

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What is the Bus-on-Shoulder pilot?

A. The Bus-on-Shoulder (BOS) operation allows authorized transit buses with trained drivers to operate on paved shoulders at certain locations on I-66 inside the Beltway at low speeds during periods of congestion to bypass traffic and maintain transit schedules. BOS is a low-cost treatment that can provide immediate benefits to transit whenever there is moderate-to-heavy congestion.

Q. What are authorized transit buses?

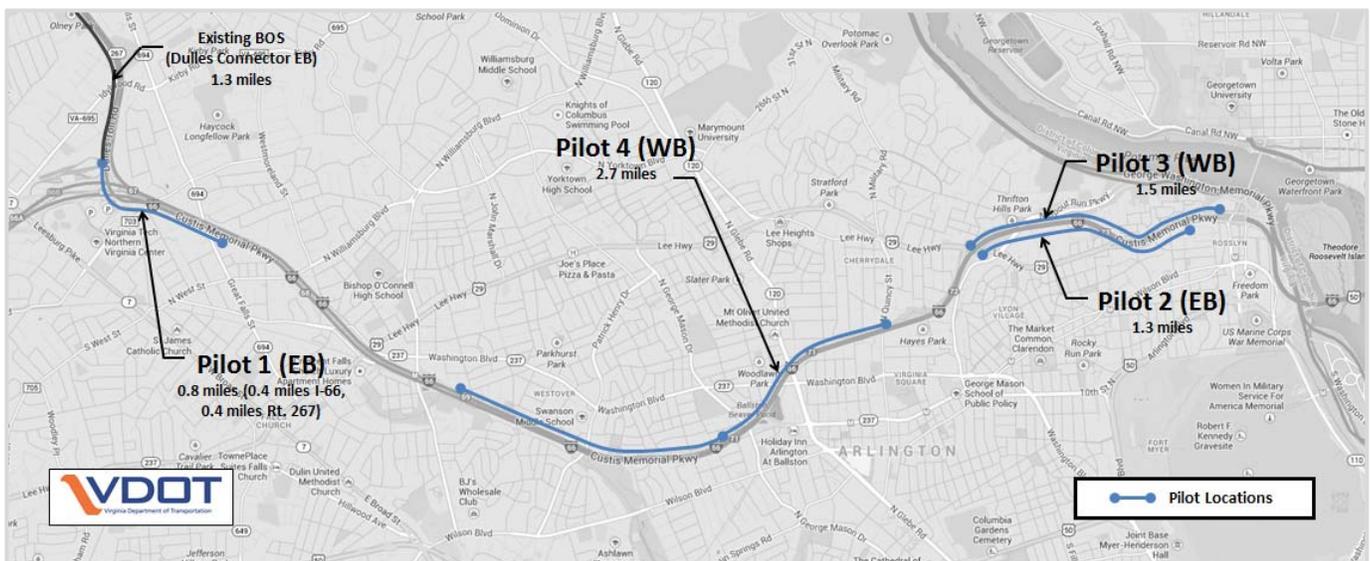
Transit agencies that have a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with VDOT on the conditions of operations on the shoulders are considered authorized buses. The MOU with VDOT requires driver training and insurance and has to be executed by the Transit Agency and the Commissioner of Highways.

Q. Where will buses be able to use the shoulder?

A. VDOT is implementing this pilot along I-66 inside the Beltway. The BOS operation will be permitted in the following locations (See map below):

- On the eastbound Dulles Connector Road, extending the existing BOS operation ending at the ramp to the West Falls Church Metro station, to the merge onto eastbound I-66 near the Great Falls Street overpass
- On eastbound I-66 from the US 29 overpass near Spout Run Parkway to N. Quinn Street
- On westbound I-66 from beyond the Rosslyn Tunnel (N. Nash Street) to the US 29 overpass near Spout Run Parkway
- On westbound I-66 from the North Quincy Street underpass to the auxiliary lane beyond Fairfax Drive

VDOT Bus-on-Shoulder Pilot Locations I-66 Inside the Beltway





I-66 BUS-ON-SHOULDER PILOT PROGRAM INSIDE THE BELTWAY Spring 2015

Q. When will buses be able to travel on the shoulder?

A. Authorized transit buses will be permitted to travel on paved shoulders in the pilot area when traffic in the main lanes does not exceed 35 miles per hour. Authorized transit buses will be able to travel on the shoulder at speeds up to 25 mph. There are no time-of-day restrictions for BOS operations on I-66 as long as the maximum speed thresholds are met. The timing for BOS operations on the Dulles Connector Road will be per the timings on the signs posted.

Q. If I have an emergency, will I still be able to use the shoulder?

A. Shoulder use for emergencies will continue to take precedence over BOS operation. At all times, authorized transit buses traveling on the shoulder must yield to all other vehicles.

Q. Will all buses travel on the shoulders when speed thresholds are met?

A. No. Only authorized transit buses with trained operators are permitted to travel on the shoulders during periods of congestion. When speeds in the main lanes permit shoulder travel, trained bus operators may elect to use only portions of the shoulder, or none at all, depending on their professional judgment of the conditions on the roadway. As of Spring 2015, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC)'s Omniride buses are the first authorized to use the I-66 shoulder. VDOT is also working toward agreements with other area transit operators.

Q. Will signs be installed along I-66 to alert drivers to the BOS pilot project?

A. Yes. "Shoulder: Authorized Buses Only" signs have been installed on I-66 every half-mile and at the beginning and end of each BOS pilot location.

Q. Are other states using bus-on-shoulder operations?

A. BOS operations have been used successfully in more than 12 states. States that currently use BOS on one or more roadways include:

- South region: NC, FL, GA
- Northeast/Mid-Atlantic region: NJ, DE, MD
- Midwest region: OH, MN, IL, KS
- West region: CA, WA

The Minneapolis-St. Paul region alone has nearly 300 shoulder-miles of bus shoulder in operation since it began approximately 20 years ago. The I-66 BOS pilot program is modeled after the successful bus-on-shoulders program in Minnesota.

Q. I don't plan to ride the bus. How will I benefit from BOS operation?

A. BOS is a cost-effective way to make bus travel more attractive and more efficient, which can increase transit ridership, save public transit funds and/or allow them to provide more transit service options. The more people use transit as a viable and reliable travel option, the more performance of the overall transportation system is improved.

Q. Who is leading the BOS initiative?

A. VDOT is the primary implementation agency for the BOS pilot on I-66, and is working closely with Virginia State Police and local and regional transit operators to complete the pilot.