Long-Range Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan

RideFinders

Working Draft

Report

prepared for

RideFinders

prepared by

Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

with

Center for Urban Transportation Research
LDA Consulting
Southeastern Institute of Research, Inc.

February 2010

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Document History

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2/28/10	Lead authors: Southern Institute of Research (SIR)	Working Draft delivered to RideFinders	Draft content refined through several iterations based on agency comments

1.0 Purpose of the Plan

RideFinders is the Richmond region's designated Transportation Demand Management (TDM) agency. TDM, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation, is any program "designed to reduce demand for transportation through various means, such as use of transit and of alternative work hours."

RideFinders, like the other TDM agencies throughout Virginia, plans and implements ridesharing and other multimodal transportation alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel for people seeking transportation options to their workplaces and other destinations. These actions help mitigate congestion on the region's roadways and reduce environmental impact caused by vehicle emissions and roadway expansion.

As the Richmond region's TDM agency, RideFinders provides TDM-related services to residents, employers, and employees in its service area including commuter information, carpool ridematching, emergency ride home, telework assistance, and information and support for bicyclists and pedestrians. It also promotes the use of transit service, but does not directly operate any transit.

RideFinders delivers its services through various methods, including a Web site, telephone contact, in-person assistance at worksites, and through mailed and emailed information distribution. Relative to other transportation programs, RideFinders has few large capital costs and operates using short-term (1-2 year) funding horizons.

Beginning in 2009, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) requires all agencies receiving TDM grant funds to prepare and submit a Long-Range TDM Plan. The purpose of this Plan is to identify and detail the TDM programs currently provided in the region, to outline potential improvements to be carried out in the Plan's timeframe, and to illustrate the financial resources necessary to implement these programs and improvements.

More specifically, this document will:

- Serve as a management and policy document for RideFinders.
- Provide DRPT with information necessary to fulfill related planning and programming requirements.
- Document current and proposed future operating budgets for RideFinders.
- Provide all information necessary to include RideFinders into DRPT's statewide Six-Year Improvement program (SYIP), Statewide Transportation Improvements Program (STIP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP).

RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan is needed now more than ever. From a transportation planning perspective, maintaining the current levels of mobility and access enjoyed by Richmond region's residents, employers, and travelers will be an increasingly difficult challenge. The region's projected growth in residential population and job opportunities over the next 25 years will increase vehicle miles traveled (VMT). If the current projections hold true, VMT could increase by over 70% from 2000 to 2025.

Given the inordinate financial cost and environmental tradeoffs that come with major roadway construction, it is unlikely the region will build enough roadway capacity to keep up with this projected demand. Solutions to roadway capacity limitations need to expand from road widening to implementation of proven TDM practices. This is the central focus of RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan.

RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan incorporates relevant information from existing transportation planning documents and available TDM-related research studies. It is consistent with long-range plans prepared by local and regional planning organizations, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). Furthermore, the strategic programs and budget requirements detailed in this Plan will be included in DRPT's statewide, Six-Year Improvement program (SYIP), Statewide Transportation Improvements Program (STIP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP).

While many documents and studies were utilized in preparing RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan, the 2007 Virginia State of the Commute Survey (VSOC Survey) and the 2008 RideFinders' Performance Review were two key information resources. The VSOC Survey was the Commonwealth's first statewide assessment of work-related commuting. This statewide study included a large number of residents from the Richmond region. The 2008 RideFinders' Performance Review was performed to assess the effectiveness of RideFinders' program elements such as ridematching placements.

2.0 Overview of RideFinders

RideFinders is the Richmond region's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) agency that helps travelers identify and explore alternative modes of transportation that are available for commuting and other travel needs. The agency currently serves seven counties and five independent towns or cities with a combined area of approximately 2,181 square miles and a population of just under one million people.

RideFinders provides a host of TDM services to residents, employers, and employees in its service area, including commuter information, carpool ridematching, vanpool formation and operations support, emergency ride home, transit fare media sales, information and support for bicyclists and pedestrians, and telework information and assistance. RideFinders promotes the use of transit service, but does not directly operate any transit.

RideFinders delivers its services through various methods, including a Web site, telephone contact, in-person assistance at worksites, and through mailed and emailed information distribution. RideFinders also offers walk-in assistance at a storefront in downtown Richmond.

2.1 History of RideFinders' TDM Program

RideFinders was established in 1981 and has maintained its relevance and service to the region since then.

RideFinders' historic milestones include:

- 1981 - RideFinders was founded as an independent entity as a result of the 1970s gas crisis. COMPOOL, the South's first non-profit ridesharing program, was co-sponsored by the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce.
- 1983 - COMPOOL used the first-ever computerized system launched to arrange commuter carpools and vanpools.
- 1985 - COMPOOL changed its name to RideFinders, and partnered with the Central Richmond Association to establish the country's first downtown parking and commuter information service.
- 1987 - RideFinders implemented the use of vans, mini-buses, and subscription bus service to Kings Dominion. This was part of the Landmark Capital Area Training Consortium Vanpool program, a workforce transportation service for people in need.
- 1990 - Transportation Allowance program was developed to coordinate Richmond Region employers commuter fringe benefits. The Guaranteed Ride

Home allowed ridesharing commuters a way to get home by taxi if they need to leave work early or stay late. RideFinders reimbursed most of the cost. The first Employers Transportation Management Association was developed.

- 1991 - GRTC Transit System started the Transit Fare Subsidy Program with assistance from RideFinders.
- 1994 - Commuter Store opened on East Main Street in Richmond.
- 1994 - RideFinders teamed up with the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce and the Retail Merchants Association of Greater Richmond to form the Ozone Advisory Program.
- 1998 - The Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) Network was implemented to enable interested citizens arrange alternative transportation for their co-workers through RideFinders in businesses all over the region.
- 1998 - GRTC Transit System assumed management of the RideFinders organization integrating the total transit system in the Greater Richmond Region.
- 1999 - RideFinders launched the Commonwealth Commuter Choice program that provides vanpool vouchers and transit tickets to state employees.
- 2001 - RideFinders launched ground level ozone campaign. "Get Aware of Your Air" initiative teaches the dangers of ground-level ozone to a new generation.
- 2005 - RideFinders launched summer bike promotion
- 2008 - RideFinders shifted focus to more employer outreach. To date, 300 employers had signed up as partners and there are over 10,000 registered clients.
- 2009 - NuRide, employee rewards incentive program, is launched. Almost 400 employers are now signed up as partners.

2.2 GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

2.2.1 Governance

RideFinders is a division of the Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) and is officially governed by the GRTC board. RideFinders' Executive Director attends GRTC board meetings and presents monthly program and financial reports to the GRTC board. These reports include quantitative output measures of success (new registrations, employer clients, etc.) and major activities of the last month.

The GRTC board officially has the final say on important RideFinders concerns including the budget and the marketing plan, and must approve major service changes and financial commitments that are greater than $50,000. The board

assists with charting strategic direction for the agency and has shown interest in RideFinders' activities, but exercises little influence on tactical day-to-day operations. In this sense, within the parameters defined for the agency by GRTC, RideFinders maintains a substantially independent operation, albeit one with a close and integrated relationship to GRTC.

GRTC provides RideFinders with a great deal of operational and marketing support. RideFinders' accounting and human resources are provided by GRTC in its role as the parent organization. GRTC staff provide these services much in the manner of outside consultants or vendors, with RideFinders' staff having frequent and extensive coordination with GRTC employees on the substantive aspects of these functions. GRTC also handles monthly accounting and general ledger entries, monthly and annual financial reporting functions, accounts receivable, and payroll. GRTC provides these services to RideFinders at no direct cost. This is a change from a previous time when GRTC assessed RideFinders a monthly "administrative fee."

GRTC's Marketing Department staff also supports RideFinders. GRTC creates and produces RideFinders' marketing materials in-house. GRTC also arranges for television and radio media buys, as a part of GRTC's purchases for larger transit promotions. For television and radio ads, GRTC typically uses production capabilities of the media outlets, which produce ads using a script and creative concepts crafted by GRTC and approved by RideFinders.

RideFinders also maintains an independent Advisory Board, currently comprised of members from various stakeholder organizations. Current members include:

- Mr. Lee Yolton, Chair
  Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
- Ms. Barbara Smith
  Vice-Chair, Chesterfield County
- Ms. Victoria Badger
  City of Richmond
- Ms. Stephanie Kirksey-Brenner
  Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce
- Mr. Todd Eure
  Henrico County
- Mr. Daniel Salkovitz
  Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- Mr. Quenton R. Lee
  Midlothian Electric Company

Prior to 1998, when RideFinders was independent of GRTC, the Board served in a formal governing role. Now the Board's role is advisory. The members of the Board serve for renewable two-year terms and are recruited by the Executive

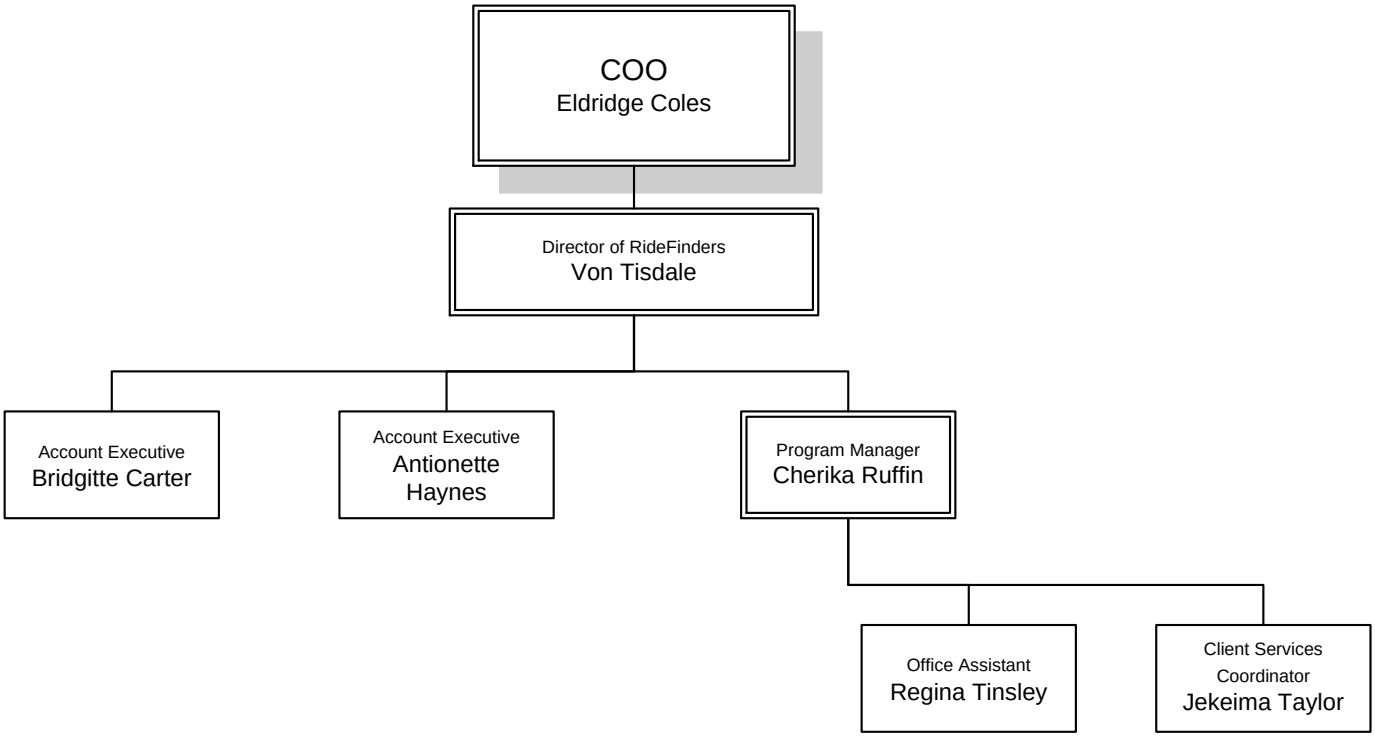
Director. Several members of the Board have served for multiple terms, providing continuity and a source of institutional history. However, new members are periodically added, either to replace members who are leaving or to represent a new stakeholder group.

The Advisory Board meets quarterly to discuss RideFinders' progress. RideFinders' management also seeks advice from this group about the direction of future work. Advisory Board members are very involved and helpful to RideFinders and often request information about specific topics or will suggest ideas for research or new programs. The Advisory Board also serves as a forum to introduce and discuss stakeholders' views.

2.2.2 Organizational Structure

RideFinders has a staff of six full-time employees. RideFinders' organizational chart in Figure 2.1 shows the staff position and reporting arrangements. A description of RideFinders' current staff positions is presented in Table 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Organizational Chart



Source: RideFinders.

Table 2.1 Staff Descriptions

FTE	Position	Job Description
1	Executive Director	The Executive Director of RideFinders reports directly to the GRTC Chief Operating Officer and Chief Executive Officer. The Executive Director attends meetings of the Planning District Commission (PDC) and participates in the PDC's Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee. The Executive Director also attends meetings of other organizations that undertake community, local, and regional planning activities. The Executive Director is responsible for establishing and maintaining relationships with locally-elected officials of jurisdictions in the agency's service area. As shown in Figure 2.1, three of the remaining five staff report directly to the Executive Director.
1	Program Manager	The Program Manager reports to the Executive Director and oversees front-end operations including the Office Assistant and Client Services Coordinator. The majority of administrative responsibilities rest with the Program Manager position. This position supports the Executive Director with long-term organization management tasks, such as budgeting and work plan development, and is charged with the day-to-day oversight of staff.
2	Account Executive	The two Account Executives are primarily responsible for Employer Outreach activities. The two positions have a high level of outside contact that require a great capacity for sales and relationship building skills to recruit employers and provide ongoing customer support.
1	Client Service Coordinator	The Client Service Coordinator is primarily responsible for the operation of the ridematching service and the Emergency Ride Home Program, two flagship services delivered to area commuters. RideFinders responds to inquiries received from the public or work-related commuters via telephone and email. The agency receives between 200 and 300 calls per month on a toll-free information line. The phone line is staffed during business hours by the Client Services Coordinator. A voicemail service takes calls when no staff is able to answer the phone. Many inquiries can be handled anonymously over the phone, but RideFinders' staff encourages all callers to provide email addresses or other contact details for additional follow-up services.
1	Office Assistant	The Office Assistant staffs the front desk of the Commuter Store and provides support for daily administrative functions.

Source: RideFinders.

2.2.3 Key Stakeholders

RideFinders' key stakeholders include GRTC, DRPT, the Richmond Area MPO (RAMPO), the jurisdictions that make up the RAMPO region, employer clients, and third-party partners. These stakeholders are the primary funders, service delivery partners, and beneficiaries of RideFinders' services. A brief overview of each stakeholder is presented below.

- ***GRTC:*** RideFinders receives substantial assistance from GRTC's Financial Department for accounting services, relieving RideFinders' staff of most of the typical accounting tasks. As noted earlier, GRTC provides the service in the manner of an outside contractor, but RideFinders does not pay any fees for the service. From a financial perspective, RideFinders operates as a cost center for GRTC. GRTC established independent accounts in GRTC's main accounting system for all RideFinders' expense and income categories, including separate accounts for each grant category. The accounting system also documents the FY budget allocated for each account.

- **DRPT:** DRPT is one of RideFinders' funding sources and a partner in service delivery. RideFinders looks to DRPT to support, guide, and promote TDM at the State and regional level.

- **Richmond Area Planning District Commission and Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO):** RideFinders operates within the geographic area of the Richmond Region Planning District Commission (RRPDC). Transportation-related planning for the PDC is performed through the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (RAMPO). RAMPO is the conduit for CMAQ funding that is directed to RideFinders. In addition, RAMPO serves as the mechanism for all of the local governmental jurisdictions to monitor RideFinders' activities.

  RideFinders works closely with RAMPO insuring that TDM is included in the region's long-term transportation plan. In August 2008, RAMPO finalized the 2031 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Goal 5.0 of the 2031 LRTP ties directly to ties directly to RideFinders' services.

  > *Goal 5.0 A balanced transportation system that offers attractive modal choices and serves the needs of the region's diverse and changing population.*

  The 2031 LRTP dedicates a chapter (Chapter 7) to TDM and prominently features RideFinders. This section documents a regional role for RideFinders in the delivery of services directed toward commuters and services delivered through employers and worksites.

- **Local Jurisdictions:** RideFinders currently serves seven counties and five independent towns or cities that make up the Richmond area. Each of these jurisdictions is independent of one another. They all have their own governments. Through their membership on the regional MPO, each jurisdiction has direct influence on RideFinders' funding.

- **RideFinders' Employer Clients:** RideFinders currently has 395 direct working "partner" relationships with employers across the Richmond region, including all of governmental agencies in downtown Richmond. These employers receive TDM support services directly from RideFinders.
- **Third-Party Affiliations:** RideFinders has productive alliances with organizations such as the American Lung Association, the Society for Human Resources Management, the Virginia Transit Association, and local Chambers of Commerce (i.e.: Richmond, Prince-George/Hopewell, Petersburg, etc.) and local Business Councils. RideFinders is affiliated with these groups to expand its visibility and credibility in the community. In addition, these groups also introduce RideFinders to potential clients for RideFinders' employer-based transportation programs.

It is important to recognize that all of these stakeholder groups have different levels of interactions with and expectations for RideFinders. The local governments and the regional MPO provide consistent funding to RideFinders. They view the agency as an extension of their work – a transportation *service provider* that helps address local and regional transportation needs. Employers work directly with RideFinders as *customers.* These corporate clients expect and receive direct benefits from their relationship with RideFinders.

As documented in RideFinders' June 2009 Performance Review, the vast majority of stakeholders feel that RideFinders does a good job in providing its services to the Richmond region. However, stakeholders defined "desired services" differently. Stakeholders located in the core of the region see RideFinders' primary role in promoting and supporting efficient transit service, while the agency's role in suburban areas was defined as carpool/vanpool promotion and support of economic development. In rural areas, the role for RideFinders was less traditional; serving non-commute human services needs and advocating for new transportation options and facilities, such as Park & Ride lots. RideFinders thrives, in part, from its ability to meet successfully the needs and expectations of this diverse set of constituents.

2.3 SERVICE AREA PROFILE

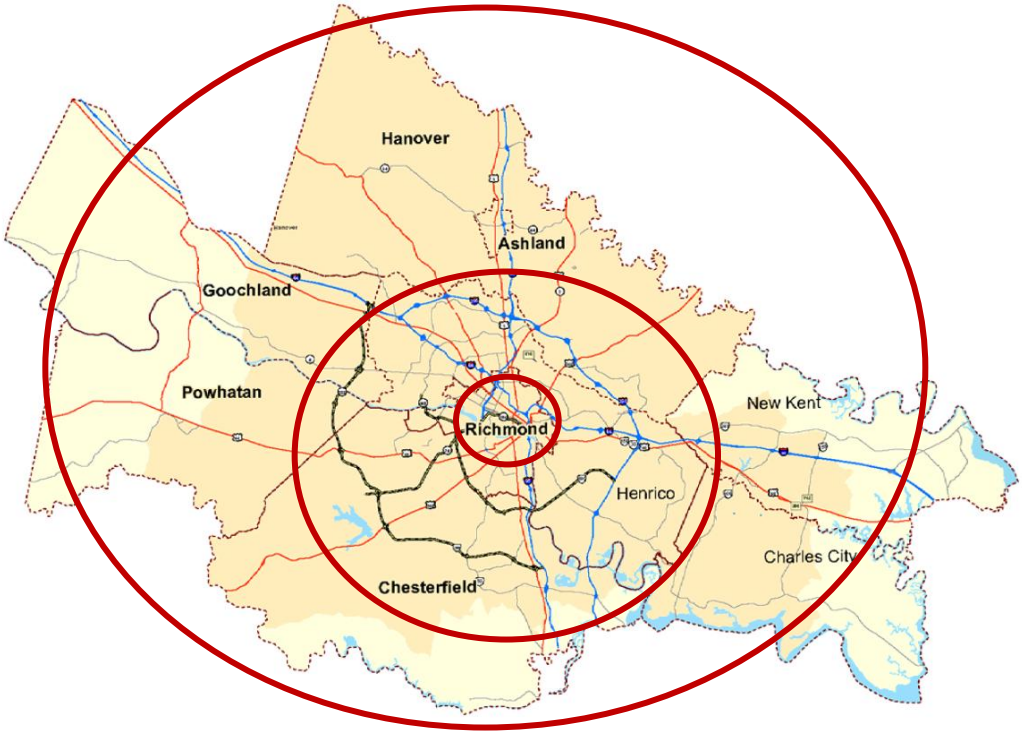
2.3.1 Description of Service Area

The seven counties and five towns or cities that make up RideFinders' 2,181 square mile service area include:

- City of Richmond
- City of Hopewell
- City of Petersburg
- Charles City
- Town of Ashland
- City of Colonial Heights
- Chesterfield County
- Goochland County
- Hanover County
- Henrico County
- New Kent County
- Powhatan County

RideFinders' service area, as depicted in Figure 2.2, can be viewed as three concentric geographic rings. The inner ring or core service area is the City of Richmond/downtown area. This is the only region in the area with paid parking. The second ring includes the two contiguous counties to the City – Henrico and Chesterfield counties. The outer ring is made up of suburban/rural counties.

Figure 2.2 Map of RideFinders' Service Area



Source: Richmond Regional Planning District Commission 2031 Long-Range Transportation Plan.

The majority of the population and jobs are within the inner two rings. The outer ring jurisdictions are more rural in nature, with lower residential density and smaller number of employers and jobs. The major activity centers are also in the inner two rings. These centers include:

- Downtown Richmond
- Manchester
- Glenside
- Innsbrook
- Rockett's Landing
- Short Pump
- The Boulders
- Watkins Center
- Woodlake/Bandermill
- Westcreek
- Hanover
- Atlee/Mechanicsville
- Town of Ashland

When compared to other regions of Virginia, RideFinders' service area is more densely populated, with an average of 406 persons per square mile versus 179 for the State average (based on the 2000 US Census). The City of Richmond has the highest density in the region, with 3,293 persons per square mile within the city limits.

2.3.2 Transportation Facilities

The region's major transportation facilities include:

- **Highway System:** Interstates 64, 95, 85, and 295 converge in the Richmond Metropolitan area.
- **Rail Service:** AMTRAK provides passenger rail service with eight northbound and eight southbound trains each weekday. Richmond is in AMTRAK's Northeast Corridor Direct service area for rapid rail and upgraded passenger services. CSX and Norfolk Southern provide rail freight service.
- **Air Service (RIC):** Richmond International Airport (RIC) is a 12-minute drive from downtown. More than 3.5 million passengers and 100+ million pounds of cargo are handled at RIC annually. In 2007, Richmond International Airport completed a major renovation project, establishing it as one of the most modern and well-equipped airports in the eastern United States. The $280 million expansion included a new air traffic control tower, two-level terminal featuring upper level departure and lower level arrival areas, spacious ticketing and baggage claim halls, new terminal roadway and new restaurants.
- **Public Transit:** Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) provides bus transportation on express and regular routes, and van service for special populations.

- **RideFinders:** RideFinders provides information and support services for car pools, vanpools, teleworking, and other transit options.
- **Commuter Store**: RideFinders runs a Commuter Store on-site at RideFinders' downtown office. Through this storefront, walk-in operation, RideFinders provides in-person information and trip planning assistance and sells various transit fare media.
- **Park and Ride Lots:** There are now 27 formal park & ride lots in RideFinders' service areas as shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 RideFinders Area Park & Ride Lots

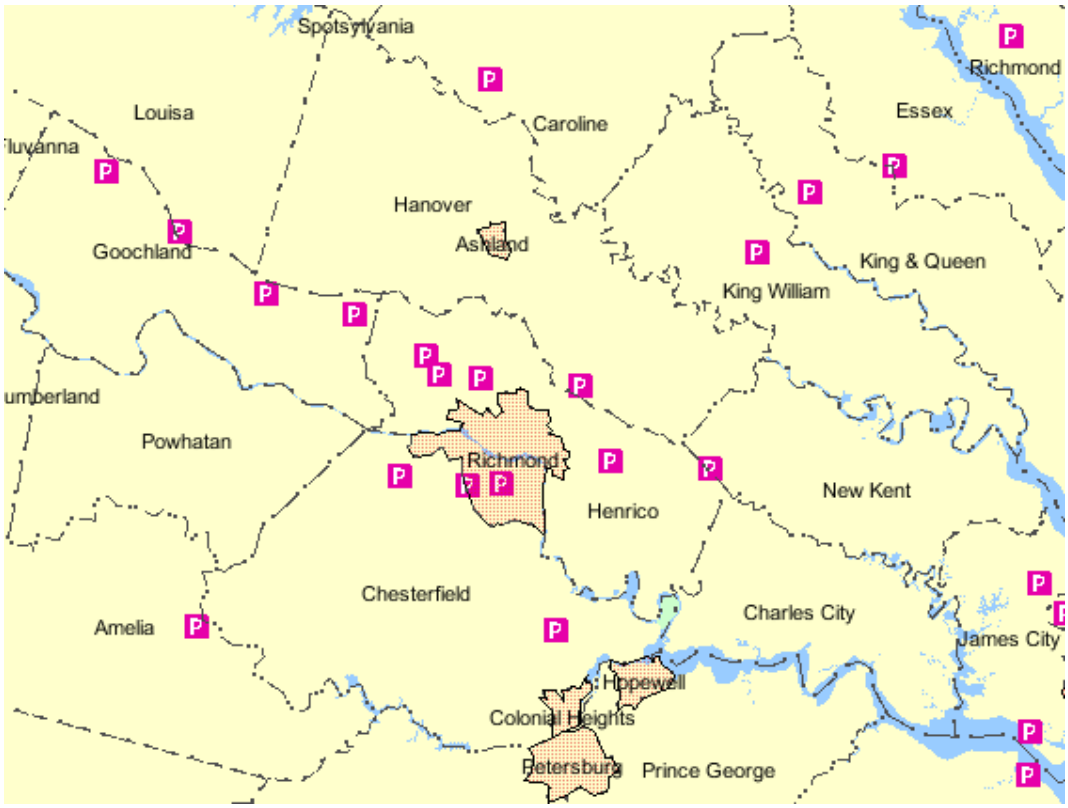
Name	Address	City	ZIP
Appomattox River	Patrick Henry Hwy & Circle Dr	Amelia Courthouse	23002
Big K-Mart	Midlothian Tpke & Greshamwood Pl	Richmond	23225
Bon Air Baptist Church	Forest Hill Ave. & Choctaw Rd.	Chesterfield	23235
Bottoms Bridge	US Hwy 60 & Rte 93	Quinton	23141
Bradley Mart	Newton Rd & Richmond Hwy	Newtown	23126
Brook & Parham	Brook & Parham	Henrico	23228
Carmel Church	Rt. 1 & Rt. 207	Carmel Church	22546
Commonwealth 20	Commonwealth Center Pky and Rt. 288	Chesterfield	23112
Fair Oaks Park & Ride	Millers Lane and Williamsburg Road	Henrico	23231
Gaskins Park & Ride	Gaskins & Mayland	Henrico	23233
Gaskins Road	Mayland Dr	Richmond	23233
Glenside Park & Ride	Glenside & Staples Mill	Henrico	23228
Gum Spring	US Hwy 522 & US Hwy 250	Gum Spring	23065
Hadensville	US Hwy 250 & Old Fredericksburg Rd	Gum Spring	23065
Hickory Haven	Rte 623 & I-64	Rockville	23146
John Tyler CC	John Tyler Community College	Chester	23281
Lowe's Park & Ride	Koger Center Blvd.	Chesterfield	23235
Mechanicsville	US Hwy 360 Bus & Shady Grove Rd	Mechanicsville	23111
Near Sharon Baptist Church	Sharon Rd & King William Rd	King William	23086
Norge	Rochambeau Dr & Croaker Rd	Williamsburg	23188
Oilville	Rte 617 & US Hwy 250	Oilville	23129
Parham Park & Ride	Parham & Fordson	Henrico	23229
Tabb & Market	Tabb & Market	Petersburg	23803
Town of Surry	School St & Bank St	Surry	23883
Union & Tabb	Union & Tabb	Petersburg	23803

Watts Supermarket	Richmond Hwy & Rte 20	Tappahannock	22560
Winterpock Lowes	Hull Street Road & Winterpock Rd.	Chesterfield	23832

Source: RideFinders.

Figure 2.3 is a map of the Richmond Region park and ride lot locations as shown on the VDOT Web site.

Figure 2.3 Richmond Region Park & Ride Lots



Source: VDOT Travel Center Online - http://www.virginiadot.org/travel/prOTIM.asp

Of the 27 park and ride lots, four serve GRTC's express commuter bus service. These express bus park and ride lots are listed on Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 GRTC Express Riders Park 'N Ride Lots

Name	Location	Connecting Service
Fair Oaks Park 'N Ride	3302 Williamsburg Rd Richmond, VA 23231-2355	28 Fair Oaks Express – 30 min to travel one end to the other
Glenside Park 'N Ride	Glenside & Cloverdale	27 Glenside Express – 30 min. to travel one end to the other
Gaskins Park 'N Ride	Gaskins & Mayland	29 Gaskins Express – 35 min. to travel one end to the other
Parham Park 'N Ride	Parham & Fordson	26 Glenside Express – 30 min. to travel one end to the other

Source: http://www.ridegrtc.com.

2.3.3 Demographic Profile of the Region

There are approximately one million people in the RideFinders' service area, as shown in Table 2.4. Minority populations including African-Americans and Hispanics are over-represented in RideFinders' service area when compared with statewide averages.

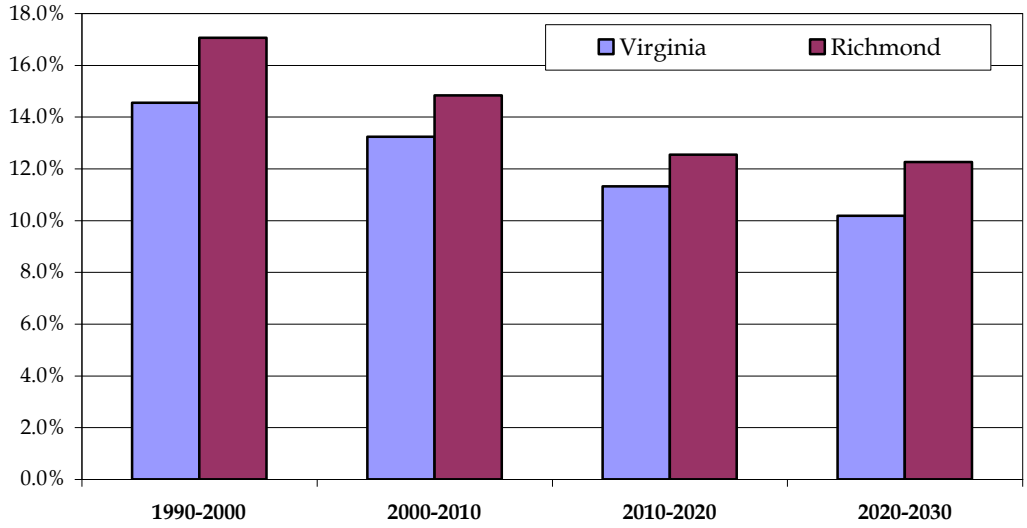
Table 2.4 Richmond Region Population (1990 - 2010)

	1990	2000	2010
Population:			
Total Pop.	739,735	865,941	994,425
	--	17.1%	14.8%
Age Groups (%):			
Under 20	201,245 (27%)	214,072 (26%)	258,137 (26%)
20 to 64	456,256 (62%)	529,035 (62%)	621,745 (63%)
65 and Over	82,234 (11%)	95,030 (12%)	114,543 (12%)

Sources: Virginia Employment Commission and US Census Bureau.

As depicted in Figure 2.4, since 1990, the population of RideFinders' service area has grown at a faster rate than the growth rate for Commonwealth as a whole. This region is projected to grow faster than the state as a whole over the next 20 years.

Figure 2.4 Population Growth in RideFinders' Service Area and Virginia



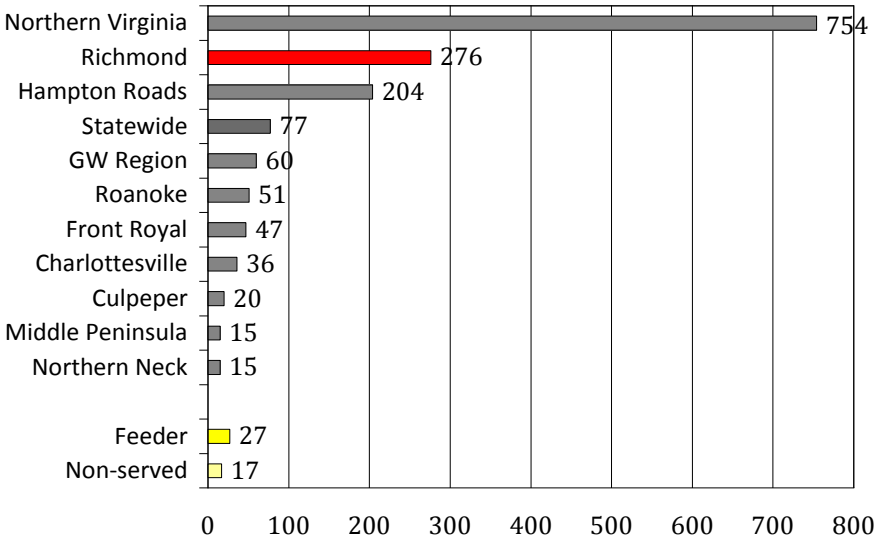
Sources: Virginia Employment Commission and US Census Bureau.

2.3.4 Economic Profile

According to the 2000 US Census, approximately 9% of the region's population was living below the poverty line and 11% was 65 years of age or older. Both of these statistics are on par with the statewide averages of 9% and 11% respectively. The City of Richmond, however, has a substantially higher poverty rate, with 21% of the city's population living below the poverty line.

In 2008, total employment in the RideFinders' service area was estimated to be 439,995. When compared to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Richmond region has the second highest employment population density in the state, only falling below Northern Virginia. Figure 2.5 shows this relative density based on employees per square mile.

Figure 2.5 Employment Population Density



Source: 2000 Census.

Table 2.5 shows the ten largest employers in the region.

Table 2.5 Top 10 Employers in RideFinders' Service Area

Richmond, VA
1. Virginia Commonwealth University
2. MCV Hospital
3. Richmond City Public Schools
4. City of Richmond
5. Philip Morris U.S.A., Inc.
6. Hunter Holmes McGuire Medical Center
7. Johnston Willis Hospital
8. Postal Service
9. University of Richmond
10. Federal Reserve Bank, Richmond

Source: Virginia Employment Commission. 50 Largest Employers during 1st Quarter (January, February, March) 2009.

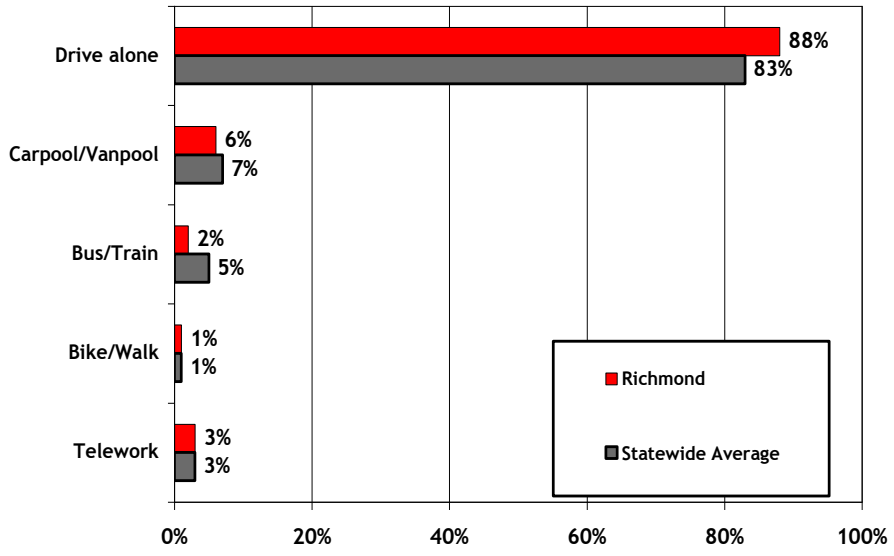
2.3.5 Existing Travel Patterns

Mode Split

Mode split is commonly used as a performance measure for TDM agencies. As depicted in Figure 2.6, the Richmond area's work mode split is more heavily weighted to drive alone commuting. Almost nine in ten (88%) of the working residents are SOV commuters. This is higher than the state-wide average of 83%, which is significantly influenced by the Northern Virginia market where the mode split is 70% SOV commute.

Of the 12% that do use alternatives to the drive alone commute, the use of alternative modes include car and vanpooling (6%), bus (2%), and Telework (3%), and bike/walk (1%).

Figure 2.6 Richmond Region's Use of Alternatives to Drive Alone Commute



VASOC – question 15: Now thinking about LAST week, how did you get to work each day? Primary Mode

Source: 2007 Virginia State of the Commute Commuting Patterns

Commuting Patterns

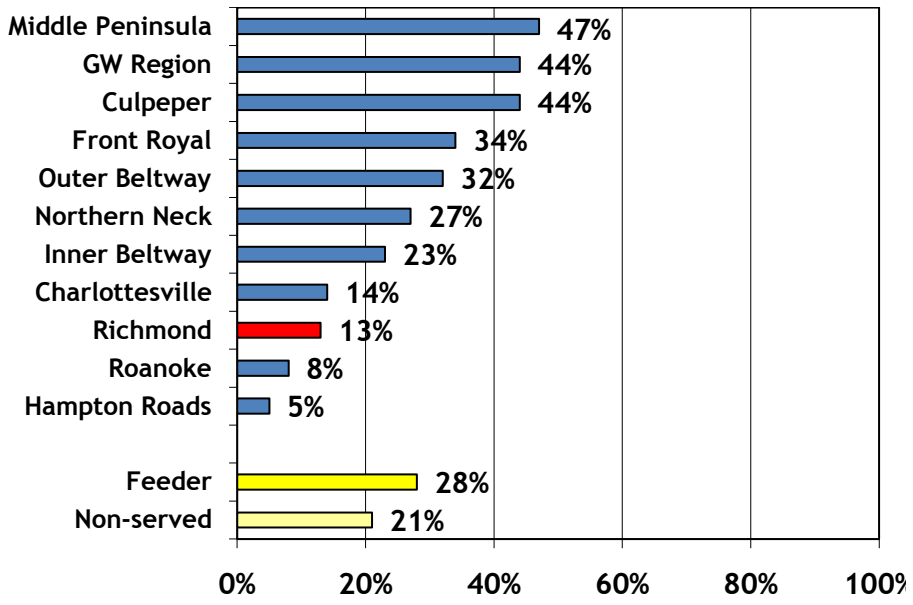
Commuting patterns are one of the largest influences on a TDM agency's programs and customers. Areas with a large percentage of inbound commuters tend to emphasize employer services, while areas with a large percentage of outbound commuters tend to focus on residentially-based programs with vanpool/commuters bus services.

RideFinders' area residents have a very moderate average commute distance and time of any group in Virginia. Both of these measures will likely increase in the

future as population and vehicle miles traveled in the region continue to rise at a significant rate, creating congestion.

The Richmond region residents who work outside the home remain in the area for work. As Figure 2.7 shows, only 13% of the region's workforce commutes outside of the market. The region has the third lowest level of outbound commuters in the state. As a result, RideFinders must operate as both an origin- and destination-based TDM program, and therefore focuses on both employers and residents.

Figure 2.7 Percent Commute Outbound



VASOC – question 2: In what county (or independent city) do you live?
VASOC – question 3b: In what county (or independent city) do you work?

Source: 2007 Virginia State of the Commute.

As depicted in Table 2.6, the highest commuter origin and destination areas are the two inner rings, with approximately 75% of residents commuting from and to the City of Richmond and the two contiguous inner ring counties – Henrico and Chesterfield.

Table 2.6 Top 10 Areas Residents Commute to & Workers Commute From

Residents Commuting to:	Residents (%)	Workers Commuting From:	Workers (%)
City of Richmond	141,594 (33%)	Henrico County	132,149 (29%)
Henrico County	137,999 (32%)	Chesterfield County	120,432 (26%)
Chesterfield County	84,966 (20%)	City of Richmond	85,675 (19%)
Hanover County	29,499 (7%)	Hanover County	42,291 (9%)
Goochland County	5,313 (1%)	Powhatan County	9,872 (2%)
City of Petersburg	3,860 (1%)	Goochland County	7,781 (2%)
Powhatan County	3,682 (1%)	New Kent County	5,264 (1%)
City of Colonial Heights	2,845 (1%)	Prince George County	3,796 (1%)
City Hopewell	2,674 (1%)	City of Petersburg	3,756 (1%)
Prince George County	2,545 (1%)	King William County	3,616 (1%)
Total Resident Commuters:	**433,256**	**Total Workers:**	**458,741**

Source: Virginia Employment Commission.

Given the absence of long-distance commuters, the Richmond market, along with Hampton Roads and Roanoke, enjoys one of the shortest commutes. Figure 2.8 shows Richmond region's relative commute in both time (average 23 minutes) and distance traveled (average 10 miles). It's no surprise that Richmond was named "*One of the 10 best cities for commuters of the nation's 75 largest metro areas*" in Forbes.com, April 2008.

Figure 2.8 Average Length of Trip in Minutes and Miles in Virginia

Region	Avg. Trip Time Minutes	Rank	Region	Avg. Trip Length Miles	Rank
GW Region	42	1	GW Region	30	1
Culpeper	40	2	Culpeper	29	2
Northern Virginia	35	3	Front Royal	25	3
Middle Peninsula	33	4	Middle Peninsula	23	4
Front Royal	32	5	Northern Neck	22	5
Northern Neck	29	6	Non-served	19	6
Statewide	**28**	**7**	Charlottesville	18	7
Non-served	26	8	Feeder	17	8
Charlottesville	26	8	**Statewide**	**17**	**8**
Feeder	24	10	Northern Virginia	16	10

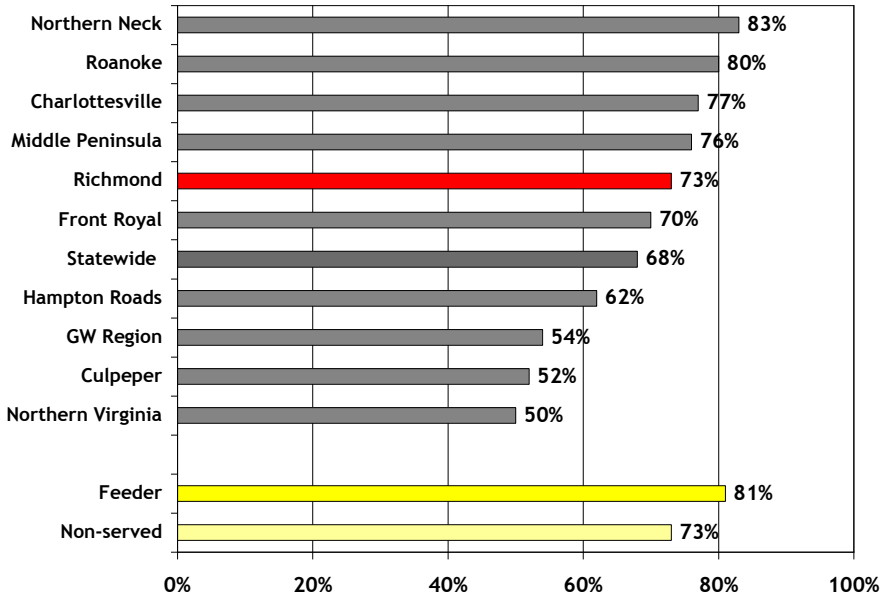
Region	Avg. Trip Time Minutes	Rank	Region	Avg. Trip Length Miles	Rank
Hampton Roads	23	11	**Richmond**	**16**	**10**
Richmond	**23**	**11**	Hampton Roads	14	12
Roanoke	20	13	Roanoke	14	12

VASOC – questions 16-17: How long is your typical daily commute one way? Please tell me both how many minutes and how many miles. First, how many minutes? And how many miles?

Source: 2007 Virginia State of the Commute.

Richmond region residents recognize their relative short commute times, too. As depicted in Figure 2.9, the 2007 Virginia State of the Commute Survey found that Richmond region residents, when compared to commuters in other Virginia markets, have one of the highest levels of satisfaction with their commute. Seven in ten (73%) rated their satisfaction with their commute a "5" or "4" in a "1-5" rating scale.

Figure 2.9 Commuter Satisfaction



VASOC Q56a. Overall, how satisfied are you with your trip to work?

Source: 2007 Virginia State of the Commute.

2.4 RIDEFINDERS' CURRENT TDM SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

2.4.1 RideFinders' Customers

Today, RideFinders focuses on the work-related commute and, in so doing, serves two primary customer groups: work-related commuters and their employers.

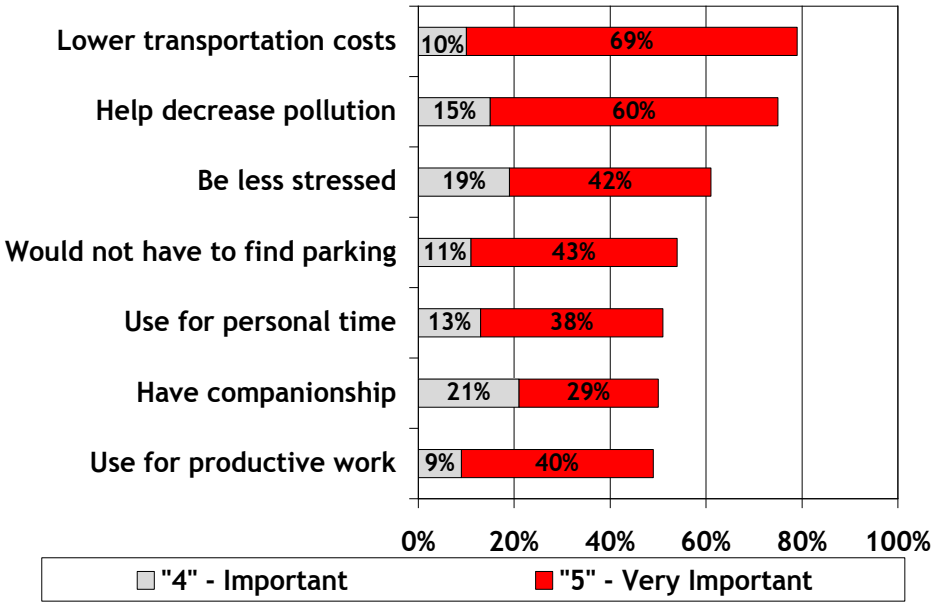
Commuters

RideFinders primarily serves downtown employers and their employees. This is consistent with TDM agency experience around the country. In survey after survey, people say they rideshare to save money and time.

Time savings come in the form of qualifying for High Occupancy Vehicle lanes (HOV) commuting. The Richmond region does not have HOV facilities and, therefore, cannot offer a time savings benefit. Furthermore, it is hard to save time with one of the shortest commute times in the state. In fact, "to save time" doesn't even make the list of reasons that people report on why they use alternative transportation modes. In Northern Virginia, it is the most important reason.

In the Richmond region, commuters who rideshare say they do so to save money and help decrease pollution, as depicted in Figure 2.10.

Figure 2.10 Reasons for Use of Alternate Transportation Modes



VASOC – question 56e: How important were each of the following in your decision to use (carpool, vanpool, bus, train, ferry, bike, walk)? "1" means "not at all important" and "5" means "very important."

Source: 2007 Virginia State of the Commute.

Lowering transportation cost with ridesharing comes from the elimination of monthly parking fees and gas and operating costs from long commutes. Since commute distance and time is relatively short in the Richmond region, the total cost of the commute, in terms of gas and car operating cost (maintenance), is low. In the Richmond region, the most significant cost savings comes from avoiding downtown area parking fees where monthly parking ranges from $50 to $150. Based on this, RideFinders' active customer base today, and for the immediate future, is concentrated around downtown workers. This is the primary target that offers the most savings for commuter who rideshare.

Employers

Recognizing that direct employer involvement in supporting ridesharing lifts employees' use of ridesharing modes, RideFinders also targets area employers, concentrating on the largest downtown employers.

There are 395 employers that participate as RideFinders partners at various levels with the goal of recruiting 20 new companies per quarter.

RideFinders' employer partners participate at varying levels. The Executive Director estimates that of that number, 56 employers have a more aggressive level of involvement, offering an array of alternative transportation to their employees. The level of involvement for most of the other employers is less substantial, such as dissemination of transportation information to employees.

Based on RideFinders' current base of employer partners, the profile of employers that embrace and promote TDM are the large public sector agencies. RideFinders has 56 public agencies currently participating as listed below in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7 RideFinders Participating Commuter Choice Organizations

Organization Name	
Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms	Virginia Department of Correctional Education
Chippenham-Johnston Willis Hospital	Virginia Department of Corrections
Federal Reserve Bank	Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
Virginia Information Technology Association	Virginia Department of Education
City of Richmond	Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice
Federal Highway Administration	Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services
4th Circuit Court of Appeals	Virginia Department of Transportation
LeClair Ryan	Virginia Employment Commission
University of Richmond	Virginia Department of Forensic Science
Dominion Enterprises	Virginia Department of Human Resource Management
Williams Mullen	Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation
Scott & Stringfellow	Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development
VCU Health System	Virginia Department of Accounts
VCU School of Dentistry	Virginia Department of Treasury
Virginia Department of General Services	Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services
Virginia Department of Minority Business Enterprise	Virginia Worker's Compensation
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality	Virginia Department of Social Services
House of Delegates	Virginia State Lottery
Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission	Virginia State Bar
Office of the Attorney General	Virginia Retirement System
Senate of Virginia	Virginia State Police
State Corporation Commission	Virginia State Board of Elections
Troutman & Sanders	Library of Virginia
Tucker Pavilion	Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development	Virginia Department of Military Affairs
Virginia Department of Taxation	Virginia Transit Association
Virginia Board for People with Disabilities	Virginia Employment Commission
Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services	Virginia Department of Health

Source: RideFinders.

Today, a concentrated push is directed toward the largest private sector downtown employers.

2.4.2 Programs and Services

TDM services are typically grouped into three distinct categories:

- Modal options, such as vanpools and transit, refer to services that expand the availability of non-single occupant vehicle (non-SOV) modes of travel.
- Financial incentives, such as transit passes, include services that offer a financial benefit or advantage for use of non-SOV travel options.
- Support services, such as Emergency Ride Home, are services that make use of non-SOV modes more convenient.

RideFinders does not directly operate or fund any services in the modal options category. RideFinders offers one service, a vanpool subsidy, in the financial incentives category. The majority of RideFinders' services fall into the category of support services. The major services provided by the agency include carpool ridematching, vanpool formation and administrative support, emergency ride home, and transit media sales. More information is available on the RideFinders' Web site. Following is information on each service.

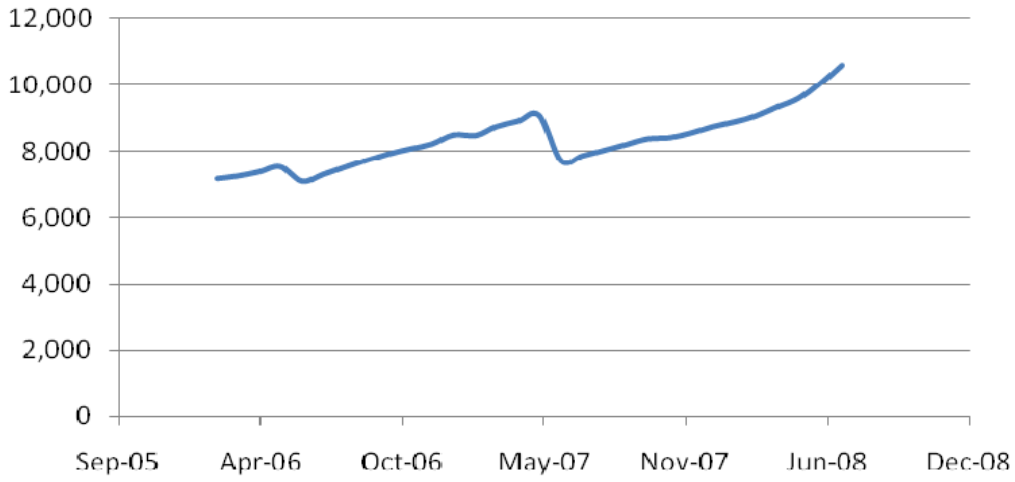
Carpool/Ridematching

Carpool/Ridematching is the core of RideFinders' services. This service is administered through a database program that matches commuters who want to carpool or vanpool with other commuters who have similar origins and destinations, routes, and travel time of day preferences as do the applicant commuters.

This database contains records of commuters who have applied for a RideFinders' carpool or vanpool match and who have chosen to remain in the database for continued ridematching opportunities, either because they have yet to form a rideshare arrangement or because they are interested in increasing the number of commuters in an existing carpool or vanpool. This database also is used to register commuters in the region who use non-SOV modes (transit, bike, walk, carpool, and vanpool) who have registered for RideFinders' Emergency Ride Home service.

Database registrations increased significantly over the past two years. In July 2008, RideFinders had 48% more database registrations that in February 2006, as shown in Figure 2.11. The summer of 2008 had an increase in registrations, likely due to the sharp increase in gas prices occurring at that time.

Figure 2.11 Ridematching Database Registrants



Source: RideFinders.

The ridematching service offers lists of potential carpool partners a commuter can contact to try to form a new carpool. The overwhelming majority of ridematch applications are submitted by commuters who want to find a partner for an ongoing carpool arrangement, but RideFinders also offers matching for university students.

Commuters can submit a ridematch registration application by telephone, mail, fax, online, and in-person at transportation fairs or other worksite or community transportation events. A web-based ridematching system for Virginia is currently under development, but until this is operational, all registration applications must be input by hand into the ridematching database. On average, RideFinders processes about 3,000 new registrations annually. In November 2008, about 12,000 commuters were actively in the database.

Using the ArcView GIS 3.2 ridematching software, the Client Services Coordinator prepares a list of potential ridematch partners for each new ridematch applicant. The Coordinator enters information about the applicants' home and work locations and time of travel and the software produces a list of other commuters in the database who have similar travel patterns. This match list with contact information for potential ridesharing partners is then sent to each new registrant. Approximately 70% of new registrations can be matched at the current time; some commuters cannot be matched because there are no commuters in the database who have compatible travel patterns. RideFinders also provides information about transit routes that could be used to make the desired trip, if the commuter requests that information.

At the end of each month, a brief follow-up survey is sent to all new registrants in the same method that the registration was received (email for online registrations, mail for mail registrations, etc.) to determine the results of the matching. The survey asks how applicants heard about RideFinders, why they

decided to register, if they contacted people named on their match list, and if they started to carpool. The survey also includes questions about the customer service/registration process and applicants' satisfaction with the service experience (e.g., response time, usefulness of information, etc.). The response rate is over 50% for email surveys and about 25% for postal mail distribution. RideFinders compiles and analyzes the results each month.

RideFinders undertakes a purge process to keep registration contact information current. Each registrant receives an annual renewal letter, around the anniversary of the original registration date, which asks if the registrant wishes to remain in the database and if so, to verify or update contact information. About 75% of registered commuters renew annually. Registrants are also purged from the database if the contact information on file is found to be no longer valid.

Vanpool Matching/Leasing

Support and formation of vanpools is another important RideFinders service. RideFinders assists groups of commuters to establish a vanpool group and complete steps needed to obtain a vanpool vehicle through a third-party vanpool leasing agent. RideFinders does not own or lease any vans.

RideFinders supports the formation and continued operation of vanpools in various ways. RideFinders does not own or operate any vans; maintenance, insurance, fare collection and all other aspects of daily vanpool operations are addressed by third party leasing agencies. However, the agency provides assistance to form new vanpools and supports the continued operation of existing vanpools.

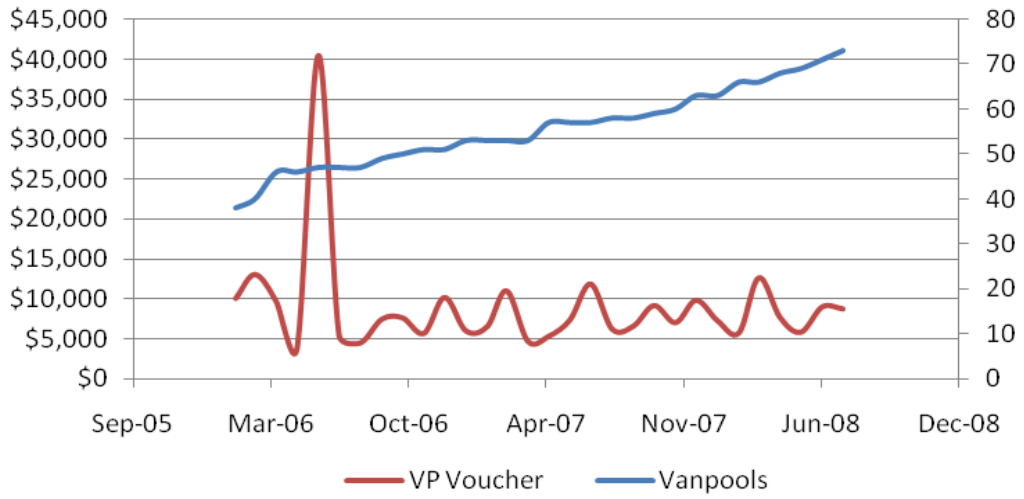
Employer support and financial benefits to start or maintain vanpools (vanpool vouchers) provide the strongest motivation for vanpool formation. However, to assist commuters with a formation task that can be time-consuming – identifying willing riders and drivers – RideFinders sponsors lunches for groups of registrants with compatible routes who have expressed interest in vanpooling to become acquainted with each other. RideFinders also arranges for the vanpool vendors to present their services to potential vanpool groups. Plus, because many of the commuters who are potential vanpool riders live outside the Richmond area, RideFinders also works with TDM agencies in neighboring regions to assist with home-end vanpool formation.

Finally, RideFinders offers three vanpool financial incentives. The first, Van Trial, is a RideFinders-funded incentive that pays for the van lease capital costs for a one-month trial period. RideFinders also administers DRPT's VanStart vanpool formation incentive and the VanSave empty-seat grants designed to help retain vanpools that lose several riders.

Figure 2.12 clearly shows a steady upward trend in the number of vanpools supported through RideFinders, with an increase of 92% between February 2006 and July 2008. Vanpool voucher sales do not exhibit the same upwards trend as might be expected. Instead, vanpool voucher sales oscillate frequently, with occasional low

months and high months with no correlation to the number of vanpools operating at the time. This is because the vanpool voucher subsidies have defined time limits; the "VanStart" formation incentive is offered for a three-month period when a vanpool begins and the "VanSave" incentive is offered for up to four months to vans that are at risk of dissolving due to losses in riders. Thus, while new vans typically increase the fleet size, they do not have a cumulative impact on the vanpool subsidy cost. On average, approximately $8,900 of vanpool vouchers is provided each month.

Figure 2.12 Monthly Vanpool Usage and Vanpool Voucher Sales



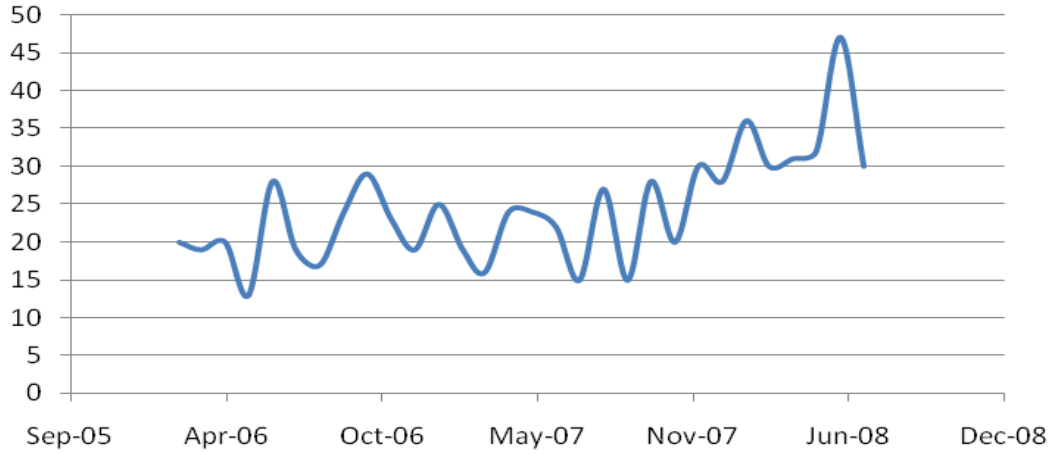
Source: RideFinders.

RideFinders reported substantial growth in vanpooling in recent years. In 2003, RideFinders supported 30 vans in the region. At this time-September 2009, RideFinders supports 100 vanpools, with most destined for worksites in the downtown area. Each vanpool has between 7 and 15 members.

Emergency Ride Home

Emergency Ride Home (ERH) is a "ride insurance" service provided to registered users who use a non-SOV mode (transit, carpool, etc.) at least three times per week for commuting. Each registered user receives an annual $250 trip allowance for rides. Therefore, as the number of registrants increases, the number of ERH trips taken also is likely to grow. While an upward trend is visible in recent ERH usage as shown in Figure 2.13, the trend does not illustrate the same steady growth as seen for registration levels. This pattern highlights the sporadic nature of ERH use, which was designed to be used only in emergencies, when no other travel option is available.

Figure 2.13 Monthly Emergency Ride Home Usage



Source: RideFinders.

The ERH is administered by the Client Services Coordinator who is responsible for registering users, approving rides, and analyzing program use and satisfaction. At this time, about 5,371 commuters are currently enrolled in the program. This represents a 165% increase since 2006, when about 2,000 commuters were registered.

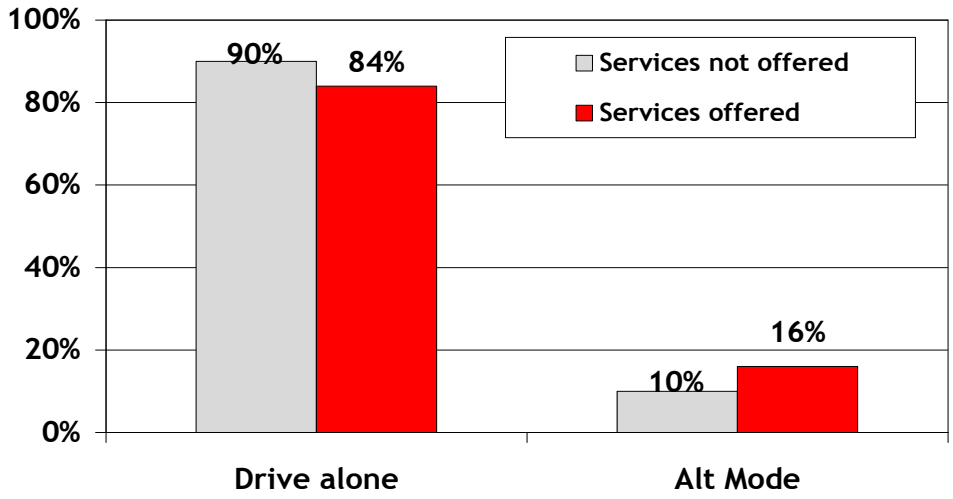
Commuters who participate in ERH are registered in the same database process as described in the ridematching section. As is done for the ridematching service, RideFinders sends each ERH registrant an annual update request to assess their desire to remain in the program and update contact information. This program has a 98% retention rate.

Registered users receive a membership card that allows them to use either a taxi or rental car to travel home in case of an unscheduled event. Participants who live or work in Northern Virginia also may use a train. Each user has an annual allowance for this service of $250; the first three uses are free and all subsequent uses require a $5 co-pay up to the allowable maximum. Each trip is arranged by the user; however, approval from RideFinders' staff is required during regular business hours. After hours, users are required to call to alert program staff on the following business day.

Employer Services

In 2007, several research studies, including the *2007 Virginia State of the Commute Study*, demonstrated the lift in the use of drive alone alternatives when employers offer rideshare support programs. This relationship is depicted in Figure 2.14.

Figure 2.14 Employer-Provided Commuter Benefits Relationship to Drive Alone and More Likely to Use Alternate Modes



VASOC – question 15: Primary mode defined as mode used most often vs. VASOC question 89/92/93/94/95/96/97: Please tell me if your employer makes any of the following commute services or benefits available to you…

Source: 2007 Virginia State of the Commute.

"Services offered," as graphed above, include parking discounts, special parking spaces, cash payments, subsidies, bike/walk facilities, emergency ride home, and commute information.

Recognizing the leverage that employers bring to increasing use of alternative modes, RideFinders recently increased its investment in its employer outreach program. Expanded outreach effort is now focused on gaining employers' endorsement and invitations to work directly with commuters through worksite-based fairs and promotions.

Employers are now offering many of the services provided by RideFinders as benefits to their employees, especially as a transit or carpool subsidy or other form of incentive (such as preferential parking for carpools).

The main services provided to employers include:

- Transit and ridematch materials for distribution to employees;
- Employee density plots showing residential locations of employees;
- Electronic surveys of employees on transportation-related issues;
- Downtown Commuter Guide that lists parking lots in the downtown Richmond area;
- Transportation Fairs at employers' worksites;
- Vanpool listings and information; and

- Two-week trial transit passes.

RideFinders uses a range of methods to identify potential new employer clients. The regional "Top 50 Employers" is a major source for potential high-impact clients. Other methods for attracting clients include participation in local Chambers of Commerce and local business associations, referrals from regional business magazines and publications, and event sponsorships and exhibits at local business expos. The Account Executives also employ cold calling and worksite drop-in visits to introduce their services to employers.

RideFinders has recently launched an employer-based incentive program called NuRide. NuRide is the nation's largest rewards program for individuals who take greener trips, which include carpooling, vanpooling, biking, walking, telecommuting, and taking public transportation. NuRide is supported by sponsors who provide rewards and special offers to NuRide members for taking greener trips and reducing global warming, traffic congestion, and energy consumption. RideFinders is co-branding this service, ensuring that employers and their employees know that RideFinders is behind the NuRide name.

Telework

RideFinders provides employers telework assistance through the Telework!VA program funded by DRPT. This program offers grants of up to $35,000 to companies for consultant services and equipment purchases to develop or expand employees' telework programs. The Executive Director and Program Manager are primarily responsible for this element of RideFinders' services, but the Account Executives include telework information in their employer tool kits.

RideFinders markets Telework!VA to employers through the Greater Richmond Technology Council, Chamber of Commerce technology shows, and other business networking opportunities. At this time, 24 employers are involved in the Telework!VA program through RideFinders, with prospects in the application approval process. The Account Executives also provide additional telework assistance to employer clients, outside of the Telework!VA program.

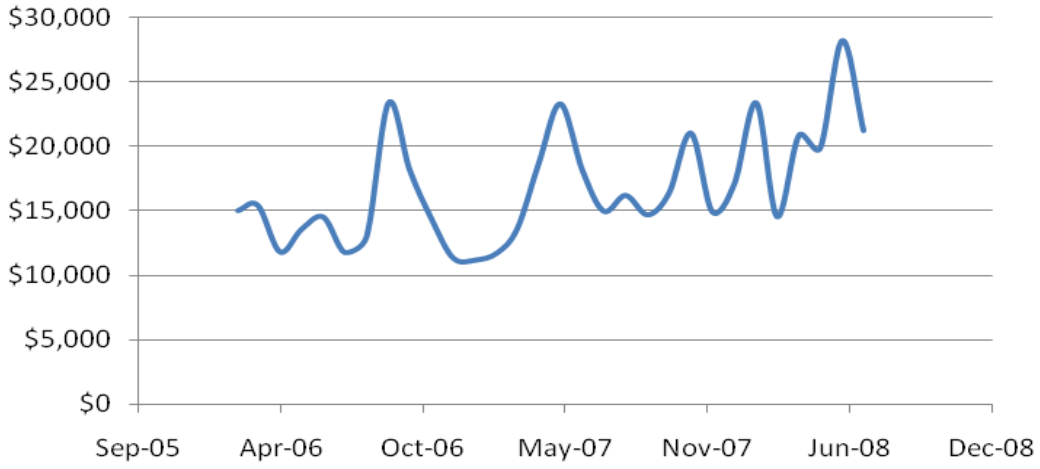
Bicycling/Walking

RideFinders provides some support for pedestrian and bicyclist commuters and is working to become more involved in this area. RideFinders has partnerships with several local advocacy groups including BikeWalkVA and the Richmond Area Bicycle Association (RABA) to promote bicycling and walking as commute modes and has sponsored or participated in regional events to provide information about non-motorized commuting. Recently, RideFinders distributed free helmets to interested commuters, and distributed pedometers in the spring of 2009 as part of a walking program and challenge. Special bike and pedestrian events, such as a bike challenge, have also been sponsored by RideFinders. Agency staff has expressed interest in offering more bike safety classes and clinics in the future.

Public Transportation

RideFinders sells GRTC transit fare media through its storefront in downtown Richmond as a service to transit riders. As shown in Figure 2.15, sales have fluctuated from one month to the next, perhaps because transit passengers have multiple other opportunities to purchase fare media.

Figure 2.15 Monthly Transit Fare Media Sales



Source: RideFinders Performance Review, July 17, 2009 by LDA Consulting.

Marketing

Historically, RideFinders has focused marketing efforts on area residents who commute to work – consumer marketing. In 2009, RideFinders started to shift its focus and resources to expand awareness of RideFinders among employers – Business-to-business marketing. As employer outreach is just being started, the following section highlights RideFinders' commuter marketing efforts.

Program awareness is critical for consumer based marketing efforts. People have to be aware of and familiar with a service or product before they try it. While awareness of a TDM agency does not necessarily translate to use of its services, the absence of awareness clearly would result in non-use. Further, mode choice research has demonstrated that travelers are most willing to consider new travel modes when they are making personal changes, such as starting a new job or moving to a new residence, which could affect their typical travel needs and patterns. Thus, maintaining a high level of awareness among members of the traveling community makes it more likely that commuters and other travelers will seek out TDM agency services when they are naturally establishing a new travel pattern and would be more likely to consider choosing non-SOV modes.

RideFinders has used a consistent and well-coordinated marketing campaign called "Team RideFinders." A key objective of this campaign has been to create a cohesive and ongoing brand identity for RideFinders and to expand commuters'

awareness of non-SOV modes to include bike, walk, and telework, in addition to the carpool, vanpool, and transit modes that are most often associated with RideFinders. Team RideFinders' logo and cartoon mode-user characters, such as Bike Boy, are consistently included in all materials.

RideFinders uses a wide variety of methods to deliver this message – to make commuters aware of the agency's available support and services. These include radio and television advertising, pre-movie theatre placements, direct mail and email campaigns, displays at worksite and community events, distribution of informational brochures, and press releases and media/news stories.

RideFinders has also run short-term promotions such as the Match the Code and Win promotion co-sponsored by Chick-fil-A restaurants and Beat the Traffic, which aired daily in radio and television ads in conjunction with routine traffic reports. RideFinders even created a school play entitled "The Air We Share." Developed in partnership with Theatre IV, a national theatrical touring company, this theatrical production encourages students and their families to incorporate small changes such as carpooling, riding the bus, bicycling, and walking to generate positive environmental impacts. The performance was held at more than 60 area schools.

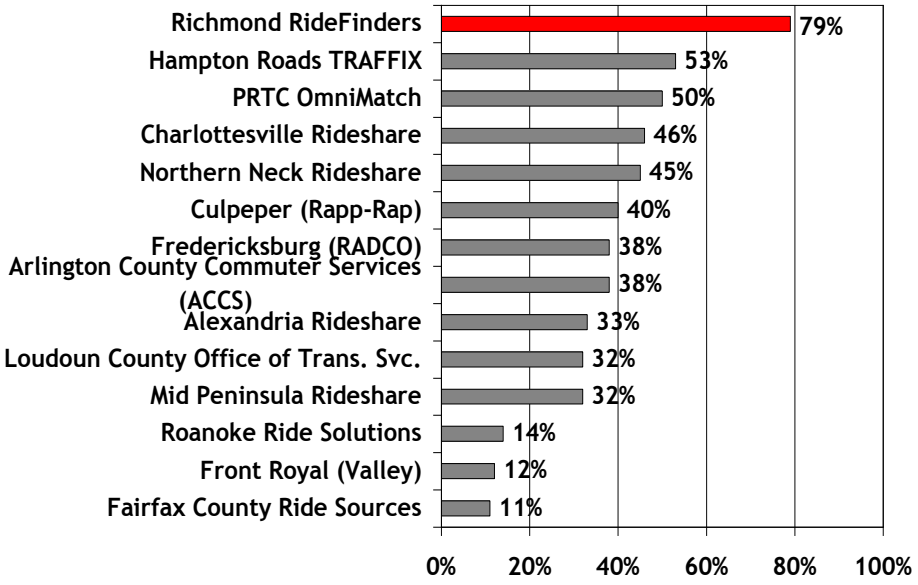
In fall seasons, RideFinders often co-sponsors Try Transit Week, along with GRTC. RideFinders also has teamed with other partner organizations on promotions such as Corporate Games, Innsbrook Go Green Expo, and Hopewell Golf Tournament.

About 60% of the commuters who call register for a RideFinders service or provide contact details. Commuters who provide a contact receive information about upcoming RideFinders events, transit schedule changes, and other transportation service announcements that might be of interest.

RideFinders disseminates information to Richmond-area travelers by several methods. One method is distribution of printed information brochures and pamphlets that explain the opportunities for, and benefits of, using non-SOV modes and describe RideFinders' service offerings. RideFinders has prepared a media kit and individual brochures related to air quality, telework, bus, ERH, and vanpooling. The agency distributes these materials through direct mail, take-one displays, and bulk distribution to employers who pass the materials on to their employees. Staff also distributes materials to commuters through RideFinders' worksite Transportation Fairs and local community and university outreach events.

The Virginia State of the Commute survey, conducted by DRPT in May - July 2007, indicated a high level of awareness of RideFinders; 79% of commuters who either live or work in RideFinders' service area were aware of the program. This was the highest level of awareness achieved by any similar rideshare agency/program across the state as shown in Figure 2.16.

Figure 2.16 Awareness of RideFinders

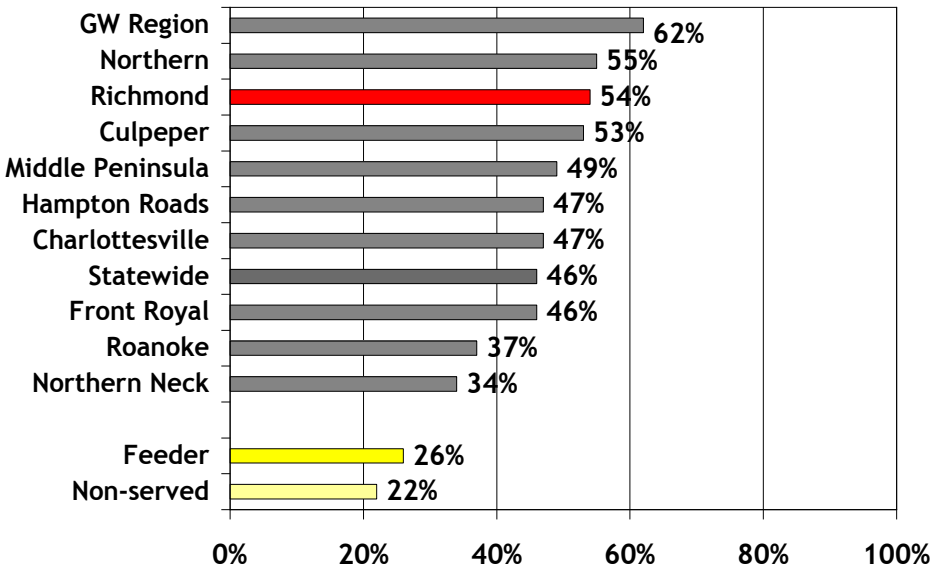


VASOC – question 88d: Have you heard of an organization or service called RideFinders?

Source: 2007 Virginia State of the Commute Study.

One of the reasons RideFinders enjoys such high levels of awareness, as shown in Figure 2.17, is due to its consistent investment in advertising and promotions. This can be measured by RideFinders' relatively high level of advertising recall.

Figure 2.17 Advertising Recall



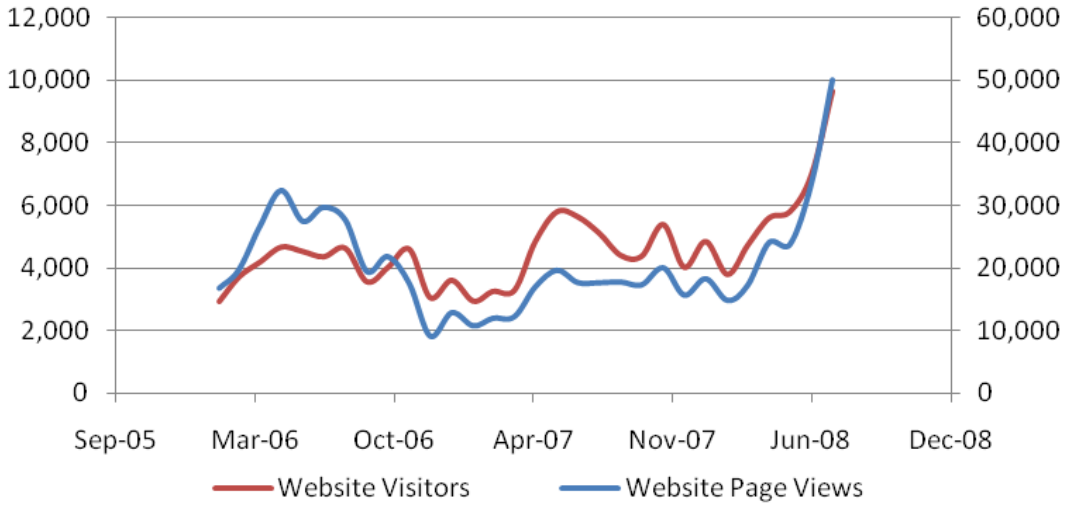
VASOC – question 61: Have you heard, seen, or read any advertising about commuting in the past year?

Source: Virginia State of the Commute Study, 2007.

Another measure of effectiveness is the activity generated by the marketing campaign – the degree prospects are driven to RideFinders' Web site for more information. The internet continues to be an increasingly important tool for TDM information dissemination – the "go to" source for information. RideFinders redesigned its Web site in 2007 to be more user-friendly and to highlight new service initiatives. The Web site provides basic information about carpooling and the ERH program, and links to transportation organizations such as GRTC, DRPT, RABA, and VDOT.

RideFinders tracks all online traffic at their Web site as shown in Figure 2.18. The number of pages viewed each month has steadily increased. The number of unique Web site visitors also increased.

Figure 2.18 Monthly Web Site Visitors and Page Views



Source: RideFinders.

The many successes of RideFinders' marketing efforts have not gone unnoticed. The excellence of the agency's marketing efforts has been recognized by numerous industry associations.

- In 2008, RideFinders received the "Creative Excellence Award" from the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) for the Team RideFinders campaign. This award honors organizations that implemented a project, promotion, or program that demonstrates creativity and originality, and generated a significant response and results.
- RideFinders was honored in 2008 with two awards by the Richmond Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). The first was the "Best in Virginia Award of Merit" in the Community Relations

category, an award that recognizes programs targeted at community audiences.

- RideFinders won for "The Air We Share" production, developed in partnership with Theatre IV, a national theatrical touring company. The touring, in-school theatrical production encouraged students and their families to incorporate small changes such as carpooling, riding the bus, bicycling, and walking, that could generate positive environmental impacts. The performance was scheduled at more than 60 area schools.
- The agency won a second IABC award, the "Best in Virginia Award of Excellence" in the Employee and Member Communication category for the "Match the Code and Win Promotion." This month long, Web-based promotion in partnership with Chick-fil-A encouraged new and existing customers to visit the RideFinders Web site and receive a coupon for free Chick-fil-A food. This award honors communications programs targeting internal employee or member audiences.
- RideFinders received a second award for this program from ACT's Chesapeake Chapter in the "Outstanding TDM Incentive Program" category for development and implementation of results oriented incentive or subsidy programs.
- Other notable awards include:
  - 2005-ACT Outstanding TDM Program
  - 2004-ACT Outstanding Ridesharing Program; Outstanding Marketing Campaign
  - 2002-Commuter Choice Leadership Initiative Recognition
  - 1999-ACT Outstanding Employer Services; The Communicator Award from MSI Advertising
  - 1998-ACT Outstanding Commuter Services Program; Outstanding Ridesharing/Vanpool Programs
  - 1995-Leadership- Public Sector Organization

3.0 Future RideFinders Service Area Profile

RideFinders' service area will undergo significant changes over the next 25 years. Many of trends and forces that will reshape the region are already at work. This section of RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan details these trends and forces and presents potential implications for RideFinders.

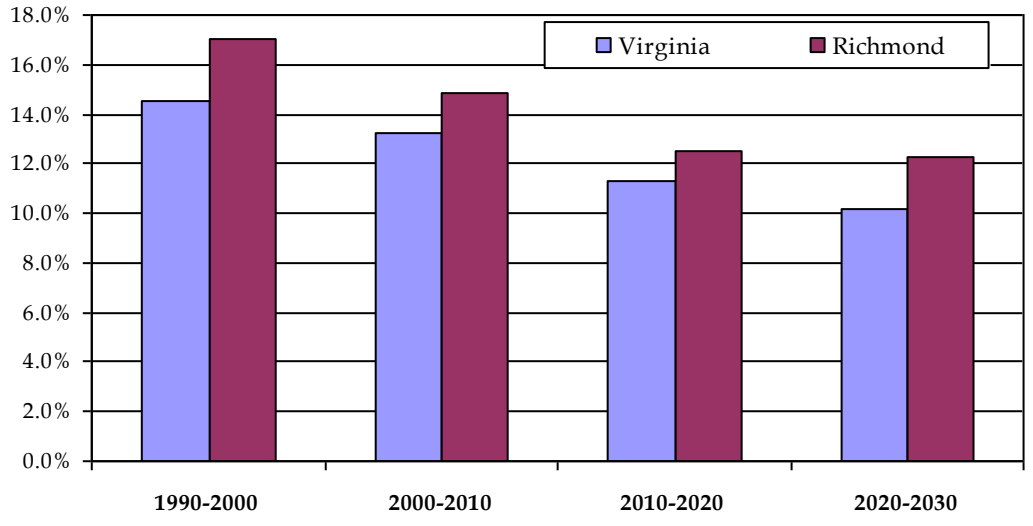
The information in this section comes from multiple sources, including the 2031 RAMPO Long-Range Transportation Plan, RideFinders' 2009 Performance Review – Trends & Future Conditions, the Greater Richmond Partnership, and SIR's Future Trends Research.

3.1 PROJECTED DEMOGRAPHICS

The Richmond region is a growth market. The U.S. Census projects that the Richmond region will add 250,000 new residents to the area by 2030, bringing the total regional population to more than 1,250,000 residents.

Metro Richmond's regional population is projected to grow at the same rate as the population growth rate for the state as a whole during the 2010-2030 period. This is also shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Projected Population Growth in Richmond and Virginia



Sources: Virginia Employment Commission and US Census Bureau.

In addition to sheer population growth, the demographic makeup of the region is projected to shift to greater number of minorities and to an older population as shown in Table 3.1 .

Table 3.1 Projected Demographic Changes (2010 - 2030)

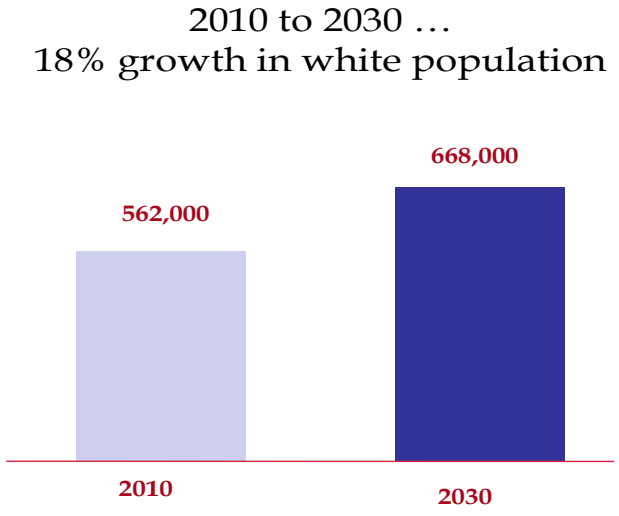
	2010	2020	2030
Total Pop.	994,425	1,119,227	1,256,434
% Growth	14.8%	12.6%	12.3%
Age Groups (%):			
Under 20	258,137 (26%)	283,660 (25%)	322,593 (26%)
30 to 64	621,745 (63%)	663,640 (59%)	701,818 (56%)
65 and Over	114,543 (13%)	171,927 (15%)	232,023 (18%)

Sources: Virginia Employment Commission and US Census Bureau.

3.1.1 Minority Population Growth

The expected increase of 250,000 residents over the next twenty years will usher in a shift in racial makeup. While the region is expected to grow at a rate of 28%, Figure 3.2 shows that the white population will grow at a rate of 18%.

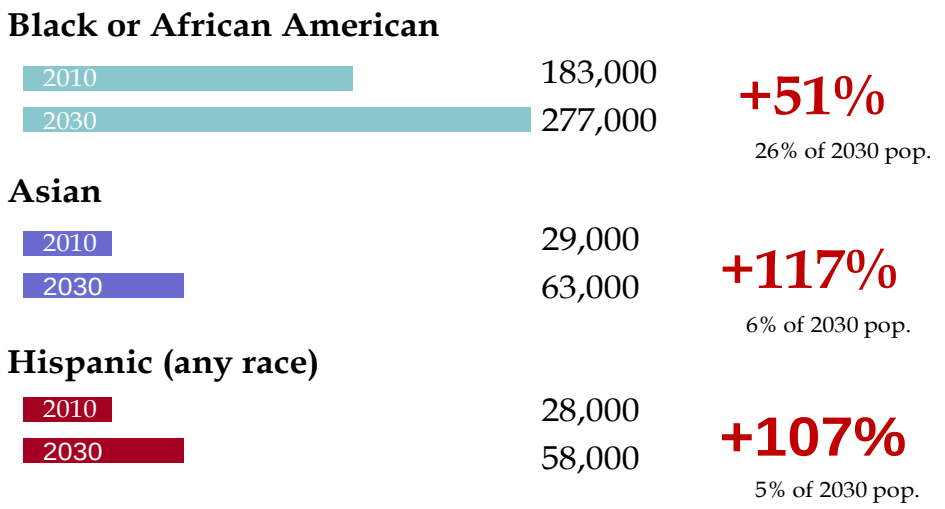
Figure 3.2 Projected Richmond Region – White Population 2010-2030



Source: US Census Bureau.

As depicted on Figure 3.3, the non-while population is projected to grow at a rate of 66%, more than twice as fast as the overall market growth. Asians and Hispanics will lead this growth.

Figure 3.3 Projected Richmond Region Non-White Population 2010-2030

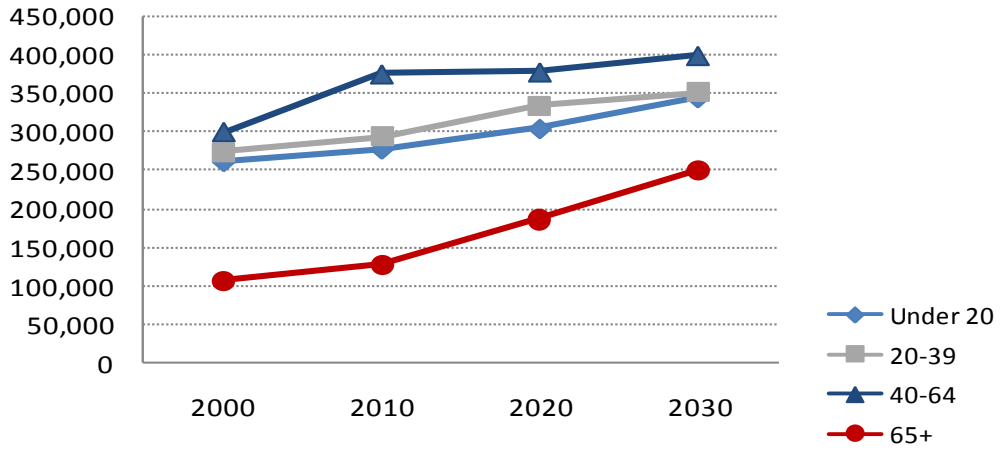


Source: US Census Bureau.

3.1.2 Older Adult Population Growth

Figure 3.4 shows the relative population increases by age segment. Over the next twenty years, Baby Boomers are projected to increase the percentage of area residents over age 65 from its current level of 12% today to 18% by 2030.

Figure 3.4 Projected Regional Population by Age 2000 - 2030



Source: Virginia Employment Commission.

Other than the sheer size of the age wave, one of the most interesting aspects of the "graying" of the RideFinders region will be the degree in which each local jurisdiction will experience this demographic shift. According to Virginia Employment Commission data, the City of Richmond will actually see a decline in the number of seniors while suburban and semi-rural counties like Henrico and New Kent County, respectively, will see dramatic increases in their senior

population. Without adequate transit services, these areas will, therefore, see unprecedented demands transportation services. This "age wave" effect may, in fact, create new service opportunities for RideFinders. Table 3.2 **shows the projected employment in the region will grow by a quarter of a million workers from 2006 to 2016.**

Table 3.2 shows projected employment level change, 2006 to 2016.

3.2 PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT

Table 3.2 shows the projected employment in the region will grow by a quarter of a million workers from 2006 to 2016.

Table 3.2 Projected Employment Level

	Estimated 2006	Estimated 2016	Change	% Change	Annual Growth
Total Employment*	1,237,233	1,500,526	263,293	21.3%	1.9%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission.

3.3 EXPECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS OF GROWTH

3.3.1 Future Transportation Facilities

Major transportation infrastructure improvements are planned to support future growth:

- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service along Broad Street between Willow Lawn and Rockett's Landing, including bus lanes between 2nd St. and 14th St.
- Construction of a downtown transfer station at the Main Street Station
- Commuter bus service added along major routes by 2016 as proposed in the regional mass transit study
- Transit Information Software to be developed for GRTC

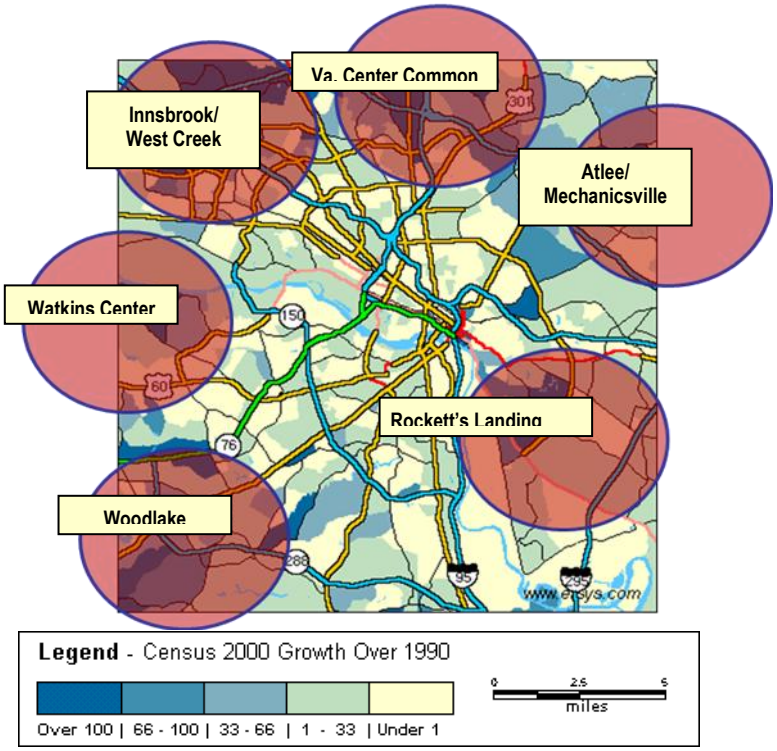
Like all transportation systems across the country, the lack of available funding to build new facilities and services for the Richmond region has become a major issue. The MPO and other organizations such as the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce through its Richmond Transportation Advisory Board (RTAB) are working diligently to point out the need for additional funding.

3.3.2 Future Activity Centers

- Downtown Richmond: The Richmond downtown area currently has the greatest concentration of jobs in the region and it is posed for future growth. A well-thought out master blue print plan was completed last year for the downtown area, and the City has been moving toward the first stages of implementation. Many of the traditional elements that made the city a vibrant place decades ago will be restored. Most of the two-way streets that were converted to one-way to increase vehicular traffic will revert back to their original form. The streetcar system may be resurrected and pedestrian movement will be facilitated. Main Street Station, Richmond's iconic architectural asset looming over I-95, will be transformed into a multi-modal hub.
- Suburban Activity Centers: In addition to the downtown area, future residential and employment growth are projected to take place in and around the region's suburban business activity centers that are already defined today – Innsbrook and Westcreek in Metro Richmond's far West End, Watkins Centre in Chesterfield/Powhatan area, Rockett's Landing in the east end, etc.
- Fort Lee: The Federal Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program selected Fort Lee as a major military logistics and supply center. Consequently, Fort Lee is now expected to double in size from the time of the BRAC announcement in 2005 until the project is complete in 2011 – representing approximately 11,000 new jobs in the area. This growth will fuel residential growth in RideFinders' Southside service area, attract additional employers, and necessitate regional retail and commercial growth to serve the growing population.

Figure 3.5 depicts these growing activity centers, with the exception of Fort Lee, which is further to the south. The map graphically displays the level of growth these activity centers has experienced in the past as in indicator of expected future growth. Growth on this map is the number of people living in the area in the year 2000 as a percent of the number of people living in that same area in 1990. The dark blue areas show the highest growth, where the light yellow areas represent no growth or an actual decrease in population. The darker areas are expected to continue their evolution into Richmond's future urban villages.

Figure 3.5 Emerging Activity Centers in the Richmond Region



Sources: US Census Bureau and Synergos Technologies, Inc.

3.4 PROJECTED TRAVEL PATTERNS

Based on demographic projections, VMT is projected to increase by 72% between 2000 and 2025. Increase in VMT and growth in key activity centers will impact travel patterns in a number of ways:

- Congestion in downtown areas and in the aforementioned high density activity centers: The resident and employer-based population growth in RideFinders' service area over the next 20-25 years is significant from both a percentage growth and sheer growth perspective – 25% growth or 250,000 ne more people. Impact of this growth is more likely to be felt, over the long-term, in the activity centers – in the downtown areas and in higher density activity centers.
- Greater number of longer distance commuters: Job growth may actually outpace population growth, suggesting that some workers will commute from outside the region to work in the RideFinders service area.
- Increase in aging population: A growing aging population will result in an increase in non-work related travel.
- Increase in freight traffic: Growth in shipping is expected on I-64 and I-95. This will increase commercial travel through and around the region.

- Increase in biking-walking: Current interest in bicycling and pedestrian walkways will continue, particularly due to concern about energy and commitment to sustainable lifestyle. The region's efforts in supporting these modes should attract greater usage.

3.5 FUTURE EXTERNAL FORCES

In addition to the projected demographic trends, there are a number of external market forces that will influence and shape RideFinders' future. These forces include:

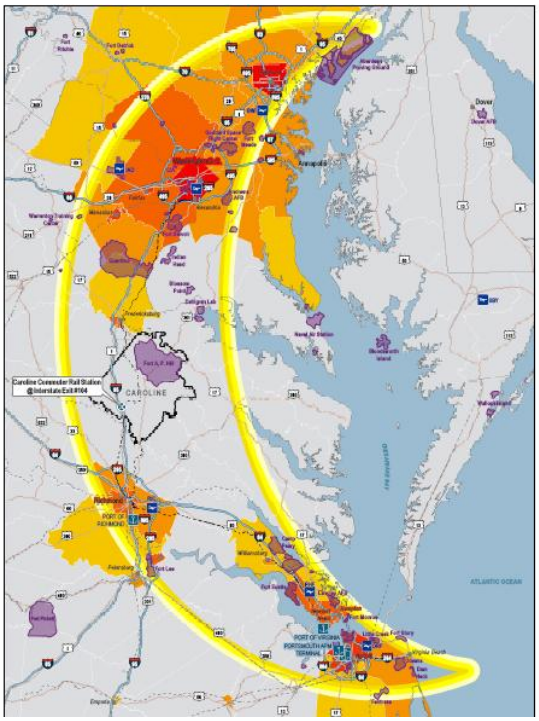
3.5.1 A Growing and Changing Population and Workforce

Growth of Virginia's Total Population:

By 2030, Virginia's total population will approach 10 million people. The vast majority of this growth will take place in the I-95 and I-64 corridor known as the "Golden Crescent." This population corridor stretches from Northern Virginia down Interstate 95 to Richmond and then east on Interstate 64 to Hampton Roads. This corridor encompasses the vast majority of the population and annual economic output of Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Success begets success, demographers project the vast majority of the population gains and business expansion will settle in this area. From a long-term perspective – 25 years – this population crescent will begin to fill in and become one megalopolis similar to the spiraling region of to L.A. today.

What does growth in the "Golden Crescent," illustrated in Figure 3.6, mean for RideFinders? Simply put – expansion. In the future, most of the jurisdictions in the RideFinders' market area will expand. Counties along the northern and eastern edges of the "Golden Crescent" will start to see economic connections and work commutes headed to Richmond's activity centers, as well as emerging activity centers in close by markets such as Fredericksburg and Williamsburg. RideFinders may ultimately need satellite offices.

Figure 3.6 Virginia's "Golden Crescent"



Source: Environmental Research Systems Institute 2008.

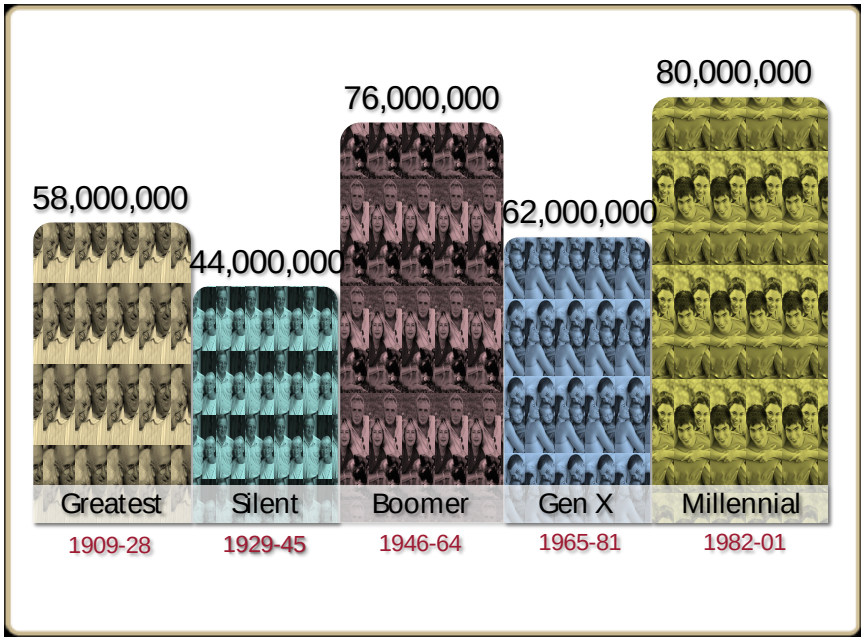
Virginia Economic Development Partnership 2009.

New Generation of Workers – The Millennials

America's youngest generation, the Millennials (sometimes called Gen Ys or Echo Boomers), are poised to make a huge impact on ridesharing modes and ridesharing support services for years to come. There are two primary factors that will fuel this change.

First and foremost, the sheer size of the Millennial population, as reflected in Figure 3.7, suggests that they will influence society, just as the unusually large Baby Boomer generation did and still does. When compared to the other generations, Millennials represent the largest generation alive today – 80 million strong.

Figure 3.7 Size & Age Profile of U.S. Generations



Source: SIR Boomer Project.

The second factor is related to Millennials' innate generational traits that were influenced by the shared experiences of age cohort. When Millennials were coming of age, their daily life was immersed in technology. Many received their first personal cell phone at age 10, but they spent more time text messaging than talking. Unlike older generations, Millennials are a digital native nation. Their neural pathways are actually different from Baby Boomers. When Boomers came of age, their minds were shaped by print and standard broadcast media, and they consumed one medium at a time. Millennials hyper-exposure to technology has resulted in hyper-connectivity – they are always seeking personal connections and linkages.

Another important generational trait that Millennials have over older generations is their support for and active involvement in social causes. Millennials are taught at an early age and through school to volunteer, and this "whole person" approach is the path to human development. Older generations had to figure this out on their own time. Consequently, Millennials are redefining social engagement and social movements. The campaign of President Obama is a case in point.

Given the cause-oriented generational values and sheer size of this generation, Millennials will have a big impact on ridesharing and may represent a tremendous opportunity to shift significantly America's modal split. There are already signs of this today. Over the past two years, Millennials, at a greater rate than any older generation, have shifted to and remained in non-SOV work commute modes. Even the recent fall in gas prices has not reversed this promising trend among Millennials.

Millennials are also leading the way in reshaping rideshare support services. Just three years ago, most ridematching was done through large government-sponsored, centralized databases. Today, many commercial enterprises are tapping into commuters' need for hyper-social connectivity by offering ridematching as part of a social network – Craigslist, Facebook, Goloco.org, Ridebuzz.org, and Greenyour.com. Millennials (8-28 year olds) are leading the adoption curve of this new technology and new way to share a ride.

While Millennials make up a small percentage of the workforce now, they will make up the majority of the work force in years to come, surpassing the smaller Gen X and baby Boomers – the older generations just ahead of them. It will be these future workers – ten and twenty years from now – that will shape how our companies, cities, and transportation systems of the future will run.

3.5.2 Developing Industries and the Changing Nature of Work

Distributed Workforce

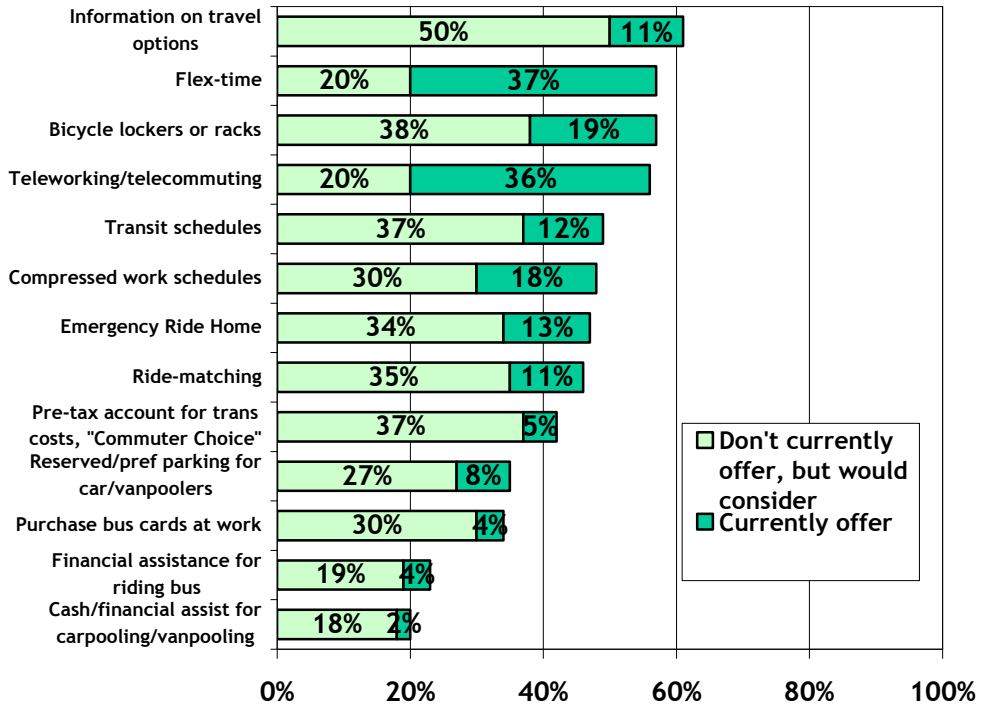
One of the more subtle reasons behind employers' relatively recent acceptance of employer-based TDM services is the changing nature of work. More and more employers recognize that work is not some place you go, but rather some you do. Enlightened employers are measuring employee productivity not by time clocks but rather by outcomes – they are slowly evolving to a distributed workforce model.

This realization has been fueled by the pre-recession 2009 labor shortage and will be accelerated, again, by the significant labor shortages projected in the coming decade when millions of Baby Boomers slow down or exit the labor market altogether. Employers desire to cater to their labor forces' physical work space desires often translates into compressed work weeks, greater flexibility to come and go, and the ability to work from off site locations.

Growing Involvement of Employers in TDM

Over the past few years, the labor shortage prior to this 2009 recession, green movement, and corporate experiences with TDM have helped the TDM cause reach the tipping point in employer appreciation and use. Corporate America has now realized that it is in their enlightened self-interest to embrace TDM programs to boost recruitment, retention, employee productivity, etc. Consequently, more and more companies are offering TDM services and programs and/or considering launching additional TDM services in the future. This is true for many of the companies in RideFinders' market. As depicted in Figure 3.8, there is great opportunity to grow use of TDM-related services and practices beyond the current level. The dark green bar shows current penetration of TDM services among employers. The lighter bar shows interest in considering these services.

Figure 3.8 Richmond Area Employers Use of and Interest in TDM-Related Practices



Q22. Following is a list of transportation information services or benefit programs that your organization or another organization might make available to employees at the worksite to help with their travel to work. In the first column, select all the services or benefits that are currently available to your employees. For those that are not available now, indicate if you would consider or would not consider offering that service or benefit.

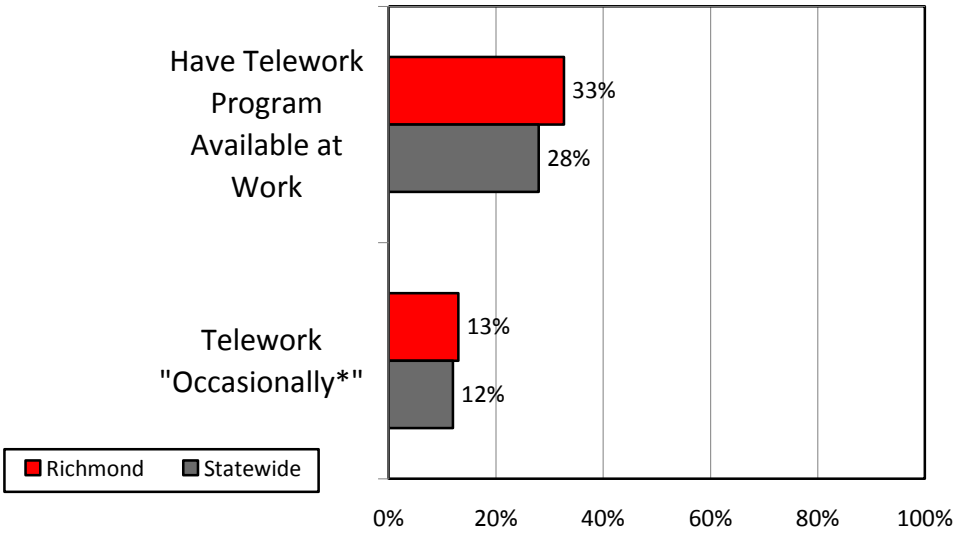
Source: 2009 RideFinders Business Leaders Study.

When combining the dark and light bar for each TDM activity (the number of Richmond region companies that currently offer any one TDM-related service with companies who are interested in offering that service), a picture of potential penetration or market share emerges. The market penetration opportunity suggests that RideFinders' business outreach efforts will be selling TDM services to a receptive audience and additional impact can be realized.

The Growth of Telework

An early indicator of the powerful impact that the changing nature of work will have on Richmond work commute patterns is the rise in popularity of telework. One cannot discuss the future of the Richmond region's work commute without including the current impact and future promise of telework. As depicted in Figure 3.9, today, 13% of the working residents telework at least occasionally, making the incidence of Telework slightly higher than the statewide average.

Figure 3.9 The Incidence of Telework – Workers



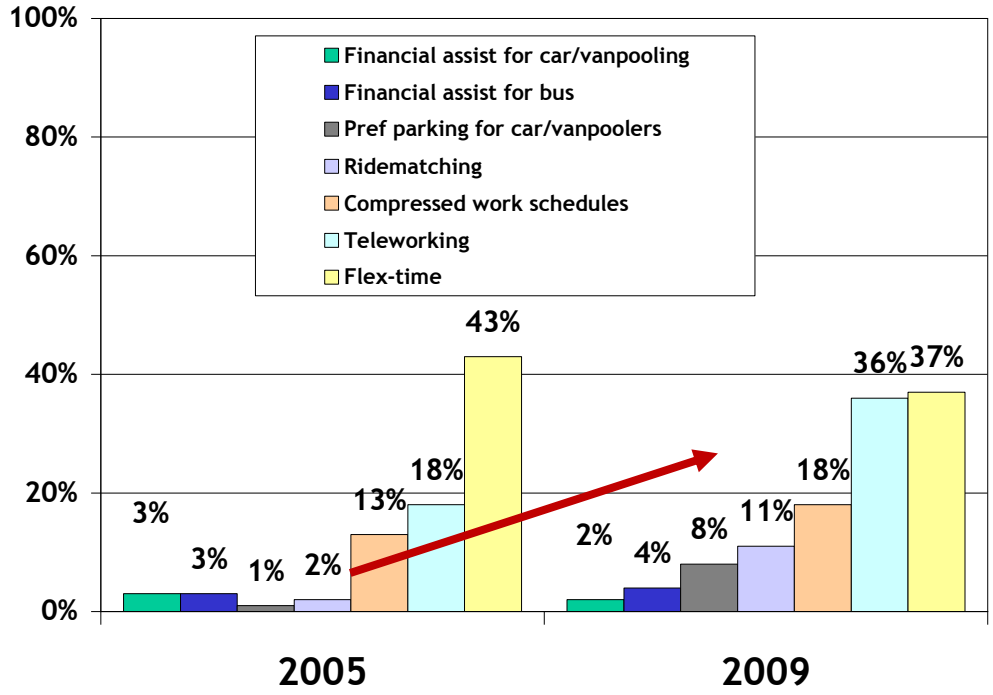
VASOC – question 13: Telecommuters are defined as "wage and salary employees who at least occasionally work at home or at a telework or satellite center during an entire work day instead of traveling to their regular workplace." Based on this definition, are you a telecommuter?

VASOC – question 13a/14d: Does your employer have a formal telecommuting program at your workplace or (do you/permit employees to) telecommute under an informal arrangement between you and your supervisor?

Source: 2007 Virginia State of the Commute.

While information on the incidence of telework in RideFinders' market is not available prior to the 2007 Virginia State of the Commute Study, RideFinders recently conducted study among the region's business leaders pointed to tremendous growth of telework. The proportion of companies offering Teleworking has effectively doubled since 2005, while the levels of other employer-based transportation programs are about the same today as they were in 2005. See Figure 3.10.

Figure 3.10 The Incidence of Telework – Employers



Q22. Following is a list of transportation information services or benefit programs that your organization or another organization might make available to employees at the worksite to help with their travel to work. In the first column, select all the services or benefits that are currently available to your employees. For those that are not available now, indicate if you would consider or would not consider offering that service or benefit.

Source: RideFinders 2005 and 2009 Business Leaders Studies.

Teleworking offers the biggest opportunity to reduce vehicle miles traveled across the region as it basically eliminates the need for the trip altogether. How much impact can it have? The Northern Virginia market may be a good benchmark to watch. In 2004, 11% of the Northern Virginia workforce telecommuted (source: Washington Metropolitan Council of Government 2004 State of the Commute Survey). In 2007, this number rose to 20% (source: Virginia State of the Commute Survey).

The telework-related trends among employers and workers will require RideFinders to develop and deliver greater telework-related expertise and portfolio of telework services.

Growth of the Port of Hampton Roads:

While located 100 miles to the east of RideFinders' service area, the Port of Virginia (Hampton Roads) must be recognized as force that will impact the Richmond region. Hampton Roads' Port of Virginia is the third largest container port on the U.S. east coast and is a hub for the world's leading international

shipping companies. With global service from more than 75 international shipping lines and 3,000 sailings annually to 100 countries, the Port offers multiple direct sailings to and from Asia, Europe, South America, and the Indian Subcontinent on a weekly basis. The Hampton Roads Port is projected to experience dramatic growth, which will ultimately increase commercial traffic driving through the Richmond region.

Growth of Richmond as a Distribution & Logistics Hub:

One of the impacts from the dramatic growth in the region's population, growth in the "Golden Crescent," and the increased Port of Hampton Roads' traffic is continued growth of the region as a major mid-East Coast distribution center. According to the Greater Richmond Partnership, Richmond's location has already made it a natural transportation and logistics center. Federal Express has a regional hub, and UPS has a district headquarters in the area. CSX, Norfolk Southern, and AMTRAK provide rail service and 64 Express barge service and Eimskip serve the Port of Richmond. Greater Richmond is also a major military logistics center and home to the U.S. Army Logistics University at Fort Lee and to Defense Supply Center Richmond. Richmond's ideal logistics location is often referenced in economic development circles. In 2007, Expansion Management and Logistics Today magazines gave the region a five-star metro area rating for logistics operations.

3.5.3 Sustainability and the Green Movement

One of the most recent social movements that is being fueled by Millennials, as well as older generations, is the green or sustainability movement. When it comes to TDM, there are both consumer-driven and business-driven forces at work.

SIR's research among Richmond area ridesharers reveals that money savings is the most important benefit that motivate commuters to switch from drive alone to alternative modes. Lowering one's personal impact on the environment – *helping to decrease pollution* – however, plays a secondary role. While RideFinders should not lead with a green message as the primary benefit of ridesharing, the fact that this secondary benefit is rated so highly does offer promise as "being green" grows in importance.

In the Richmond region, the green benefit in advancing TDM may have greater value among business audiences. More and more companies want to be perceived as being green. In a recent SIR Study for the *Older Dominion Partnership*, 50% of the CEO's in Virginia want their companies to be perceived as *"being green."* Local companies are embracing green practices and looking for ways to showcase their corporate greenness.

Regional TDM-Mobility Advocacy Groups

GRTC recently launched "Friends of Transit" advocacy group. In less than four months, the number of advocates that have signed up exceed 1,700. Members of this group will advance the community conversation on the benefits of transit.

A second advocacy group, STIR - Sustainable Transportation Initiative of Richmond, was recently launched. STIR wants the Richmond area to be a national model on green mobility. The group has contacted General Motors Corp., Segway Inc. and Ford Motor Co. in hopes of having the region designated as a pilot city for two urban-mobility projects: Ford Motor Co.'s Urban Mobility Network Project and, separately, GM/Segway's PUMA project. Both projects test alternative transportation concepts and products in congested urban areas. GM/Segway's PUMA project tests the use of a small, electric-powered vehicle – a two-passenger cart that reaches 35 mph. Ford's Urban Mobility Network project is experimenting with various modes of transportation, from buses to bicycles, to move people more efficiently in urban areas.

Stricter Clean Air Standards

The new federal transportation authorization bill draft has a greater emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This may create another benefit RideFinders' services and programs can offer.

3.5.4 Automobile Cost of Ownership

Discussing the future of roads and highways most often leads to some form of user fees – tolls, increased gas taxes, or the latest revenue-generating user fee called congestion pricing or VMT tax. VMT tax is basically charging road users a user fee based on their usage level. Regardless of what form user fees take in the future, the one thing appears a little more certain is that one day it will cost more to operate an automobile.

RideFinders, as all rideshare agencies across the country, saw a dramatic increase in inquiries and ridematching activities when gas prices hit $4 per gallon. While prices have fallen way off this mark, most predictions on the long-term price of gas call for much higher prices in the future. If the reaction to the 2008 spike in gasoline prices was any indicator, the arrival of higher fuel costs, user fees, or simply more tolls will have an impact on the choice and use of work commute modes.

4.0 RideFinders' Strategic Plan

4.1 STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. A SWOT analysis fosters recognition of strengths, or areas in which RideFinders excels and will want to continue those trends to help further its mission; and weaknesses, those areas in which RideFinders should strive to improve to reduce or eliminate their negative impact on the agency. Opportunities are factors or events that offer a strategic opportunity for RideFinders to take advantage and convert to strengths. Threats are areas that could have a negative impact unless addressed proactively.

4.1.1 Strengths

- Well qualified, dedicated, and enthusiastic staff with over 20 years of collective TDM experience and program knowledge.
- Effective and motivating staff management.
- Substantial administrative support from GRTC; frees RideFinders' staff resources for service delivery.
- High name recognition and identity for RideFinders, due to extensive and continuous marketing and outreach.
- Generally viewed as an effective organization; has moderately high support among local jurisdictions.
- Guaranteed funding source (as long as CMAQ continues).
- RideFinders is recognized by the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the region's central transportation planning organization, as the agency responsible for TDM. This past year, RideFinders worked closely with RAMPO insuring that TDM was included in the region's long-term transportation plan. In August 2008, RAMPO finalized the 2031 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). This plan has as one of its goals a balanced transportation system that offers attractive modal choices and serves the needs of the region's diverse and changing population (Goal 5). The LRTP specifically mentions RideFinders and the agency's TDM role in a chapter dedicated to TDM (Chapter 7 of the LRTP).

4.1.2 Weaknesses

- Despite high recognition of RideFinders as an organization, familiarity of specific services is limited.
- Staff backgrounds and skills are narrowly focused (marketing/customer service), limiting RideFinders' ability to venture into non-traditional TDM areas.
- RideFinders' position as a division of GRTC might suggest it does not have authority over its decision-making and budget, potentially restricting the roles it could adopt and the partnerships it could form.

4.1.3 Opportunities

- The future will usher in a new level of congestion for the Richmond region.
  - Population growth in residents and employment will fuel regional VMT.
  - A growing, older population that will be much healthier and mobile than today's seniors will result in an increase in non-work related VMT.
  - Increase in pass through commercial traffic will result in additional VMT across the area.
- Congestion may even spill outside of the typical I-95 and I-64 corridors. Increase in congestion will, in turn, fuel the overall need for TDM to play an increasingly important role in maintaining and enhancing the efficiency of the region's transportation system.
- Stakeholders see value in RideFinders expanding its services beyond ridematching and rideshare support to non-traditional services (e.g., school travel, non-commute travel, economic development support).
- Growing suburban population and development of new suburban employment centers.
- Growing awareness and concern by local jurisdictions, employers, and residents of the problem of climate change, the benefits of "going green," and the links between transportation/SOV use and a sustainable environment.
- Future growth of the region's convention and visitors' bureau business will create additional opportunities for RideFinders' services. Future growth of employment centers will place increasing demands on RideFinders' employer-based services. For example, rapidly growing employment activity centers will need expanded TDM program support and a wider range of transportation options (i.e. car-sharing, transit, bike-pedestrian, etc. These new employment and activity centers will also increase the demand for intra-region access and mobility movement.
- Stakeholders believe it would be appropriate to consolidate regional TDM services and planning within RideFinders. This is, in part, due to an

acknowledgement that TDM strategies are little understood and little implemented at the local level. This could present an opportunity for RideFinders to establish the agency as the regional TDM resource.

- The return of $4 per gallon gas. When gas reached this level, interest in ridesharing spiked to highest levels recorded and another sharp rise in gas prices may have the same effect.
- The growth in seniors in the suburban counties may warrant exploration of increased non-work-related trip support such as continuous access to healthcare providers or coordinating human services and patient delivery.
- The new federal transportation authorization bill draft has a greater emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This may create another benefit RideFinders' services and programs can offer.

4.1.4 Threats

- Funding is heavily drawn from a single source (93% CMAQ), making RideFinders vulnerable to financial crisis if this source of funding is disrupted.
- Current economic climate is affecting Federal and State budgets. Pressure for states and regions to obtain greater flexibility in use of CMAQ funding for safety and infrastructure projects could limit RideFinders' financial security.

4.2 RIDEFINDERS' MISSION & VISION

The Richmond region is a thriving community – *an exceptional place to live, work, and play*. And this designation is not self proclaimed. Over the years, the Richmond region has received numerous accolades from a wide-range of credible, third-party sources.

A brief sample of the region's high rankings from just in the past three years includes:

- The **sixth-best place in the nation to start over** in a study by Manpower reported in BusinessWeek, June 9, 2009.
- One of the **20 best cities of its size for young professionals** to live and work, by Next Generation Consulting, June 10, 2009.
- One of the nation's **40 best places for business and careers** among the 200 largest metro areas by Forbes, March 19, 2009.
- North America's **ninth best small city** and fourth best in foreign direct investment strategy in Foreign Direct Investment (fDi) Magazine's North American Cities of the Future 2009/10, April/May 2009.
- A **top 10 city for finding a job in 2009** in a study by Ajilon Professional Staffing reported in Forbes.com, January 5, 2009.

- The **fifth best metro center** for business, rated by Dow Jones MarketWatch, December 2, 2008.
- The **ninth best city for women**, in WomenCo.com, November 1, 2008.
- One of the **10 best cities for commuters** of the nation's 75 largest metro areas in Forbes.com, April 2008.
- One of the nation's **top 20 places to educate your child** (rated #12), in Forbes.com, December 12, 2007.
- One of the nation's **best large metros for public schools** (rated #8) in Expansion Management, December 2007.
- An economic development "hot spot," rated fourth of the top 20 mid-sized metros rated by the National Policy Research Council in Expansion Management, October 2007.
- One of the nation's **top 20 real estate markets for expanding companies** in Expansion Management, October 2007.
- **The sixth best metro area for business opportunity** in Expansion Management's "Mayor's Challenge" ranking, August 16, 2007.
- Ranked 27th of the nation's 361 metropolitan statistical areas for long-term economic strength, by Policom Corporation in 2007.
- **Sixth of the top 50 medium markets for relocating families** (population of 575,000 to 1,250,000) in a 2007 study from Primacy Relocation and Worldwide ERC® in conjunction with Bert Sperling's Best Places.
- Number eight of the top 20 U.S. large metros for business attraction and recruitment in Expansion Management, June 19, 2007.
- One of the South's top 10 places for the creative class in Southern Business & Development, winter 2007.
- A five-star metro area for knowledge workers in Expansion Management, April 12, 2007.
- **One of America's 50 Hottest Cities** for business expansions and relocations in Expansion Management magazine's February 2007 issue.
- **The twelfth most competitive metro area** (of the 50 largest U.S. metro areas) in Beacon Hill Institute's Metro Area and State Competitiveness Report 2005.
- **Number 26 of the nation's 50 "smart places to live"** in the June 2006 issue of Kiplinger's Personal Finance.
- America's 14th best metropolitan area for small business in Bizjournals.com, January 2006.

Twenty-five years from now, the Richmond region wants to be in a position where it still earns this recognition as one of the exceptional major metropolitan areas in the country – *to make the top ten lists across any and every conceivable best place to live, work, or play category*.

To consistently earn this exalted position as a national leader in so many categories, the Richmond region will need to sustain its exceptional quality of life and the attributes that make up quality of life ratings – access to healthcare, low crime and safety of citizens, access to high-quality education, trained workforce, environmental stewardship, services for the aging population, and transportation – *access and mobility for both residents and businesses alike*.

From a transportation planning perspective, maintaining mobility and access will be an extremely challenging task. The projected growth in residential population and job opportunities will increase VMT. If the current projections hold true, VMT could increase by 72% between 2000 and 2025. Given the inordinate cost and environmental tradeoffs that come with major roadway expansion, it is unlikely the region will be able to build enough roadway capacity to keep up with the projected demand. If the region's modal mix holds steady well into the future at 88% single occupancy vehicle (SOV), a dramatic increase in congestion is the inevitable outcome. Or is it?

The Richmond region's exceptional mobility and access enjoyed today can be maintained, in part, by shifting the region's mindset, commuter behaviors, and transportation system infrastructure away from SOV dependency to a more balanced multi-modal approach. This is, in effect, RideFinders' mission statement:

> *To foster increased efficiency of the transportation system by influencing travel behavior by mode, time, frequency, trip length, or route. As a result of implementing our mission, we expect to reduce traffic congestion, conserve energy, improve air quality, and reduce transportation-related expenditures of individuals, employers, and governments.*

By accomplishing its mission, RideFinders will improve the access and mobility of residents, employers, and visitors; thereby contributing to the overall quality of life and reputation of the entire region. RideFinders' Long-Range 25-Year TDM vision statement is based on this aspiration:

> *RideFinders will help build and sustain a world class multi-modal transportation system that makes the Richmond region one of the best places to live, work, and visit in America.*

4.3 RIDEFINDERS' PROGRAM STRATEGY

This Long-Range TDM Plan will help RideFinders achieve its mission and vision. The Plan is based on ten key strategic actions:

- **Position RideFinders as the Region's Lead Agency for TDM and Multimodal Planning & Implementation**: Over time, TDM and multi-modal planning and program implementation will become increasingly important. This Long-Range TDM Plan seeks to build upon and advance RideFinders as the region's "go to" lead TDM and multimodal planning and implementation agency. In this capacity, RideFinders will continue to work with VDOT-DRPT and the MPO in formulating and implementing TDM-related plans.

- **Expand RideFinders' TDM and Multimodal Lead Agency Role:** RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan will advance the agency in a manner that reinforces RideFinders' TDM and multimodal planning and implementation expertise (*expert positioning*). This includes aligning RideFinders' core services, staff development, new staff positions, marketing outreach materials, and future services (e.g., Zipcars) around this central focus - *the region's "go to" lead TDM and multimodal planning and implementation agency.* This represents an enhancement to RideFinders' core services.

  Currently, RideFinders does not have a technical TDM planning function or staff resources. The agency works closely with GRTC's Planning Department staff on regional transit issues and is engaged in other regional issues through involvement in several organizations, including the Richmond Area Master Planning Organization (RAMPO). RideFinders is a non-voting member of RAMPO and participates in the Tri-Cities Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Technical Advisory Committees (TAC). While the agency was actively involved in the 2008 update of the RAMPO's regional 2031 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and was a major contributor to the TDM chapter, a new section that was just added in the 2008 update, RideFinders did so with limited in-house TDM planning resources. RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan points to RideFinders adding in-house TDM planning expertise.

- **In the Short-term, Focus on the Greatest Point of Leverage – The Business Market, Not Residential:** Given the limitations of existing and anticipated financial resources and the demonstrated leverage that comes with employer participation, RideFinders will continue to shift staff and financial resources from a residential or commuter approach to more of a business-to-business strategy. This includes pursuing a more business-to-business marketing (e.g., underwriting of high-profile business events like the Chamber's Richmond Transportation Advisory Board (RTAB) meetings) and less effort against consumer marketing. Special attention will be accorded downtown area employers. Expansion into the non-work trip market will be the focus of RideFinders' medium- and long-term programming. This broader customer

focus, however, will require some advance planning and programming in years five and six of RideFinders' Long-term TDM Plan.

- **Cultivate Third-party Business Development Partnerships**: RideFinders currently deploys cold calling and worksite drop-in visits to introduce TDM-related support services to area employers. RideFinders' staff targets the Richmond region's largest employers, especially ones in the downtown area. While this targeting may be efficient, this prospect cultivation approach is labor-intensive, especially given RideFinders' limited staff resources. RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan calls for exploring closer business outreach partnerships with the Chamber, Society of Human Resource Management (SHURM), downtown associations, and other business organizations to assist with prospect identification, introductions, and relationship cultivation. This will free up RideFinders' staff to service more business partners.

- **Over Time, Add Transportation-related Corporate Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Footprint Assessments & Related Solutions to RideFinders' Corporate Service Portfolio**: It is anticipated that corporate GHG footprint awareness and related actions to lower corporate GHG emissions footprints will continue to grow in importance. This will present an opportunity for RideFinders to become more relevant and, consequently, valuable to area employers.

  RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan will seek ways to leverage this opportunity through GHG-related planning assistance and the use of GHG emissions footprint assessment tools such as NuRide ridematching software and the new GHG calculator that will be offered through DRPT/VDOT/Dulles Area Transportation Association (DATA).

  NuRide will afford employers an opportunity to measure the GHG emissions of their participating employees that participate in employer-based TDM programs. The GHG calculator will afford employers an opportunity to measure their overall corporate GHG footprints and more thoroughly understand the impact of TDM programs.

  RideFinders will explore extensions of this green expertise. For example, RideFinders will explore participating in "green business certification" with other strategic partners such as the Chamber of Commerce and/or the Retail Merchants Associations. To this end, RideFinders will monitor RIDE Solution's partnership with "Cool Green Biz," an initiative launched by the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Roanoke Valley Cool Cities Coalition.

  Explore RideFinders' New Services and Products with Appropriate Mobility Partners: In servicing companies and organizations across the region, opportunities to provide new multimodal mobility-oriented services will emerge. To the extent funding is plausible, RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan calls for the development of plans to serve emerging market

needs. As of now, this includes working with the MPO and others to develop long-term plans for advancing biking and preparing for the Age Wave, the doubling of the region's senior population.

In regard to biking, RideFinders will seek ways to build on the region's bicycle plan. This includes exploring the creation of a bike sharing and renting systems that could serve high-density areas such as downtown and the urban campus of Virginia Commonwealth University. RideFinders will follow closely the work of Arlington County Transportation Partners as they launch an ambitious bike sharing program.

In regard to transportation services for the aging population, this could include taxi and paratransit feeder system that targets concentrations of "future carless households" into the current fixed route transit system. To this end, RideFinders will join the newly formed Richmond Region 2030 Age Wave Planning taskforce to represent the voice of multimodal solutions in this long-term planning effort.

- **Measure & Package RideFinders' Outcomes and Community Impacts – VMT and Emission Reduction Results:** RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan calls for the agency to hone its overall capabilities in assessing its performance and impact, as well as reporting outcomes. This will require training and use of new technologies such as the new GHG emission calculator and NuRide software. It will also require the implementation of the comprehensive *Strategy & Performance Evaluation Program* RideFinders formulated in 2009 as detailed in this document.
- **Secure Alternative Long-Term Funding:** RideFinders' reliance on CMAQ, DRPT, grants and local matches for funding could present a problem in the future if these funding streams were reduced or eliminated. RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan calls for the agency to work with the MPO and other stakeholders to research opportunities for new sources of funding that could be used for operating purposes and/or for special projects. This includes working with MPO staff to develop a funding contingency plan to explore over time the potential for contributions from employer clients and non-governmental grant sources.
- **Continue to Build TDM Advocacy Support:** Successfully advance TDM and multimodal solutions, as a vital and viable part of the region's long-term transportation system will require a concerted information and education campaign. To this end, RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan points to the use of new social media to turn its ridematch and emergency ride home database of 12,890 commuters into active apostles of TDM. RideFinders will also work with GRTC's new "Friends of Transit" advocacy group and the new Sustainable Transportation in Richmond (STIR) advocacy group to advance awareness, appreciation, and active support for TDM and multi-modal planning.

- **Study RideFinders' Optimal Long-Term Organizational Structure**: RideFinders' position as a department within GRTC appears to offer both advantages and disadvantages. On the potentially negative side, RideFinders does not have complete authority in programmatic or budgetary decisions. Organizational components and plans are subject to GRTC's Board approval. GRTC has not disapproved of any RideFinders initiatives to date, but the TDM agency has not proposed any services that are outside the traditional commuter and employer-service box. So this actually is untested. On the plus side, RideFinders is relieved of administrative duties related to human resources and accounting, which are not part of its service mission. On net, the relationship to GRTC seems to benefit RideFinders administratively. RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan calls for RideFinders to work with GRTC, the MPO, and other stakeholders to identify the optimal long-term organizational structure for RideFinders.

The seamless implementation of these ten core strategy components as part of RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan will enable RideFinders to serve more commuters through their employers, and, in so doing, have a greater impact on the region in terms of reduced VMT and emissions.

4.4 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

To help organize the phasing in of these ten key strategic components, RideFinders has organized its Long-Range TDM Plan across three planning horizons: short-term, medium-term, and long- term planning horizons. These are depicted in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Planning Efforts Across Three Planning Horizons

Term	Time Frame	Years
Short-term:	The next six years	2010 - 2015
Medium-term:	7 - 15 years	2016 - 2025
Long-term	16 - 25 years	2025 - 2035

Source: RideFinders.

The remainder of this document presents plans – goals, objectives, strategies, and related program elements for each planning horizon.

4.4.1 Coordination with Other Plans & Programs

It is the intent of RideFinders and GRTC to incorporate this TDM Plan into the Richmond Area MPO's (RAMPO) Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) when the LRTP is next updated. As stated earlier, RideFinders is a non-voting member of RAMPO and participates on the MPO's Technical Advisory Committee.

This long-term goal – to coordinate and integrate RideFinders' TDM Plan with the region's LRTP - will build on RideFinders' active and successful involvement with RAMPO in the 2008 update of the LRTP. RideFinders helped construct the TDM chapter of the current LRTP, a new section that was added during this most recent update.

The coordination and integration goal for the TDM Plan, however, will take time, as RideFinders plans to share this document with GRTC leadership, the RideFinders' Advisory Board, as well as with other key stakeholders.

4.4.2 Process for Developing Goals & Objectives

The goals and objectives contained in this plan were developed through a collaborative process involving RideFinders' staff with assistance and input from Cambridge Systematics, LDA Consulting, Southeastern Institute of Research (SIR), and Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR). The process to identify and refine programmatic goals, objectives, and performance measures included:

- Review of RideFinders' existing documents to understand the role and services of the program;
- Interviews with RideFinders' staff to identify existing and future program needs;
- Review of all comprehensive plans and other documents created by RideFinders and the member jurisdictions of the Richmond Area MPO;
- Development of a SWOT analysis based on the reviewed documents;
- Formation of draft TDM goals based on existing vision statements and transportation or TDM-related goals and objectives in reviewed documents and interviews and SWOT analysis; and
- Review and revision of goals and objectives by RideFinders' staff.

During the development of goals, objectives, and performance standards for this plan, the following definitions were used:

- **Goal –** is a broad, qualitative statement of what the agency hopes to achieve.
- **Objective** – is a specific, measurable statement of what will be done to achieve goals.
- **Performance Standard (Measure)** – is a quantitative or qualitative characterization of performance that evaluates the efficiency or effectiveness in conducting business operations.
- **Strategy** – is a statement of the approach or method the program will pursue to attain goals and objectives.

4.4.3 Agency Goals, Objectives, & Strategies

Following the process described in section 4.3.2, RideFinders has identified the following long-term goals (see Table 4.2 for a complete list of associated objectives and strategies.

- **RideFinders Is a Model Transportation Agency in Organizational Structure, Leadership, and Impact on a Community.**
  - This goal relates to RideFinders' organizational structure and leadership. The agency envisions its long-term organizational structure to be commensurate with its responsibilities and positive impact on the region.
- **TDM Is One of the Major Pillars of the Richmond Region's 21st Century Transportation System.**
  - RideFinders envisions TDM will play an increasingly important role in the region's transportation system – to help the region achieve and sustain a complete, safe, and efficient multi-modal transportation system.
- **RideFinders is the Richmond Region's Lead Agency and Resource for TDM Planning & Implementation.**
  - As TDM will play an increasingly important role in the region's transportation system, RideFinders will continue to provide expert leadership in TDM planning and implementation.
- **RideFinders Offers an Innovative & Diverse Portfolio of Services & Programs to an Expanding Customer Base In Order to Reduce VMT's & Help Improve Air Quality.**
  - This goal relates to RideFinders' strengthening and expanding services and programs through research-inspired planning and partnerships to meet emerging transportation needs and new customer segments across the region, and, in so doing, help reduce the total vehicle miles traveled (VMT), improve air quality, and reinforce RideFinders' TDM-multimodal expertise.
- **RideFinders Is a Model Transportation Agency When It Comes to Performance Measurement, Reporting, and Return on Investment/Impact.**
  - This goal relates to RideFinders' desire to become the de facto standard in how to effective measure and report the impact on delivering desired outcomes. For example, measuring how RideFinders' services and programs reduces vehicle miles traveled, improves air quality inputs, saves energy, etc.

Table 4.2 outlines the specific objectives and strategies that RideFinders will pursue over the short-, medium, and long-term planning horizon to meet these five broad goals.

In the short-term (1-6 years), RideFinders will continue to increase its capability, experience, and success with the employer market through the deployment of

RideFinders' business-to-business sales team, NuRide ridematching, and DRPT's new GHG Footprint Calculator. These initiatives will help RideFinders dramatically increase the overall impact it can have on the Richmond region.

In the medium term (7 to 15 years), RideFinders will continue to provide a solid base of services to area employees and employers. The program will expand in scope and reach to serve non-work related travel planning.

More substantial changes to the Richmond region will take place over the long-range timeframe (16 to 25 years). As RideFinders' service area continues to grow and change over the long-term, the service needs of RideFinders' core customer groups will change as well. Over the long-term, the key to RideFinders' sustained growth and relevancy will be directly related to RideFinders' ability to serve the edge cities and extremely diverse population that will make up the region.

Table 4.2 RideFinders' TDM Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal 1: RideFinders Is a Model Transportation Agency in Organizational Structure, Leadership, and Impact on a Community.

- Objective 1: Build RideFinders' Advisory Board presence and impact. Make the TDM/Multi-modal cause more and more important and RideFinders more responsive.
  - Short-term Strategies (1-6 years):
    - Actively recruit Board members from the highest levels within organizations.
    - Develop the Advisory Board membership to include representatives from RideFinders' key stakeholder and customer groups in the region. For example, recruit Advisory Board members with expertise and representation in environmental organizations, minority groups, aging, military (Fort Lee), physically challenged, and various geographic perspectives (Petersburg, downtown area, etc.).
  - Medium-term Strategy (7-15 years):
    - Maintain RideFinders' organizational structure that encourages an efficient and effective operation of TDM programs, services, and achieves strategic objectives/goals.
  - Long-term Strategy (16-25 years):
    - Evolve RideFinders into the optimal long-term organizational structure as it serves a growing clientele.

Goal 2: TDM Is One of the Major Pillars of the Richmond Region's 21st Century Transportation System.

- Objective 1: TDM becomes a major component of the region's transportation system.
  - Short-term Strategy (1-6 years):
    - Create an advocacy education program to advance the TDM as a major component of the region's transportation system. Program components may include:
      - » Create comprehensive "TDM Impact" story that explains what TDM is, how it works, and the impact it makes.
      - » Include examples of TDM's success in other municipalities. Package case studies on

how transportation infrastructure and transportation services, in combination with land use development, play an essential role in defining a community's mobility and accessibility opportunities and influencing travel choices. Also, show linkages to transportation and business vitality through access to materials, workers, customers, and services.

    - Bring to life three core pillars of successful integrated of land use and transportation:
        - A balanced mix of land development that includes high-density, pedestrian-focused, mixed-used "Urban Villages" development pattern
        - Multimodal transportation infrastructure
        - Comprehensive transportation information and assistance services
    - Recognize local/regional accomplishment and showcase outcomes – ROI.
    - Share "TDM Impact" story across all stakeholder groups using group presentations and social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) as an effective and efficient way to communicate to and cultivate a growing supporter base.

  - Medium-term Strategies (7-15 years):
    - Continue the Advocacy Education Program. Over time, make the case that TDM is the most the affordable and efficient way to maintain the region's mobility and access. Showcase examples of how TDM is helping the region achieve and sustain a comprehensive, safe, and efficient multi-modal transportation system.
    - Identify and train a growing number of TDM ambassadors who can deliver the TDM Impact Story.
  - Long-term Strategy (16-25 years):
    - Potentially, turn the growing number of TDM advocates into a formal association.

- Objective 2: RideFinders becomes a major source of information and practical solutions related to GHG emissions from area work-related commute trips.
  - Short-term Strategies (1-6 years):
    - Recognizing that population growth and air quality issues will continue to affect the region, advance TDM's role in helping the Richmond region address air quality issue and advance the region's reputation as being pro-environment/sustainable – protecting quality of life.
    - Create pro-active air quality improvement/emissions reduction program for the business community and its large employers. This includes forming strategic "green/sustainability" partnerships for program design and implementation.
    - Incorporate DATA's/DRPT's new GHG emissions footprint calculator into RideFinders' employer outreach practice. Train RideFinders' sales staff to use the calculator to help companies benchmark their emissions footprints and to demonstrate the potential impact of greater employee participation in TDM programs in reducing corporate GHG footprints.
  - Medium-term Strategy (7-15 years):
    - Launch incentive programs tied to carbon footprint awareness and the increasing need for everyone to contribute.
  - Long-term Strategy (16-25 years):
    - Evolve RideFinders' overall program focus in relation to the relative importance of sustainability and green cause.

Goal 3: RideFinders is the Richmond Region's Lead Agency and Resource for TDM Planning & Implementation.

- Objective 1: As TDM will play an increasingly important role in the region's transportation system, RideFinders will be the principal agency and resource in the region for TDM-related planning and implementation. In doing so, RideFinders will continue to work closely with VDOT, DRPT, and the MPO to develop effective programs.
  - Short-term Strategies (1-6 years):
    - Position RideFinders as THE expert in TDM planning and implementation.
    - Use RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan as the first step in positioning RideFinders as THE expert in TDM planning.
    - Elevate the awareness and status of RideFinders as THE expert in TDM planning and implementation among the business community that makes up RideFinders' service area. Build an ongoing business-to-business campaign showcasing leading companies and CEOs embracing RideFinders/TDM.
- Objective 2: Elevate the awareness and status of RideFinders as THE expert in TDM planning and implementation among third-party partners and organizations that have a stake in regional transportation system and air quality issues.
  - Short-term Strategies (1-6 years):
    - Involve corporate senior management (CEO, COO, and CFO) of the top 100 largest employers. Elevate relationship beyond human resource department.
    - Quantify the bottom line "business impact" of TDM strategies with key partners.
    - Make RideFinders a major partner of the leading business associations and other regional stakeholder groups:
      - Chamber of Commerce
      - CEO Round Table
      - Society of Human Resource Managers
      - Outdoor walking / bike groups
      - Environmental and natural resources groups as appropriate
      - Major neighbor retail associations (e.g., Carytown)
  - Medium-term Strategies (7-15 years):
    - Over time (10-20 years), position RideFinders as the expert and regional authority on technical aspects of corporate environmental footprint assessments (Greenhouse Gases – GHG- related to employees' commutes) and TDM-related solutions.
    - Add an additional staff member(s) with planning expertise in parking supply/pricing, commercial real estate proffers, pedestrian/bicycle planning, and related policies.
    - Add additional staff member (s) and/or expertise in assessing corporate greenhouse gas footprints related employee commutes.
  - Long-term Strategy (16-25 years):
    - Evolved RideFinders into the optimal organizational structure to deliver TDM expertise.

Goal 4: RideFinders Offers an Innovative & Diverse Portfolio of Services & Programs to an Expanding Customer Base in Order to Reduce VMT's & Help Improve Air Quality

- Objective 1: Expand RideFinders' customer base beyond the work-related commuter market.
  - Short-term Strategies (1-6 years):
    - Implement online ridematching through NuRide software by 2010.
    - Through research-inspired planning and partnerships, build RideFinders' product and service offerings that serve niche-market needs and reinforce RideFinders' TDM-multimodal expertise. Explore and prioritize opportunity niche markets including:
      - » Aging Baby Boomers
      - » Healthcare service connection
      - » Education market
      - » Ethnic or portal neighborhoods
      - » Shopping/retail audiences – employers/shoppers
      - » Key real estate developments
      - » Military expansion in the area – Fort Lee – BRAC
      - » Greater Richmond Convention & Visitor Bureau (GRCVB) – major event planning and coordination
      - » Biking and walking
      - » Other underserved niche markets such as areas of non-existent transit services.

      Over the short-term, develop and launch plans for the top two niche markets. Current thinking centers on bike niche market and senior niche market in preparation for the age wave.
    - Help Sustainable Transportation Initiative in Richmond (STIR) advance TDM and multimodal cause overall, and support STIR's tactical initiatives such as launching Segway pilot program.
    - In year 5 and 6 of the short-term, plan for the evolution of NuRide into a mass market service, in addition to the employer market. Explore trip planning tools and features. Test and refine consumer approach features for full scale launch in the medium-term.
  - Medium-term Strategies (7-15 years):
    - Expand and support RideFinders' focus beyond commuters work trips. Include one-to-one customized/personalized transportation planning assistance for individuals – personal and household trip plans.
    - Introduce and support community-wide car sharing service (i.e.: Zipcar).
  - Long-term Strategies (16-25 years):
    - Continue to expand and support RideFinders' focus beyond commuters work trips.
- Objective 2: Increase Teleworking.
  - Short-term Strategies (1-6 years):
    - Continue to support DRPT's Telework!VA program, the major telework initiative being implemented across the region.
  - Medium-term and Long-term Strategies (7-25 years):

- Buildup sales expertise / consultant resources.
- Continue to provide appropriate program support and marketing.

Goal 5: RideFinders Is a Model Transportation Agency When It Comes to Performance Measurement, Reporting, and Return on Investment / Impact.

- Objective 1: RideFinders has timely and actionable market-based data and information on the agency's overall and service level performance and impact.
  - Short-term Strategies (1-6 years):
    - Establish overall corporate and service level goals.
    - Launch and sustain RideFinders' comprehensive *Strategy & Performance Evaluation Program*.
    - Continually monitor and assess the overall performance - impact on VMT and emissions reduction, customer satisfaction, and performance of RideFinders' specific programs and services.
    - Regularly report performance evaluation measures to RideFinders' stakeholders.
    - Establish a formal process to periodically review and update RideFinders' annual and long-term plans based on market experience, new opportunities, and feedback from customers and stakeholders.
  - Medium-term Strategy (7-15 years):
    - Create and maintain performance dashboard reporting system.
  - Long-term Strategy (16-25 years):
    - Continue to monitor, assess, and report performance and impacts.

Source: RideFinders.

4.4.4 Potential Partnerships

Short-, medium-, and long-term program enhancements will require sustaining relationships with existing transportation partners and building new relationships with a diverse network of partners. These include:

- Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation: DRPT will continue to be an important partner and major funding source for RideFinders.
- Telework!VA: As telework grows in the RideFinders service area, Telework!VA will be an important partner.
- MPO and each member jurisdiction: As funding partners, it will be critical to maintain great relationships with all of the local jurisdictions.
- Business and Related Associations: Partnerships should be continued and pursued with business and professional organizations in the community (e.g., Chamber of Commerce) to advance employer sustainability and TDM.
- TDM Advocacy Groups: Partnerships should be aggressively pursued with organizations focused on TDM advocacy and green movement such as the Friends of Transit and STIR group that have recently formed.

4.5 PROGRAM MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.5.1 Overview of Past Evaluation

Program evaluation is a function that is often short-changed by TDM agencies, due to insufficient funding to conduct the research and data collection required for comprehensive evaluations. RideFinders' efforts to assess the performance of its services and understand customers' needs, however, have been above average relative to many of the Commonwealth's fifteen TDM agencies.

RideFinders tracks monthly participation in several of its services and solicits regular feedback from ride-match and emergency ride home participants through monthly surveys designed to assess the extent to which these services have influenced or assisted participants to start or increase their use of non-SOV modes. RideFinders also has conducted numerous periodic studies of service initiatives, including the:

- 2003 Residents Awareness & Usage Telephone Study
- 2004 Residents Awareness & Usage Telephone Study
- 2005 Bike Challenge Online Study
- 2005 Business Leaders Online Study
- 2005 Residents Awareness & Usage Online Study
- 2008 Placement Study
- 2009 Business Leaders Study
- 2009 Downtown Commuter Study

In most cases, these marketing research studies have explored transportation needs of residents and businesses; assessed the impact of RideFinders' marketing campaigns in building awareness and familiarity of the agency's services; explored how participants use RideFinders' services; measured the level of satisfaction with services; and solicited recommendations for service improvements.

These studies have informed RideFinders' marketing programs and led to service refinements and development of new service offers. The best example of this "*research in action*" comes from the 2005 Residents Study and 2005 Business Leaders Study. Both studies generated unassailable evidence that the direct involvement of businesses in offering transportation-related TDM services in the work setting lifts commuter use of alternatives modes. In fact, the perception of corporate support for ridesharing lifts participation threefold. Armed with this insight, RideFinders designed and launched a comprehensive business outreach TDM campaign the following year.

In addition to funding and directing its own proprietary studies, RideFinders has also participated in other regional and state-wide transportation research-related

initiatives including: Greater Richmond Chamber Transportation Study (2007), Greater Richmond Region Affordable Housing Study (2007), Regional Mass Transit Study (2007), and Virginia State of the Commute Survey (2007).

4.5.2 Current Performance Monitoring

RideFinders currently tracks several performance measures to monitor program delivery and performance. The program is also monitored through DRPT's State of the Commute Study and regional studies conducted by RideFinders. These measures provide RideFinders' staff with a means of monitoring the overall awareness of the Agency, the marketing activities that attract and recruit program participants, and the number of individuals, companies, carpools, and vanpools served.

The output oriented performance measures serve as a starting point for developing additional performance outcome measures – to evaluate the impact of the program and progress towards the aforementioned goals and related objectives. Table 4.3 lists the current output-related performance measures that RideFinders monitors and evaluates to assess the performance of the Agency.

Table 4.3 RideFinders' Performance Measures

Commuter Customers
Total calls
Total Unique Visitors to Web site
Total Database Matching Registrants
Total GRH Registrants
Transit Check Sold
Net Promoter Score™
Employer Customers
Total employer clients
4 Rated employer clients
3 Rated employer clients
2 Rated Employer
1 Rated Employer
Net Promoter Score ™
Overall Impact or Outcome
VMT reduced
Air quality impact avoided

Source: RideFinders.

It is envisioned that VMT reduced and air quality impacts avoided will be added to this list in subsequent years.

4.5.3 Future Evaluation Criteria

While all of these past research efforts have been tremendously helpful from a programmatic or operational standpoint, more value can be realized if RideFinders' research efforts are viewed and orchestrated as a more formal comprehensive 360^0 evaluation program.

This perspective, however, requires two considerations. First and foremost, research must be programmed and conducted in a consistent manner. Second, research must be viewed as an investment and funded at the required level. A general rule of thumb that corporate marketing programs follow is to allocate 5% to 10% of total resources to fund research evaluation and development initiatives.

While there are many advantages of an ongoing comprehensive 360^0 evaluation research program, the most important one is the ability to evaluate systematically agency services from an impact or outcomes perspective and to document the transportation and environmental impacts of an agency's services. The need to calculate impacts or desired outcomes will continue to become more and more important as governmental spending comes under more and more scrutiny.

A similar 360^0 evaluation research program was recently put in place for Arlington County Commuter Services (ACCS), one of RideFinders' sister TDM agencies. One of the net take-a-ways from ACCS' work is that it can now claim that in FY 2008, Arlington County Commuter Services (ACCS):

- Eliminated a specific number of daily vehicle trips in the County by helping people shift from driving alone to transit, carpooling, vanpooling, walking, bicycling, or teleworking;
- Eliminated a specific number of daily VMT;
- Reduced Arlington County's carbon footprint by specific number of tons of NOx, a specific number of tons of VOC, and specific number of tons of CO^2.

RideFinders, in conjunction with GRTC, has recently embarked on a similar multi-year, multifaceted comprehensive 360^0 evaluation program. The Southeastern Institute of Research (SIR) and LDA Consulting have begun work on this multi-year effort. Specific future evaluation criteria that have been approved by RideFinders are depicted in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Future Evaluation Criteria

Awareness and attitudes
Awareness of options
Awareness of GRTC/RideFinders and its services
Ratings of transportation options and GRTC/RideFinders services on specific attributes
Factors influencing mode choice
Consideration of alternative modes
Participation/use of services
Sources of information
Inquiries
Contact with RideFinders
Usage of specific services
Frequency of use
Length of time using
Barriers to trial
Consideration of future use
Current services
New programs
Satisfaction
Overall satisfaction ratings for transportation system and support
Overall satisfaction ratings for GRTC/RideFinders
Reasons behind ratings
Areas for improvement
Unmet needs
Overall impact
Mode split
Shifts to non SOV modes motivated by use of services – trail and continued
Perceived benefits of mode change – personal, business, societal
SOV trips eliminated – cars taken off road
VMT reduction
Environmental consequences

Source: RideFinders.

4.5.4 Process for Monitoring and Evaluation

The process for monitoring and evaluating RideFinders is detailed in a comprehensive long-range working document entitled *GRTC-RideFinders' Strategy & Performance Evaluation Program - June 2, 2008 by LDA Consulting and SIR*. The first year of this program was funded by GRTC and RideFinders. Highlights from this plan follow.

Overall Plan Objectives

- Assess performance of all programs/services.
- Provide input for GRTC-RideFinders' overall services and program development and ongoing refinement. To do this, identify optimal prospects for individual programs/services, identify areas for improvement and finally, identify any unmet needs and program/service development opportunities.
- Document impacts – outcomes - of GRTC-Rider's programs and services.

Target Audiences

- General public/residents
- Employers
- Current transit customers both fixed route riders – "Choice" riders, transit dependent riders and express service riders – "Choice" riders
- Commuter RideFinders' program participants – ridematching, vanpool and ERH (Emergency Ride Home)
- RideFinders' Employer Program participants
- RideFinders'/GRTC Web site visitors
- Commuter store visitors
- Individuals requesting information/assistance

Implementation Approach

Table 4.5 presents the specific components of *GRTC-RideFinders' Strategy & Performance Evaluation Program*. Studies are slated for GRTC-RideFinders' individual programs/services. All of this work will profile existing users and identify optimal prospects for individual programs/services, identify any unmet needs and program/service development opportunities; create in-depth user/target profiles (demographical and psycho-graphical), identify barriers and benefits; and measure performance.

Collected data will be used to calculate program impacts by specific GRTC-RideFinders' program/service and overall agency. Ultimately, the *Performance Evaluation Program will* build and support an online "Dashboard" reporting

system for internal and public review of GRTC-RideFinders' ongoing performance and demonstrated impacts. The last step will involve the construction of an online *Strategy & Performance Evaluation* research database for *GRTC-RideFinders* – an easy venue to share research reports and program rationale with the general public, constituents, clients, and advocacy groups.

Table 4.5 Program Components

Study Name	Description	Approach	Timing
Market-wide Studies			
Resident	Assess awareness, usage and attitudes region wide, includes measurement of RideFinders' efforts reducing SOV trips	Telephone survey n = 300 to 500	Every 2 years
Employer	Assess region wide awareness, usage and attitudes , incidence and types of commute services at worksites, includes measurement of RideFinders' impact reducing SOV trips through employer assistance	Internet/Paper survey n = 200 Partner with Chamber and/or other business group(s). Could include RideFinders' 30 business clients	Every 2 years
Corridor Opportunity Study			
Residents	Usage, motivators, barriers to use, and intent to use in opportunity corridors for Choice Riders (Example: Parham lot to downtown)	Telephone survey or mail	One time for plan development
Customer Feedback			
Bus riders	Separate studies for fixed route services and individual express bus services; include measurement of Go-Cards	"Seat drop" – written survey distributed on buses 43 routes – 25 completes per route – 1075 total	Every 2.3 years
Employer Program	Usage, satisfaction, impact on number and type of commute services offered by employer	Phone survey to database of current participants 100 participants 50% participation	Every 2-3 years
Smaller GRTC Programs	Example: CARE, CARE Tickets, C-Van	Examine these programs as needed where budget and time allow	TBD
Ridematching Services	Will include both carpool and vanpool program, use, satisfaction, impact on mode choice	Phone/internet survey to database of current participants	Every 2.3 years
Emergency Ride Home	Use, satisfaction, impact on mode choice	Mail/internet survey to database of current participants	Every 2-3 years

Study Name	Description	Approach	Timing
Website	Use, satisfaction, impact on mode choice	Pop-up online survey of site visitors	Every 2-3 years
Commuter Store	Use, satisfaction, impact on mode choice	Customer intercepts or comment cards	Every 2-3 years
Assistance / Information Requests	Use, satisfaction, impact on mode choice	Mail/internet survey to database of current participants	Every 2-3 years
Maintenance			
Research Database	Database of all research pertaining to GRTC. Includes Knowledge Papers to tie the research together.		Ongoing
Making an Impact Presentation Deck	PowerPoint presentation for RideFinders Team to share Evaluation Plan and related research insights with key stakeholders.		Ongoing
Impact Analysis	Use research and other data to determine ultimate impact and report annually.		Annually
Marketing Dashboard	Create systematic reporting system.		Ongoing
Miscellaneous	Depending on the scope of the Strategy and Performance Evaluation Program, there may be the need to create a budget line item for miscellaneous meetings, account maintenance, and travel.		Ongoing

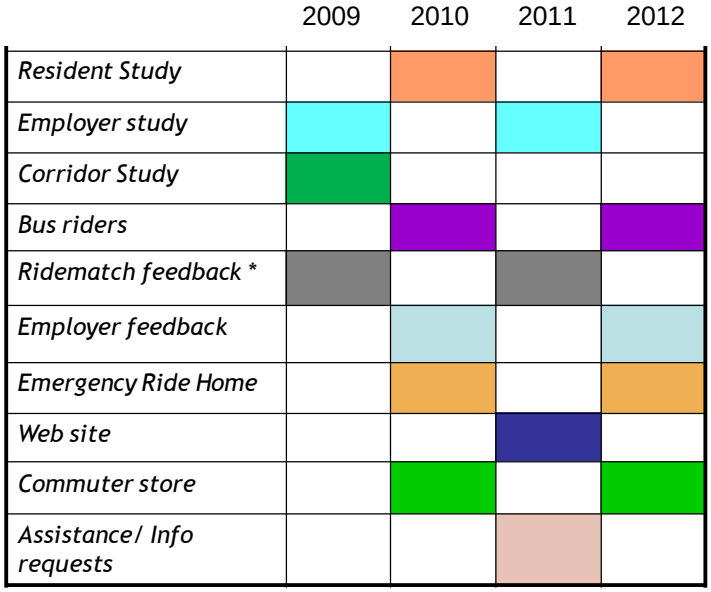
Source: GRTC-RideFinders Strategy & Performance Evaluation Program.

Program Priorities

The *GRTC-RideFinders' Strategy & Performance Evaluation Program* is a four-year program that was designed in 2008 and launched in 2009. Due to limited budget resources, initial prioritization of evaluation performance measurement was made based on the need to obtain program strategy input – to drive program development and refinement.

Based on this criterion, the first two research studies – *Employer Study* and *Corridor Study,* were launched in 2009. The Employer Study – *2009 Business Leader Study* – was recently completed. Findings have been included in this document. The corridor study will be completed in early 2010. Proposed implementation schedule for the entire *GRTC-RideFinders' Strategy & Performance Evaluation Program* is presented in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 RideFinders' Strategy & Performance Evaluation Program Implementation Schedule



Source: GRTC-RideFinders' Strategy & Performance Evaluation Program.

5.0 Financial Plan

5.1 CURRENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES

RideFinders' overall FY 2010 funding, as detailed in Table 5.1, is approximately one million dollars.

A large majority of RideFinders' annual funding comes from an allocation of the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds available to the Richmond region. By an official decision of the MPO, RideFinders receives 11.4% of the total regional CMAQ funding.

In addition to CMAQ funding, RideFinders receives support from several sources including DRPT's annual grant and small contributions provided by four jurisdictions in RideFinders' service area.

Occasionally, RideFinders receives onetime special grants such as this year's State Transportation Efficiency Improvement Fund (TEIF) from DRPT for local area implementation of the *Telework!VA* service. RideFinders also receives some in-kind services from GRTC, for professional services such as accounting and human resources. RideFinders' budget does not assign a value to these services.

Table 5.1 FY 2010 RideFinders' Source of Funds

CMAQ	$700,000
Telework VA Grant	$225,000
DRPT Match	$40,000
Crater District	$8,000
Local Jurisdictions	$23,000
	$1,000,000

Source: RideFinders.

When non-reoccurring resources, such as the FY 2010 telework grant, are taken out of the resource mix, it becomes apparent that annual CMAQ funding accounts for 90% or more of RideFinders' financial resources.

5.2 FUTURE FINANCIAL RESOURCES

5.2.1 Short-term

The following details the financial needs for the short-term planning horizon – one to six years. Two alternative funding scenarios are presented – constrained and unconstrained.

The constrained scenario assumes constant funding amounts from DRPT and conservative annual growth of other funding sources such as CMAQ. This constrained funding level will allow RideFinders to continue its current programs; however, it will not enable RideFinders to enhance or begin new programs and will not accommodate increases in staff salary and benefits.

The unconstrained scenario considers funding requirements to enhance existing services and initiate new programs, as identified in the implementation plan, if grants and additional funding are identified and secured.

Constrained Scenario

Table 5.2 shows the annual growth in RideFinders expenses by functional area over the short-term timeframe (one to six years) given a constrained funding growth scenario – constant DRPT funding and conservative growth of other funding sources.

Table 5.2 Constrained Short-term Program Expenses ($000)
5 Percent Annual Growth in Funding

	Year 1 FY 2011	Year 2 FY 2012	Year 3 FY2013	Year 4 FY2014	Year 5 FY 2015	Year 6 FY2016	Total
Program Staff/Admin	$425	$440	$455	$470	$485	$500	$2,775
(FTE)	(6.0)	(6.0)	(6.0)	(6.0)	(6.0)	(6.0)	
Marketing	$575	$605	$640	$675	$715	$753	$3,963
Operations	$50	$55	$60	$65	$70	$80	$380
Total	$1,050	$1,100	$1,155	$1,210	$1,270	$1,333	$7,118

Source: RideFinders.

Unconstrained Scenario

Table 5.3 shows the services that would be expanded and programs that would be added to the baseline program over the short-term timeframe (one to six years), if additional grants and funding became available. These programs are detailed in Table 4.2.

These programs are distributed over the six-year time period based upon priority and readiness for implementation. Improvements are also distributed to maintain a relatively stable increase in funding requirements and requests.

Table 5.3 Unconstrained Short-term Program Plan and Expenses ($000)

Program or Service Enhancement	Year 1 FY 2011	Year 2 FY 2012	Year 3 FY2013	Year 4 FY2014	Year 5 FY 2015	Year 6 FY2016	Total
Program Staff/Admin	$425	$440	$515	$530	$680	$690	$3,280
(FTE)	(6.0)	(6.0)	(7.0)	(7.0)	(9.0)	(9.0)	
Marketing	$575	$680	$935	$1,225	$1,500	$2,005	$6,920
Operations	$50	$55	$75	$80	$125	$140	$525
Total	$1,050	$1,175	$1,525	$1,835	$2,305	$2,835	$10,725

Source: RideFinders.

Under the short-term unconstrained scenario, the major increases in investment include:

- Add one FTE in 2013 and two more FTEs in 2015 to handle the projected increase in activity related to serving a growing number of RideFinders' employer partners and to prepare RideFinders for an expanded focus, in the medium-term, beyond work trips.
- Increase overall business-to-business outreach and service marketing programs. This includes the development of transportation-related GHG emissions expertise and strategic joint-marketing partnerships.
- Implement the remaining portion of the comprehensive *GRTC-RideFinders' Strategy & Performance Evaluation Program*.
- Develop and launch plans for the top two niche markets. Current thinking centers on biking support plan and the senior market in preparation for the age wave.
- The development, testing, and execution of online trip planning services through an expanded NuRide service serving RideFinders' current employer customers in years five and six (2015-2016) and, ultimately, launched as a mass market service for all residents in the medium-term (2017-2018).

5.2.2 Medium-term & Long-term Funding Scenarios

Under the constrained funding scenario, funding for RideFinders would stay relatively level over the seven to twenty-five year period with a modest 5% annual increase. Programming would remain relatively stagnant.

Under an unconstrained scenario, services would continue to be expanded with the primary focus on stepped-up support for RideFinders' corporate partners

and automated, online trip planning for the region's resident population. It is anticipated that these enhanced services during the medium- and long-term period would see the overall annual operating budget triple during this period - year twenty-five budget would be 300% larger than year seven's budget.

5.2.3 Future Funding Sources

The unrestrained budget represents a significant increase in RideFinders' financial resources. Where could these additional resources come from? The likely answer will be multiple sources; and the potential for this to develop will only happen if RideFinders sets a course to make it happen.

To this end, RideFinders' TDM Plan calls for a formal planning process to identify alternative future funding sources. As noted earlier in this document, RideFinders will convene a task force, which will include appropriate stakeholders, to explore new funding sources. Two examples include:

- Fees from RideFinders' Employer Services: Expanded employer services such as the GHG emissions footprint assessments could include some form of "green certification." This service, in turn, could merit service fees from companies that go through a formal rating/certification process.
- Corporate Sponsorships: The potential of dramatically building RideFinders' ridematching Web site into a social network through NuRide mass-market product could open up sponsorship and advertising-generated revenue opportunities.

These are just two examples. The task force will formally explore these and many other possibilities. This process will culminate in a recommended future funding action plan that will inform future updates of this overall document – RideFinders' Long-Range TDM Plan.