - In conjunction with car and vanpool promotion, park and ride lots will provide a commuter-oriented transportation network. An additional lot in New Kent at the junction of Route 30/33 and Interstate 64 is an ideal location for residents of New Kent, King and Queen and James City Counties.
- Providing incentives to ride public transit through Guaranteed Ride Home programs - Ridefinders provides guaranteed ride home programs for individuals using their services. Advertising this service more will convince drivers who ride alone to carpool.



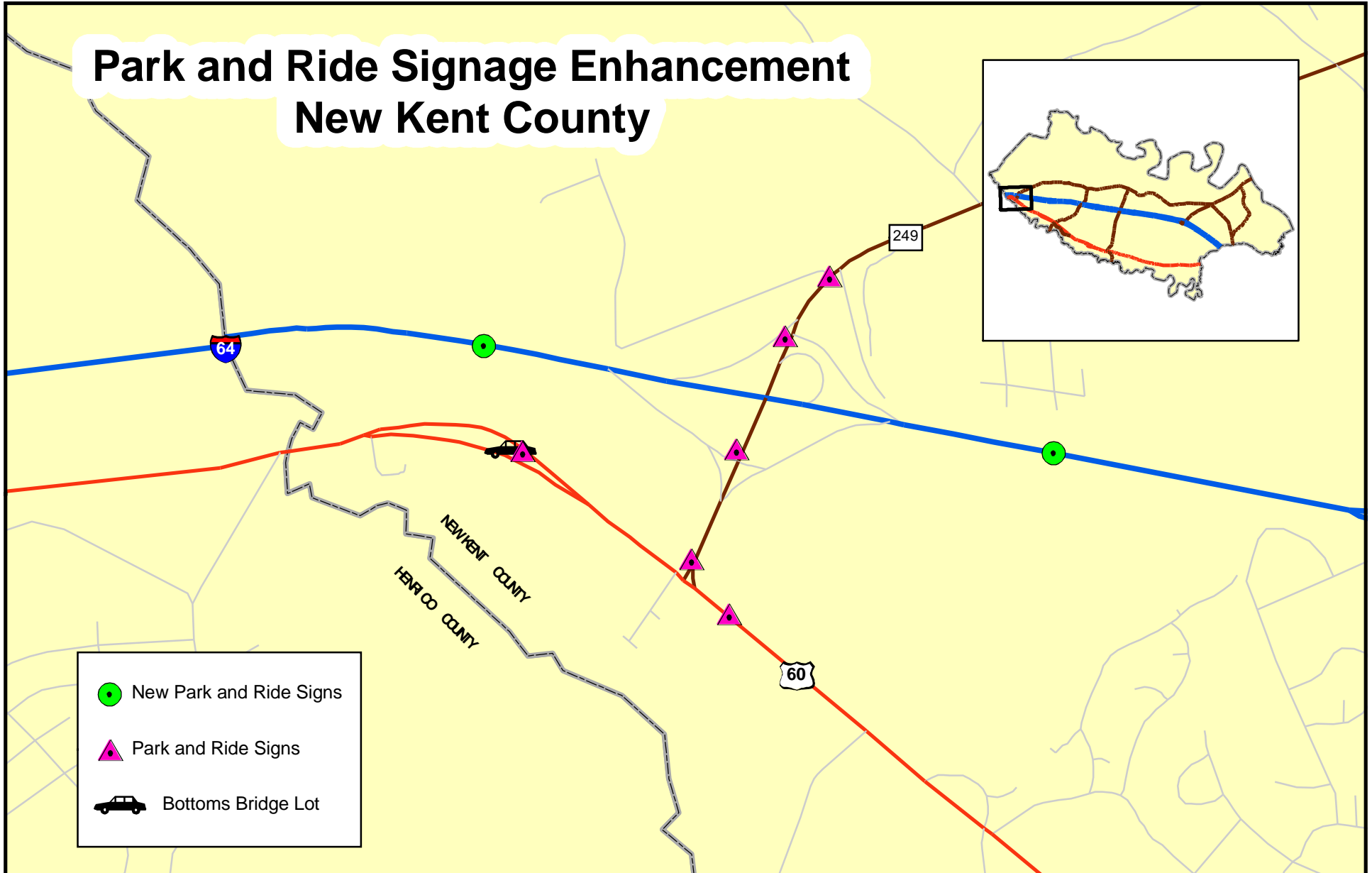
Figure 10 - Car/Van Pool Signage




### Enhancements for Bottoms Bridge

Overall, the Bottoms Bridge lot is a well maintained and well used lot. Additional improvements to the lot and signage should include:

- Cleaning and maintaining directional signs leading up to the lot.
- Adding a sign to the bottom of the informational lot sign, located at the entrance to the lot, with the Ridefinders logo and number to call (1-800-693-RIDE) for ride matching services.
- Placing additional blue car/van pool informational signs on the interstate in either direction near the Bottoms Bridge exit. Similar signs are seen primarily along Interstate 64 in Henrico County. (Please see New Kent enhancement map.)

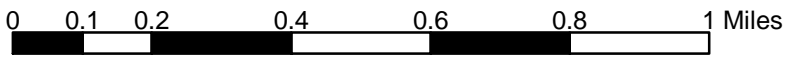
# Park and Ride Signage Enhancement New Kent County



-  New Park and Ride Signs
-  Park and Ride Signs
-  Bottoms Bridge Lot



Prepared by: Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, August 2002



## **Enhancements for Oilville and Centerville**

Both of these lots if maintained and expanded, would be utilized more by commuters. Existing conditions do not invite commuters to the lot, signage is lacking surrounding the lot, and travelers along the Interstate 64 may not even realize these two lots exist. Additional improvements to the lots and signage should include:

- Adding directional green park and ride signs along Routes 250, 617 and 623 in all directions. (Please see Goochland enhancement map.)
- Cleaning and maintaining existing directional signs leading up to the lot.
- Installing informational signs at the entrance to each lot.
- Adding a sign to the bottom of the informational lot sign, located at the entrance to the lot, with the Ridefinders logo and number to call (1-800-693-RIDE) for ride matching services.
- Placing additional blue car/van pool informational signs on the interstate in either direction near the Centerville and Oilville exits exit. Similar signs are seen primarily along Interstate 64 in Henrico County.

# Park and Ride Signage Enhancement Goochland County



- New Park and Ride Signs
- ▲ Park and Ride Signs
- 🚗 Centerville Lot
- 🚗 Oilville Lot

