

2023 Park & Ride Lot Slug Count

August 8, 2023

Prepared by GWRC Staff

Introduction

On the second Tuesday of August, the GWRideConnect program performed a survey of riders and drivers participating in an activity known as slugging at the three most northern lots in Planning District 16, which were Rt 610 Staffordboro, Rt 610 Mine Road, and Rt 630 Courthouse Rd. Slugging was only observed at the Staffordboro Park & Ride lot. These survey results may be included in models developed by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and other Transportation Demand Management (TDM) planning components. In 2022, the GWRideConnect program conducted a survey on August 9, which was also the second Tuesday of the month. The most recent study prior to 2022 was published by VDOT in Fall 2014 with 4 pickup locations: Route 3 Gordon Rd, Route 17, Route 610 (both Mine Rd and Staffordboro Rd were included), and Route 630.

Slugging, also known as casual or instant carpooling, is when a driver picks up non-paying passenger(s) at a specific pickup location and drops the passenger(s) off at an existing drop-off location that is agreed upon before the rider enters the vehicle. Slugging is an effective form of ridesharing that reduces vehicle miles travelled (VMT's). Slugging began in this area in the 1970's.

Procedure

George Washington Regional Commission staff deployed in teams of two persons to watch for slugging activity. Each team was assigned the tasks of counting both drivers and riders (slugs). Counting of drivers was done by one team member while counting of slugs was done by the other team member. Each team member used a mechanical hand tally counter to track counts and a cell phone to record time. Team members were given the option to use tally marks instead of mechanical tally counters. Counts were recorded approximately every 30 minutes on a form provided by GWRideConnect. At least one member of each team had participated in the 2022 survey. Staff divided the Route 610 Park & Ride locations into two separate pickup areas as the lots require two teams for observation and the distance between the locations is considered non-walkable due to lack of pedestrian infrastructure. We also notated when a rider, i.e. "slug", appeared female because the most often asked question to the GWRideConnect program about slugging is if women participate. The answer is yes.

Results

Second Tuesday of August 2023 compared to August 2022:

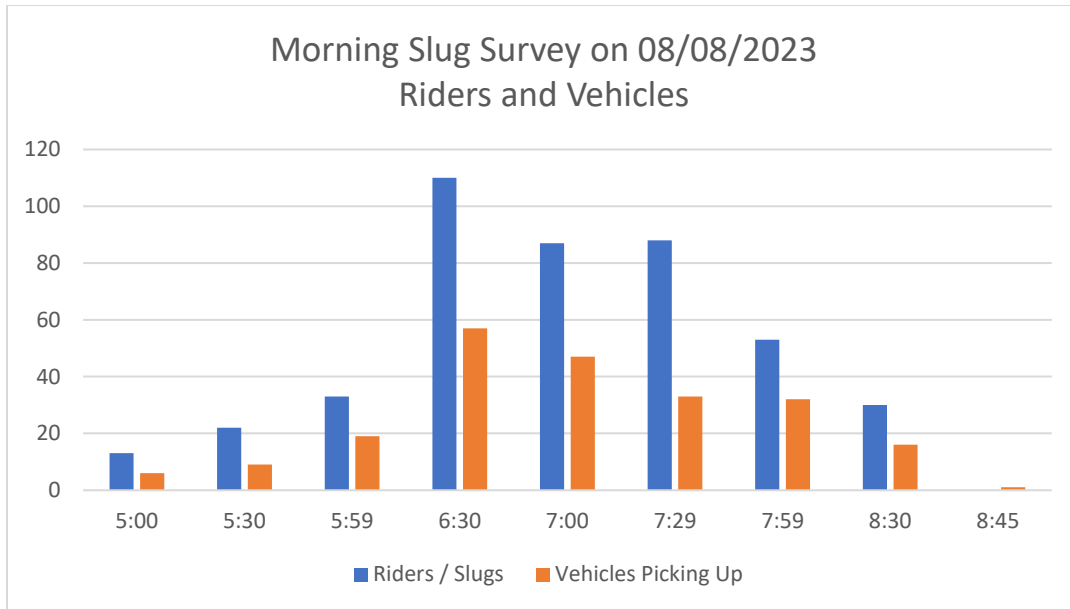
	Slugs	Vehicles
2023 Slug count numbers	436	220
2022 Slug count numbers:	289	153
Increase over last year:	147	67
Percent increase YoY:	51%	44%

Breakdown of 2023 count:

Rt. 610 Staffordboro Park & Ride Lot Slug Count					
August 8, 2023					
Begin Time	End Time	Riders / Slugs	Vehicles Picking Up	Appeared Female	Percentage Female
4:31	5:00	13	6	2	15%
5:01	5:30	22	9	1	5%
5:31	5:59	33	19	8	24%
6:00	6:30	110	57	29	26%
6:31	7:00	87	47	19	22%
7:01	7:29	88	33	20	23%
7:30	7:59	53	32	16	30%
8:00	8:30	30	16	11	37%
8:31	8:45	0	1	-	-
Totals		436	220	106	24%

The average number of slugs per car: 1.98

Average Time Between Vehicles		
Count began at 4:31 AM	Vehicles Picking Up	Average Headway (minutes)
5:00	6	4.83
5:30	9	3.33
5:59	19	1.53
6:30	57	0.54
7:00	47	0.64
7:29	33	0.88
7:59	32	0.94
8:30	16	1.94
8:45	1	15.00
Average Headway		3.29



Notes

- The weather was pleasant registering 72° at 6:30 a.m with a few clouds in the sky. There had been bad storms the afternoon before with the Federal Government closing at 3:00 p.m.
- Many Slugs were dropped off to join the line. One Slug arrived in a taxi.
- Many drivers picked up 3 riders when the lines were longer.
- The most popular destination was Pentagon. Riders were picked up for Rosslyn, 14th Street, and Crystal City.
- A spot check was done on amount of time a rider waited for a ride – the rider stepped onto the slugging platform at 7:57 and stepped into a vehicle at 8:04
- One staff member thought it would be interesting to count the number of slugs waiting in line at certain time points. The counts were as follows:

Time Point	Slugs in line
4:31	3
6:45	34
7:15	30
7:30	31
7:45	17
8:05	14
8:20	10
8:30	2
8:35	0