

Sustainability Policy

Moving
Forward Together



MC DOT
Montgomery County
Department of Transportation



MONTGOMERY COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION

Sustainability
Policy

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) recognizes that the County's expanding transportation system has far-reaching impacts. The way our streets are planned, the range of available transportation options, and the way in which projects are constructed and maintained all influence our environment, physical health, economic well-being, social cohesion and the resiliency of neighborhoods over time. These broader issues are at the heart of MCDOT's sustainability goals that guide our programs, designs and policies.

Director's Message



To create an even more progressive transportation system that preserves the County's environment and resources and enhances our quality of life into the future, MCDOT has established four Sustainability Goals to guide our decision making:


Department of Transportation
Director Al Roshdieh

- **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:** Plan and implement a transportation system that broadly considers ecosystem and climate impacts, reduces and prevents waste and pollution, uses renewable resources, uses sustainable sources of energy and reduces energy consumption.
- **ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY:** Support a public transportation infrastructure that stimulates economic prosperity, promotes economic development, and is cost effective and efficient.
- **SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:** Provide a transportation network that is accessible, affordable, safe, secure and equitable, and one that improves the health and quality of life for people who use it and live near it. Consider the basic needs of diverse residents and businesses and provide access and mobility for all. Give back to communities by volunteering and donating resources.
- **SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION:** Ensure that residents, businesses and visitors are well informed about their sustainable travel options, help them make more sustainable decisions in their daily lives and support them in their choices.

Moving Forward Together



A New Vision for Transportation in Montgomery County

MCDOT's core values are expressed in our mission, vision and guiding principles and they provide the framework for our Sustainability Policy:






MCDOT's VISION:

A seamless transportation system for people of all ages, incomes and abilities that supports a vibrant and sustainable community.

MCDOT's MISSION:

To move people and connect places with the best transportation choices and services.






GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

-  Provide an effective and efficient transportation system
-  Keep our system reliable, safe and secure
-  Engage and support our diverse community
-  Enhance quality of life
-  Be innovative and forward-thinking

This Sustainability Policy outlines strategic objectives for each of our five mission-oriented guiding principles. The table on the next page provides a summary. How MCDOT is achieving these objectives is outlined in detail in the remainder of the document.

As Montgomery County plans for a future with more jobs, more people, and more options, MCDOT's Sustainability Policy supports a stronger and more vibrant community that is making even greater strides towards conserving natural resources, protecting the environment, promoting social equity, stimulating economic growth, and educating our residents. Through innovative approaches, we are creating a 21st century system that moves more people in fewer vehicles. A sustainable future means a higher quality of life for everyone in Montgomery County -- now and for generations to come.

MCDOT's Sustainability Goals, Guiding Principles and Objectives

MCDOT GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES					
SUSTAINABILITY GOALS					
	PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM	KEEP OUR SYSTEM RELIABLE, SAFE AND SECURE	ENGAGE AND SUPPORT OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY	ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE	BE INNOVATIVE AND FORWARD-THINKING
Environmental	Reduce traffic congestion	Provide safe options to encourage non-auto travel	Develop sustainable travel options	Reduce pollutants and environmental impacts	Adopt innovative technologies and best practices
Economic	Keep infrastructure in good repair	Enhance system consistency and dependability	Provide affordable transportation options	Promote energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Support smart growth
Social	Improve multimodal connectivity	Reduce traffic collisions	Provide an equitable and fair multimodal system	Enhance access and mobility	Use innovation to make all transportation choices easier
Educational	Promote transportation choices	Educate all system users to keep the traveling public safe	Encourage use of sustainable travel options	Support programs that promote environmentally preferable choices	Foster dynamic partnerships with businesses and the community

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: 1



Provide an Effective and Efficient Transportation System

Providing an effective and efficient transportation system means using our valuable County resources – including public spaces and funds – to yield the greatest results in terms of access, mobility, safety and quality of life. The result is a balanced approach that accommodates vehicle demand, manages congestion and provides transit, ridesharing, bicycling and walking opportunities that serve all County residents, visitors and workers. As MCDOT fine tunes our programs and policies to support expanding transportation choices, we continue to look for opportunities to serve more people in a variety of ways.

Environmental Sustainability

Reduce traffic congestion

- **Provide new pedestrian connections** in areas where there are none or where there are gaps.
- **Build bicycle facilities to bridge transportation gaps.** Provide better access along major commuting routes to Metrorail stations, transit centers, activity centers and urban centers.
- **Reduce gridlock during power outages** by installing uninterruptible power supplies/battery back-ups for all County-owned traffic signals. Reducing vehicle idling time means less air pollution.
- **Enhance traffic flow and cut idling delays** by making intersection improvements, such as adding or extending turn lanes.



Economic Sustainability



Keep infrastructure in good repair

Preserve investments in infrastructure:

- **Roads:** Monitor the condition of County roads and use this information to target limited resources to preserve, rehabilitate and maintain roads and road shoulders.
- **Bridges:** Keep bridges in good repair through a regular program of inspection, maintenance and rehabilitation.
- **Sidewalks and Bike Paths:** Maintain and repair sidewalks and bike paths.
- **Storm Drains:** Repair roadway ditches and channels, enclosed storm drains and damaged pipes.
- **Right-of-Ways:** Mow grass, replace guardrails and maintain and/or replace curbs and gutters.
- **Lighting:** Replace broken or burnt out streetlights and fix downed poles.
- **Transit Facilities and Bus Stops:** Keep facilities in good repair through a regular program of inspections, maintenance and rehabilitation.
- **Signs and Pavement Markings:** Repair and replace signs and markings in response to resident requests and through a regular maintenance schedule.
- **Traffic Signals:** Repair and replace signals and upgrade technology where appropriate.
- **Buses and Other Equipment:** Ensure buses receive daily cleanings, maintenance and regular inspections.
- **Parking Garages and Lots:** Keep facilities in good repair through routine inspections, maintenance and rehabilitation. Repair, replace and update lighting in parking lots and garages.



Social Sustainability

▶ Improve multimodal connectivity

- **Expand the reach of alternative transportation options.** Examples include providing bike racks on all Ride On buses, in County parking garages, and throughout activity centers within central business districts.
- **Expand first mile, last mile options for connecting with transit and other travel options.** Create a Bikeshare network within the County that is part of the regional Capital Bikeshare program.
- **Construct sidewalks and ramps to meet ADA standards,** particularly on arterial or collector roads that connect people with destinations.
- **Build transit centers** to enhance and expand bus passenger facilities.



Montgomery Mall Transit Center



Sustainability Education

Promote transportation choices

- **Widely promote transportation options to residents, employers and visitors of all ages, income levels and ethnicities through public education and engagement.** Make presentations and/or organize public meetings, fairs, festivals and events; send direct mail to residents; actively engage on social media and translate information into multiple languages.
- **Use transportation demand management to encourage consideration of sustainable travel options.** Within Transportation Management Districts, provide concentrated services to encourage the use of transit and other commuting options by employers and employees. Promote the benefits of these options, such as reducing traffic congestion, increasing transportation capacity, reducing air and noise pollution and promoting bicycle and pedestrian access.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: 2



Keep Our System Reliable, Safe and Secure

Safety is paramount to what we do. We are dedicated to making our streets safe for all users. Our projects take a “complete streets” approach, addressing the safety and comfort of pedestrians, transit-users, people on bikes, and people in cars. We prioritize safety and work closely with other departments and agencies on projects and programs that further this goal. MCDOT is an integral partner in coordinating responses to emergencies and severe weather events. Additionally, we continue to build trust amongst Montgomery County residents in the security and reliability of all of our services.

Environmental Sustainability

Provide safe options to encourage non-auto travel

- **Continue to implement a countywide Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Initiative.** The strategic plan outlines ways to improve safety by using engineering, enforcement and education measures.
- **Conduct a Safe Routes to School program** that makes engineering improvements to reduce collision rates. These include installing traffic calming measures, providing enhanced signage and crosswalk markings, upgrading sidewalks or installing sidewalk connections, and improving traffic flow around County public and private schools.
- **Modify road right-of-ways to expand opportunities for other users.** Restripe roads to include shared bike lanes and add sidewalks, where appropriate.



Crosswalk Simulation for Safe Routes to School Program



Economic Sustainability

▶ Enhance system consistency and dependability

- **Keep roads open during emergencies** by removing downed trees and addressing flooding.
- **Operate a state-of-the-art transportation management center** that monitors traffic, adjusts signal timing to help keep traffic and transit vehicles moving, improves system efficiency and decreases delays.
- **Improve Ride On reliability** by adjusting routes impacted by collisions or road work in real time. If disruptions do occur, use social and traditional media to inform the public.
- **Protect economic hubs and tax revenues** by pretreating roads prior to winter storms to speed snow removal and minimize retail and business closures. Following snow storms, clear snow from roads, County-owned sidewalks and major bus stops as quickly as possible, prioritizing central business districts so economic activity can resume.
- **Monitor transportation facilities to enhance security.** Use patrols and video cameras to check buses, parking lots and garages, and transit facilities.



Transportation Management Center



Social Sustainability

Reduce Traffic Collisions

- **Target resources to pedestrian and bicyclist safety efforts** that are most successful by using a data-driven approach.
- **Give pedestrians adequate time to safely cross the street** by retiming traffic signals to increase walk times.
- **Use engineering solutions to calm excessive traffic speed in neighborhoods**, enhancing pedestrian and bicycle safety. Install speed humps, small traffic circles, curb extensions and pedestrian refuge islands to help slow traffic.
- **Upgrade or install new lighting** along roads, sidewalks, in parking lots and garages, and adjacent to transit stops to ensure safety and security while using the transportation system.
- **Enhance traffic safety** by installing traffic controls, such as new traffic signals, marking pavement, installing signs and trimming foliage to improve visibility.



Before and After Photos of Piney Branch Road



Sustainability Education

▶ Educate all system users to keep the traveling public safe

- **Promote safe driving, walking and biking** by participating in the regional Street Smart education campaign. Use advertising to communicate safety messages and street teams to distribute safety tips to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Sponsor targeted safety campaigns** to reduce crashes along corridors with the highest number of collisions, in parking lots, and among the most vulnerable populations, including non-native English speakers, seniors and teens.
- **Keep transit users safe in emergencies** by providing ongoing training for bus operators about how to respond in difficult situations. Provide drivers with emergency communications systems on all buses.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: 3



Engage and Support Our Diverse Community

Montgomery County is diverse in many ways. Our community is home to people of varying ages, incomes, races, backgrounds and abilities. We are proud of our bustling urban centers, suburban neighborhoods and our cherished rural and agricultural heritage. To truly support our community, the transportation system must respond to the needs of all groups, neighborhoods and contexts that make up our vibrant County. We actively involve people in our work through public engagement and a customer-oriented approach to everything we do.

Environmental Sustainability

▶ Develop sustainable travel options

- **Add more transit options in areas targeted for development.** Work with the State to plan the Corridor Cities Transitway bus rapid transit system.
- **Increase the percent of the population with nearby access to transportation choices that have a smaller environmental footprint.** Enhance Ride On by planning for priority service along high demand corridors and adjust bus schedules and service levels to better meet needs.
- **Encourage ownership and use of electric powered vehicles** by installing charging stations in County-owned parking garages. Electric vehicles emit significantly fewer pollutants compared to conventionally fueled vehicles.



Economic Sustainability

▶ Provide affordable transportation options

- Provide free and reduced fare Ride On bus service for seniors, persons with disabilities, teens, County employees and college students.
- Offer discounted taxicab service or door-to-door transport to eligible low-income seniors and adults with disabilities and their companions.
- Assist programs that recruit volunteer drivers who escort passengers to medical appointments, grocery shopping and other needs.
- Provide free curb-to-curb service to senior centers and some community centers for seniors living within certain areas.



Social Sustainability

► Provide an equitable and fair multimodal system

- **Ensure that transportation options comply with Federal non-discrimination laws.** Ride On meets all Federal Title VI requirements, which guarantee that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from using Ride On.
- **Make the transit system accessible.** Ride On has been hailed as a national model in transforming its bus stops to be fully accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, all Ride On buses are wheelchair accessible.
- **Provide a transit subsidy program** to employees who agree to give up their parking space.
- **Design and construct pedestrian and bicyclist amenities** with priority given to locations near schools, major activity centers, transit stations and bus stops.



Sustainability Education

Encourage use of sustainable travel options

- **Distribute information to businesses and organizations** that promote options for reducing single passenger vehicle travel.
- **Organize activities for school children** that promote pedestrian and bicycle safety by holding Safe Kids days.
- **Create a sense of ownership amongst teens in staying safe by partnering** with high school students, PTAs and school administrators to help develop pedestrian safety education programs.
- **Encourage more students to walk and bike to school** by celebrating Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day.
- **Sponsor Bike to Work Day pit stops** to encourage employees to explore biking and/or combine biking with transit as a way of commuting.
- **Promote walking and transit use among employees** by holding an annual Walk and Ride Challenge for businesses and other organizations.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: 4

Enhance Quality of Life



To meet the needs of an increasing population, MCDOT is creating an integrated transportation system that balances the impacts of our actions with the needs of the community. The design and range of transportation options empowers residents, businesses and commuters to make well informed choices that support their health, the health of the environment and the health of our community.

Environmental Sustainability

Reduce pollutants and environmental impacts

1. REDUCE WASTE

- **Collect leaves for composting**, reusing this valuable organic material and keeping it out of the waste stream.
- **Use our own recycled asphalt** in MCDOT projects.
- **Ensure MCDOT facilities** meet and exceed applicable environmental protection laws through regular inspections.
- **Purchase environmentally preferable office supplies** that contain recycled content or can be recycled and, whenever possible, recycle materials from construction and maintenance operations.
- **Raise staff environmental awareness of best practices** by holding pollution prevention training classes and implementing innovations to improve systems and procedures.



Environmental Sustainability

2. REDUCE AIR & WATER POLLUTION

- **Operate the Ride On bus system**, the largest regional transit system besides Metro, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions when compared to driving alone.
- **Sweep streets** every year to remove debris from County-maintained roadways, keeping these pollutants out of storm drains, rivers, streams and the Chesapeake Bay.
- **Care for the County's 500,000 street trees** along County-maintained roadways and plant new ones. Trees help enhance the soil's capacity to absorb rainwater; decrease erosion, replenish groundwater, reduce stormwater runoff into local streams and filter pollutants. Studies have shown that trees can even enhance residents' sense of well-being and reduce stress.
- **Create green streets** by partnering with the Department of Environmental Protection to construct on-site stormwater treatments such as rain gardens, permeable pavers and other methods that filter rainwater and improve water quality.
- **Clean storm drains** to ensure debris is removed before it washes into local streams.
- **Remove litter** from County roads and right-of-ways, targeting areas where trash accumulates and responding to resident requests.



Economic Sustainability

Promote energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions

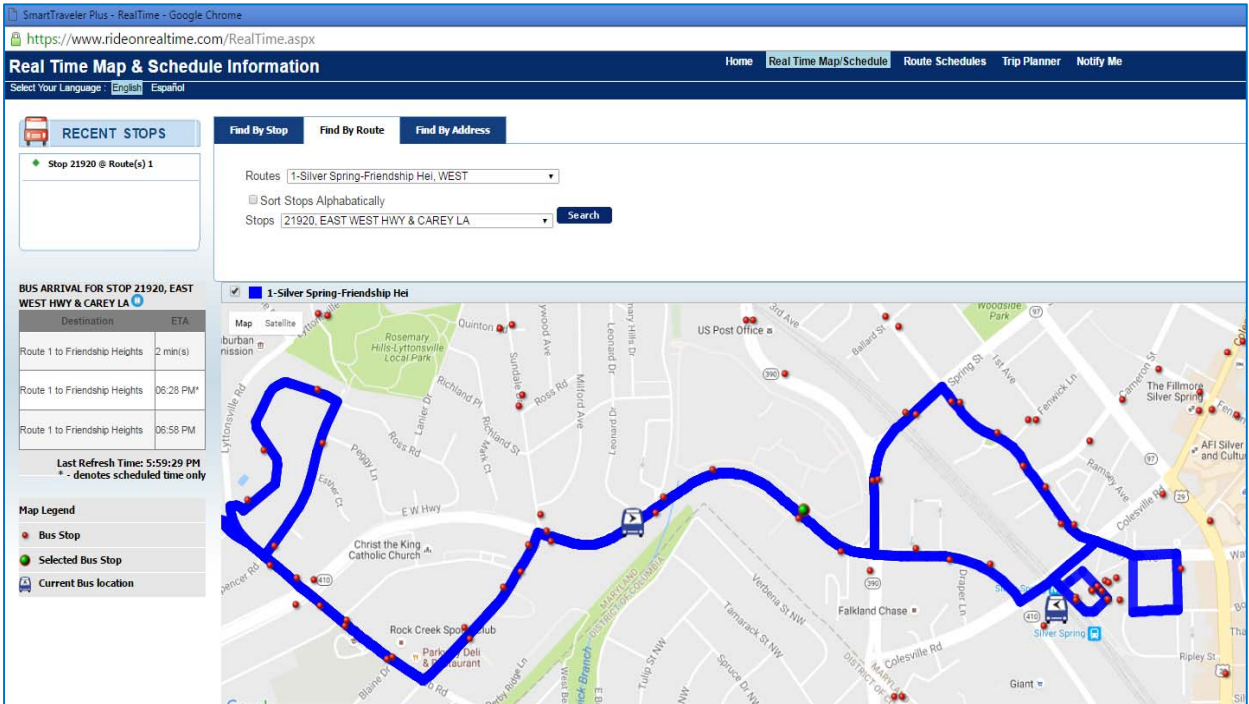
- **Use LED lighting** for all traffic signals and garages and plan to transition streetlights. LEDs (Light Emitting Diode) produce light very efficiently, are more durable, versatile and long-lasting than traditional compact fluorescent lamps, and reduce energy costs.
- **Reduce use of more polluting fuels for Ride On buses** by expanding the percentage of the fleet that is hybrid electric or powered by compressed natural gas or clean diesel.
- **Install solar powered** on-street parking meters.
- **Establish an idling policy for Ride On buses** that limits the amount of time buses can run while parked to reduce air pollution and conserve fuel.



Social Sustainability

Enhance access and mobility

- **Regulate the County’s taxi system to ensure cabs are a viable travel option.** Cabs and drivers must meet the highest standards for safety. All taxi drivers must be licensed, have good driving records and pass criminal background checks. Vehicles must carry adequate insurance, pass mechanical inspections twice a year and be clean and in good cosmetic condition.
- **Encourage car-free and car-lite lifestyles** by providing car sharing spaces in some County parking lots and garages.
- **Ensure access to residents remains open during major snowstorms.** Clear emergency routes first so that every County resident is within one-half mile of an accessible route should rescue crews or Police need to reach them.
- **Offer online public transportation planning and usage tools,** such as real time applications and online information, to help travelers plan trips and make taking transit more predictable.



Sustainability Education

Support programs that promote environmentally preferable choices

- Encourage environmentally sensitive community landscape projects by sponsoring an annual competition for residents, businesses, non-profits and others. Reward landscaping that incorporates rain gardens, encourages use of native species, and prohibits use of invasive species.
- Sponsor the **Adopt A Road** program that recruits volunteers to remove trash from adopted road segments. The program helps educate residents about the benefits to our County's waterways of reducing litter.
- Provide grants to community members to beautify common property through environmentally sensitive plantings and litter clean ups



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: 5



Be Innovative and Forward Thinking

As a forward-thinking transportation department, we are embracing technology and innovation. From public outreach to pavement management, almost every aspect of our transportation system and department can benefit from new and emerging technologies. We encourage our employees to be creative in their approach to addressing transportation challenges and to create a system that will continue to provide excellent choices and services to all users well into the 21st century.

Environmental Sustainability

▶ Adopt innovative technologies and best practices

- **Encourage more people to consider using bikes for some of their transportation needs** by providing greater protection for bicyclists. Add the first non-urban protected bike lane in the U.S. and continue planning for more.
- **Manage operations to minimize impacts to the environment.** For example, protect trees during sidewalk and curb rehabilitations and prevent erosion and run off during construction projects.
- **Operate in new facilities that are LEED rated** so MCDOT operations are kinder to the environment.
- **Remediate streams, wetlands and forests** affected by transportation projects by reducing the impacts on these resources and/or creating new wetlands and planting trees in alternative locations.



Equipment Maintenance and Transit Operations Center (EMTOC) Green Roof

Economic Sustainability

Support smart growth

- **Help transition designated areas identified in County master plans** into walkable and bikeable communities by supporting construction of street grids and incorporating options for transit, sidewalks and bike paths into right-of-ways.
- **Support regional transportation planning** to help implement projects such as the Purple Line and Metrobus and Metrorail improvements.
- **Provide transportation that supports growth and economic competitiveness.** Plan for a Bus Rapid Transit system in the County's most densely developed areas to increase high-quality transit service.
- **Increase frequency and reliability of transit** by adding priority Ride On bus service in high transit demand areas.
- **Look for opportunities to redevelop parking garages and lots to better meet land use goals and transform them into mixed use, transit-oriented developments,** such as the Woodmont Corner Garage in Bethesda and downtown Wheaton Market Place Redevelopment.
- **Promote retail activity,** particularly in the Central Business Districts, by improving streetscapes, supporting the urban districts that maintain and enhance downtowns, and targeting infrastructure improvements to strengthen employment districts.



Social Sustainability

Use innovation to make all transportation choices easier to use

- Use technology to provide better service to transit users and encourage more people to try transit. Install real time signs in bus stops that show when the next bus will arrive and install signs in County facilities that display all the transit options available from that location.
- Use innovations to better manage parking facilities and reduce environmental impacts. Provide online, real time parking availability data, dynamic signs at parking facilities, and variable pricing for different parking options to reduce time spent searching for a space.



Sustainability Education

▶ Foster dynamic partnerships with businesses and the community

- **Enter into traffic mitigation agreements** with developers of commercial and multifamily properties to encourage non-auto travel.
- **Partner with environmental organizations** to educate the community about Bus Rapid Transit.
- **Reduce free parking and the incentive to drive alone** by offering developers in parking lot districts the ability to pay a fee in lieu of providing onsite parking.
- **Promote social responsibility and community action.** Partner with the community to sponsor an annual Give and Ride program that provides free rides to Ride On passengers who donate food for needy families. Organize staff to participate in Community Service Day litter clean ups.
- **Sponsor a volunteer organization,** Keep Montgomery County Clean and Green, which promotes waste reduction, recycling and sustainable landscapes.
- **Reach out to employers and employees through Commuter Services** to help them consider alternatives to driving to work alone.



Moving Forward Together



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