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ERRATA

“Casual Carpooling Focus Group Study”
Publication No. FHWA-HRT-13-053

Dear Customer:

Editorial corrections were made to this report after the report was originally published. The following table shows the modifications that were made to this report.

Location	Correction
Page i, Box 15	Add: "Department of the Navy Technical Contact: Marc Oliphant"
Page 1	Change: <i>Casual Carpooling Scan Report and Appendix B to the Casual Carpooling Scan Report</i> to: Casual Carpooling Scan Report and Appendix B to the Casual Carpooling Scan Report
Page 5	Change sentence to: "As shown in figure 1, casual carpooling occurs in the..."
Page 15, Table 3	Add: "No Response" to blank cell.

Technical Report Documentation Page

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15. Supplementary Notes FHWA's Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR): Zachary Ellis, HRTM-30 FHWA Technical Contact: Allen Greenberg Department of the Navy Technical Contact: Marc Oliphant			
16. Abstract Qualitative research in the form of focus groups was conducted from June 2012 through September 2012 to explore the phenomenon of casual carpooling (also called slugging, informal carpooling, and dynamic ridesharing). Eight focus groups were held in three regions with the largest and longest running casual carpooling systems in the Nation: Washington, DC; Houston, TX; and San Francisco, CA. At each location, the focus groups were held with drivers and passengers who are active participants in casual carpooling. The focus groups took place over 1 to 2 days on separate evenings with generally one or two groups being held each evening (one focus group in Washington, DC, was held midday). A total of 83 individuals participated in the focus groups. With the goal of enriching understanding of casual carpooling systems from the participants' perspective, this effort provided insights, results, and conclusions to the following research questions: 1. What are the underlying social-cultural dynamics that comprise the casual carpooling system? 2. What are the factors that attract participants to casual carpooling and influencers that motivate them to stick with the system? 3. What are the opportunities for system improvements that may improve the casual carpooling experience?			
17. Key Words alternative commuting, casual carpooling, dynamic ridesharing, carpooling, electronic slugging, slugging, slugs, flexible carpooling, informal carpools, ride matching, ridesharing, ridesharing systems.		18. Distribution Statement No restrictions. This document is available to the public through the National Technical Information Service, Springfield, VA 22161.	
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INTRODUCTION

This report documents a qualitative research study sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Exploratory Advanced Research (EAR) Program that was conducted from June 2012 through September 2012 to explore the phenomenon of casual carpooling. FHWA's EAR Program addresses the need to conduct longer term and higher risk breakthrough research with the potential for transformational improvement to plan; build; renew; and operate safe, congestion-free, and environmentally sound transportation systems. This study is one component of a two-part study that explored the mechanics, logistics, and success of the practice. During November and December 2010, the EAR Program supported a team that consisted of transportation professionals, academic faculty, and business entrepreneurs who visited casual carpooling lines in Washington, DC; Houston, TX; and San Francisco, CA, to observe and compare practices among the three locations. The [Casual Carpooling Scan Report](#) is documented in a separate report, and [Appendix B to the Casual Carpooling Scan Report](#) is also available separately.^(1,2)

Casual carpooling is just like traditional carpooling in that a ride is shared between a driver and one or more passengers. The practice of casual carpooling, however, is a unique variation on the traditional form of carpooling with two distinct differences:

- ✓ Casual carpooling takes place without any prearrangement between driver and passenger(s).
- ✓ In casual carpooling, there is no ongoing commitment among the participants.

Other terms commonly used to describe casual carpooling include “slugging” and “dynamic ridesharing.” According to David LeBlanc, a veteran slug, author of *Slugging*, and creator of Slug-Lines.com, the term “slug” came from bus drivers who had to determine if there were genuine passengers at their stop or just people wanting a free lift, in the same way that they look out for fake coins—or “slugs” being thrown into the fare-collection box.⁽³⁾ Of these terms, “casual carpooling” and “slugging” describe an approach where there is a predetermined physical meeting place for the driver and passengers and there is no required use of technology to participate.

Though the authors recognize that there are connotative and denotative differences between these terms and that their use varies by region, for purposes of continuity, this report refers to the practice generally as “casual carpooling” and those who participate in it as “casual carpoolers.”

Background

As a response to the opening of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes in the Washington, DC–Northern Virginia metro area in the mid-1970s, a unique commuting phenomenon developed: slugging. This type of carpooling evolved from drivers and passengers coming together to fulfill each party's needs: drivers needed additional passengers to meet the HOV requirement of four occupants (in Washington, DC, this was later reduced to three) and passengers needed faster ways to reach their destination than public transit without the expense of driving. This win–win situation eventually spread from the original slug line in Springfield, VA, to roughly 24 sites in the region today.

the park-and-ride and casual carpooling locations were manually created in ArcGIS by finding each location on the base map and creating a point; reference addresses are listed on each of the following Web sites and were retrieved in February 2013: www.slug-lines.com/Slugging/Map.asp (Washington, DC, region), www.ridemetro.org/SchedulesMaps/parkride.aspx (Houston, TX, region), and www.ridenow.org/carpool (San Francisco, CA, region). ArcGIS® and ArcMap™ are the intellectual property of Esri and are used herein under license.

Washington, DC

In the Washington, DC, area, casual carpooling is commonly referred to as “slugging.” As shown in figure 1, casual carpooling occurs in the Washington, DC, area primarily along Interstate (I) 95 and I-395 between Washington and Northern Virginia, extending as far south as the north side of Fredericksburg, VA. A few “slug lines” also operate along I-66 heading westbound out of Washington to Manassas, VA. Casual carpooling in this region is equally active during the morning (starting as early as 5:30 a.m. and lasting until 8:45 a.m.) and afternoon (starting as early as 3 p.m. and continuing until 6 p.m.) commutes.

Several dominant environmental features of the Washington area’s transportation network have contributed to the region’s casual carpooling system:

- HOV-3 lanes. The minimum number of occupants that is required for vehicles using HOV lanes along the I-95 and I-395 corridors south of Washington is determined.
- Park-and-Ride lots. Large park-and-ride lots are located along I-95 at key interchanges and suburban cities.
- Potomac River. The Potomac River creates a barrier between Washington and Virginia, limiting travel crossing between the city and Virginia to three bridges and Metrorail, the subway system.
- The Pentagon. The world’s largest office building by floor area, with over 30,000 employees and visitors on a daily basis, is also a natural hub for all transportation modes including personal vehicle, taxi, and passenger dropoff/pickup for bus and subway transit services.

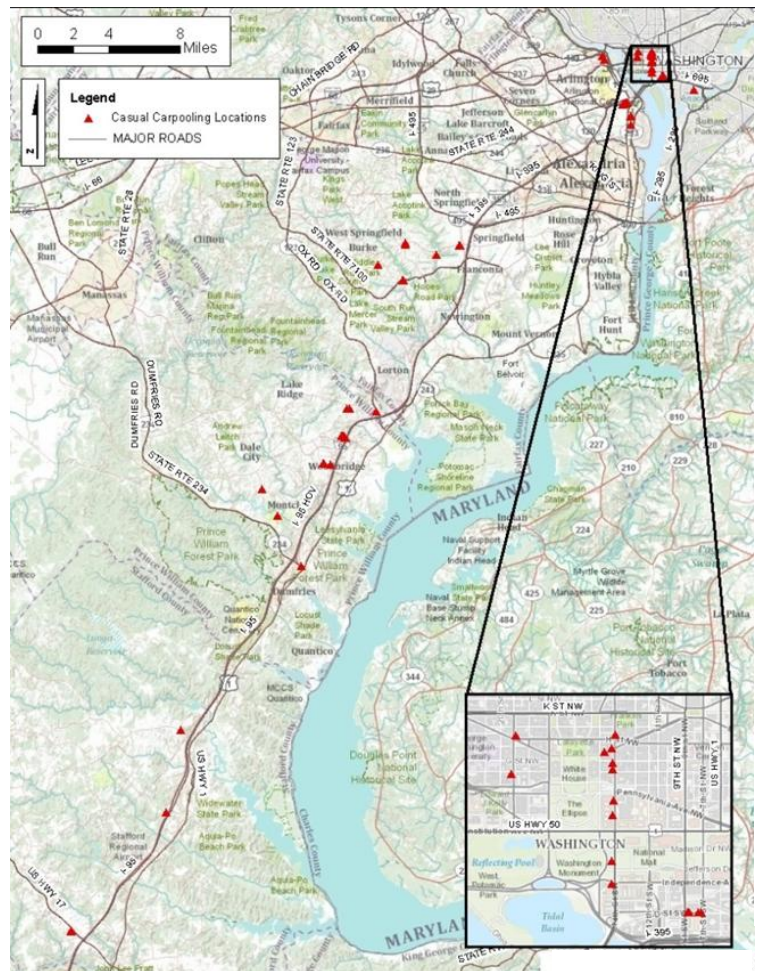


Figure 1. Map. Casual carpooling locations in the Washington, DC, region.

Region	Demographic Information				Casual Carpooling (CC) Behavior		
	Gender	Age	Education	Race	Role	CC to and from Work?	Frequency
	Female	27	Bachelor's or undergraduate degree	Hispanic / Latino	Primarily a driver	No response	Daily
	Female	No response	No response	No response	Primarily a passenger	No response	No response
	Male	No response	No response	Hispanic / Latino	Primarily a passenger	No response	No response
	Male	No response	No response	No response	No response	To work	Daily
	Female	No response	No response	Hispanic / Latino	Primarily a passenger	No response	No response
	Male	No response	No response	No response	Primarily a passenger	No response	About twice a month