

Ride On Newsletter

May 2024

Montgomery County Releases a Bus Transition Plan to Reach Goal of Zero Emissions by 2035



The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and the County Department of General Services (DGS) have released a Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) Transition Plan to convert the County’s transit fleet of nearly 400 Ride On buses to zero-emission vehicles by 2035. The Ride On bus system currently operates 14 electric vehicles.

"The Zero-Emissions Bus transition plan falls in line with our ambitious climate action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 100 percent by 2035," said County Executive Marc Elrich. "This plan will help guide us through our transit fleet transition and lays out the needed infrastructure to support it. This effort will make a substantial impact on our environment by reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions. We are proud to be at the forefront amongst local governments when it comes to sustainable transportation."

The ZEB plan is purposely flexible to accommodate for emerging technology and relies heavily on State and Federal grants that MCDOT has so far been successful in receiving. Recent grant awards have totaled more than \$30 million for environmentally friendly transportation solutions over the last two years.

“We’ve been aggressively pursuing funding opportunities made available to us on both the State and Federal level,” said MCDOT Director Chris Conklin. “Often the State funds we receive are used as a match for Federal grant applications. We’ve got a long road ahead, but following the plan we have in place I believe a zero-emissions fleet is fully attainable by or before 2035. The plan is comprehensive, innovative and flexible and it will be updated regularly to reflect new funding streams and advanced technology options.”

The County has secured a contract to purchase 100 additional battery electric buses over the next three years. However, the range limitations of current battery electric vehicles present a challenge for current longer-range bus routes. Alternative technology is being sought to compensate for these longer-range needs. MCDOT secured a Federal grant last year for its first 13 hydrogen buses and a clean hydrogen fueling station at the Gaithersburg bus depot. DGS is managing the project and will break ground on that project next year.

One of the greatest challenges among zero-emission transitions is building clean energy charging infrastructure to support them.

DGS leveraged a partnership with the privately owned AlphaStruxure, a leading developer of sustainable energy infrastructure projects through an Energy as a Service (EaaS) solution. It is a long-term agreement without upfront capital expenditures. In October 2022, the County unveiled what at the time was the nation’s largest solar-powered microgrid for charging of public buses at the Brookville bus depot in Silver Spring. The Brookville microgrid can charge up to 70 battery electric buses with solar power.

DGS is heading up the implementation of an even larger microgrid that will be breaking ground at the Gaithersburg bus depot late this spring to power the future hydrogen bus project and provide additional charging infrastructure for electric buses. This solar-powered microgrid will be the sixth microgrid for the County and will be in operation next year.

“We have some very exciting projects that are setting us apart as a zero emissions leader,” said DGS Director David Dise. “The ZEB Transition Plan is comprehensive and considers the charging and maintenance infrastructure we need to support a zero-emission bus fleet. We now have a solid long-range plan to work from, which is important for the County to be able to make timely decisions, visualize a path forward and offer transparency. This plan can be used as a model for other jurisdictions looking to follow in our footsteps.”

For more information and to view the Zero Emissions Bus Transition Plan, visit the [website](#).

Ride On Participates in County Events



Montgomery County is committed to providing safe and healthy transportation options for residents. Ride On is proud to participate in several county events to promote these initiatives.

May is National Bike Month, and Montgomery County Department of Transportation had eight pit stops throughout the county for Bike to Work Day on Friday, May 17. This was a free event which highlighted a fun and healthy way to start the day, both on Bike to Work Day and all the days after. Ride On's bike program makes it easy to integrate cycling into your daily commute. Bikes are allowed on Ride On buses, making it possible to extend your biking radius and explore the county by bike.

Ride On helps keep pedestrians safe by offering convenient bus routes throughout the county. To celebrate this, Ride On participated in Pedestrian Safety Day on May 11. This was a community event to emphasize the importance of pedestrian safety, while providing family friendly activities and games.

Montgomery County Public Safety Appreciation Day is Sunday, May 19 from 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds. This free event is rain or shine and brings together law enforcement agencies and Fire Rescue Services serving Montgomery County residents for a day of celebration with the community. Ride On will have a table at the event with free giveaways and information about our services.

Ride On will provide FREE shuttle service from Wheaton Mall and the Germantown Transit bus stops beginning at 10:30 a.m. and running every 30 minutes to the

Montgomery County Fairgrounds. The last shuttle will depart the fairgrounds at 6 p.m. FREE parking will also be available at the fairgrounds.

For more information, please visit mcpublicsafetyday.com.

Interview With Ride On Gaithersburg Depot Office Service Coordinator JuneAnn Nobrega



What is your name?

JuneAnn Nobrega

What is your role here with Ride On?

I am the Office Service Coordinator at the Gaithersburg Depot.

How long have you been working with Ride On?

I have been working with Ride On for four and a half years and with the county for twenty-one and a half years.

What inspired you to pursue a career in transit management/supervision?

Being able to serve my community is not just a job for me—it's a true calling. The satisfaction I derive from helping others navigate their daily lives, ensuring they can reach their destinations safely and efficiently, is immeasurable. Every day, I wake up knowing that I have the privilege of making a positive impact on the lives of those around me.

There's something profoundly fulfilling about being part of the intricate web that keeps a community connected. Whether it's a student commuting to school, a professional heading to work, or a senior citizen making a doctor's appointment, each journey facilitated by our service is a testament to the vital role we play in people's lives. Knowing that I contribute to the smooth functioning of society in this way fills me with a deep sense of purpose.

What do you enjoy most about working in transit? What keeps you motivated?

Working with my coworkers at Ride On is an absolute joy. Each day, we come together as a cohesive team, driven by a shared passion for providing excellent service to the riders who depend on us. I take great pride in ensuring that my colleagues are not just equipped, but empowered, to fulfill their roles effectively.

Part of my role involves making sure that everyone has the resources they need to serve our riders with excellence. This means keeping communication channels open, facilitating training sessions, and providing ongoing support. Whether it's updating

procedures, troubleshooting issues, or offering guidance, I strive to be a reliable resource for my staff.

Please share a memorable or rewarding experience you've had while working in transit.

A mother visited the bus depot upon seeing her son's picture on one of our bus graphics. She sought our assistance, and with the coordination of central communications, we tracked down the bus in question. Witnessing the joy on her face as she finally obtained the cherished picture with her son's image was a reminder of the power of small gestures in making a meaningful difference in people's lives.

What advice would you give to someone interested in pursuing a career in transit management?

Good customer service is the lifeblood of any successful business. It's not just a box to check off—it's the foundation upon which lasting relationships with customers are built. Think of it as the golden rule of business: treat your customers the way you would want to be treated. This means being attentive, empathetic, and responsive to their needs.

Annual Montgomery County 'Give and Ride Food Drive' to Run from May 26 – June 1

GIVE a non-perishable food item on any Ride On bus & RIDE FREE!

¡ENTREGUE un alimento no perecedero en cualquier autobús Ride On y VIAJE GRATIS!

May 26 - June 1, 2024 / Del 26 de Mayo al 1.º de Junio de 2024

Together we CAN make a difference! / ¡Juntos PODEMOS hacer la diferencia!

MCDOT Ride On MC Montgomery County PL PUBLIC LIBRARIES manna food center

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and Manna Food Center are hosting the 31st Annual Give and Ride Food Drive” from Sunday, May 26, to Saturday, June 1. MCDOT is asking for donations of non-perishable food items on any MCDOT Ride On bus or at designated drop off sites. County bus riders who make a donation will have their bus fare waived.

“Montgomery County is fortunate to have a robust food assistance network, a strong nonprofit sector, government leaders and agencies that are dedicated to ending childhood hunger and efforts like the Give and Ride Food Drive are a part of helping families in need,” said County Executive Marc Elrich. “We still have a lot of work to do, and residents can help by making non-perishable donations. This annual food drive has an enormous impact on our residents.”

A 2023 [Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger](#) states that at least 14 percent of children in Montgomery County (approximately 34,000) are food insecure. Nearly 20 percent of seniors in the County live below the self-sufficiency standard, according to the [2023 Self-Sufficiency Standard](#).

“This is our 31st year running this important program,” said MCDOT Director Chris Conklin. “We want to encourage everyone to donate. We are asking residents to consider making donations even if they don’t ride the bus. Non-perishable food items can be dropped off on all Ride On, extRa, Flex and Flash buses or at the five participating Montgomery County Public Libraries, the Executive Office Building and the Council Office Building.”

Participating drop off locations, aside from all County buses, include:

- Davis Library, 6400 Democracy Boulevard, Bethesda.
- Gaithersburg Library, 18330 Montgomery Village Avenue, Gaithersburg.
- Long Branch Library, 8800 Garland Avenue, Silver Spring.
- Montgomery County Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville.
- Olney Library, 3500 Olney-Laytonsville Road, Olney.
- Stella Werner Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville.
- White Oak Library, 11701 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring.

[Manna Food Center](#) is a leader in the fight against hunger and food waste in Montgomery County. Through innovative partnerships and solutions, Manna collects food and delivers it to families in need through pop-up pantries, school-based programs, education and community food rescue and a Farm to food bank program.

“This past year we have shared food resources with 50,499 neighbors experiencing hunger, but there is still a great need, especially with inflation and grocery prices soaring,” said Mardia Dennis, the director of development and communications for Manna Food.

Manna Food’s website lists the following items as high need: instant oatmeal, brown rice, whole grain pasta, canned tuna, beans, shelf-stable milk boxes, cooking oils and spices.

Learn more and view a list of much needed items as well as all drop-off locations [here](#). Watch a [video](#) on what to donate.

Ride On Celebrates Older Americans Month with Transportation Resources



In recognition of Older Americans Month, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is highlighting Ride On bus services and resources that are available to older in the county. Older adults can explore the following options for their transportation needs:

Ride Metrobus and Ride On FREE in Montgomery County With a Senior SmarTrip® Card

- Riders 65 and older can use a Senior SmarTrip card to travel free or at a discount on Metrorail.
- To get your Senior SmarTrip card, visit a Montgomery County Public Library or Commuter Store. Bring proof of age (State ID, birth certificate or passport). The Senior SmarTrip card is **free**. There is no value on the card at time of receipt. Fare value may be added at Metro stations or Commuter stores.

Call Connect-A-Ride (CAR) for Information, Referral and More

- CAR is a free referral service that provides adults over 50 and adults with disabilities information about their transportation options for medical services, errands, social activities and more.
- CAR links callers with public, private, and volunteer transportation services, including escorted transportation.
- In addition, the program assists callers with their applications for transportation programs like Call-n-Ride and Metro Access (see below). They also offer free workshops on how to use public transportation.

- Call 301-738-3252 Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. CAR is funded by Montgomery County Government and operated by Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA).

Call-n-Ride Discounted Taxis

- Call-n-Ride (CNR) provides discounted taxi-cab service to eligible low-income older adults (63 years and older), and adults with disabilities.
- Travel can be for any purpose within Montgomery County, and certain other areas for medical reasons.
- Call Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. for information or to apply at 301-948-5409 or email mcdot.cnrorder@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Senior Connection Volunteer Transportation

- Senior Connection provides free escorted transportation services to older adults over 60 through a growing network of volunteers. Rides subject to availability of driver.
- Call 301-962-0820 or email info@seniorconnectionmc.org for more information.

Escorted Transportation from Montgomery County/Jewish Council for the Aging

- Escorted transportation is available for adults who qualify based on income and disability. Customers contribute to the cost of the service based on income. Montgomery County funds this program through Jewish Council for the Aging's Connect-a-Ride program.
- Call 301-738-3252 or email connectaride@AccessJCA.org for more information.

VillageRides Helps Local "Villages" Coordinate Volunteer Transportation

- Some communities work together to help their neighbors age in place.
- To find out if you live in an area served by VillageRides, call 301-255-4212 or email VillageRides@AccessJCA.org.

Transportation to Medical Appointments for Medicaid Recipients

- Free transportation for Medicaid-covered, medically necessary appointments may be available in some cases. There can be no other means of transportation available that the recipient can readily use.
- Call 240-777-5890 for more information.

Free Transportation to Montgomery County Recreation

- Curb-to-curb transportation is available for County residents 55 and over to senior centers and some community centers.
- This free service is for those living within the service areas of one of the centers.
- Call 240-777-4925 for more information.
- Rockville and Gaithersburg also provide limited transportation to their senior centers. In Rockville, call 240-314-8810. In Gaithersburg, call 301-258-6380 and press 5.

Ride On Launches Safety Campaign to Share Rider Safety Tips



At Ride On, rider safety is our highest priority. We want to ensure that each rider leaves safe, rides safe, and arrives safe. In pursuit of this goal, we have launched a Safety Campaign to share basic bus safety tips with our riders. It is our hope that these tips will help each and every rider to stay safe as they travel with us. Read below for the list of tips that are being featured in this campaign.

- **Wait safely.** Stand back 4 feet from the curb while waiting for the bus to arrive. This distance ensures that you are safely away from the moving vehicle as it approaches and leaves a bus stop.
- **Stay visible.** Avoid dark colored clothing and stand in a well lit area when riding at night. Ask your operator for an alternate courtesy stop if your stop is not well lit.
- **Be aware of emergency exits.** Familiarize yourself with the location of the nearest exit in case of an emergency to ensure you're prepared for unexpected scenarios.
- **Bike safely.** If you bike and ride, always approach the bike rack from the curb.
- **Protect young riders.** Do not let children play near buses; pushing and shoving can cause accidents. Hold small children's hands when a bus approaches.
- **If you see something, say something.** Report any suspicious items or dangerous behavior to your bus operator. They will involve the proper authorities when necessary.

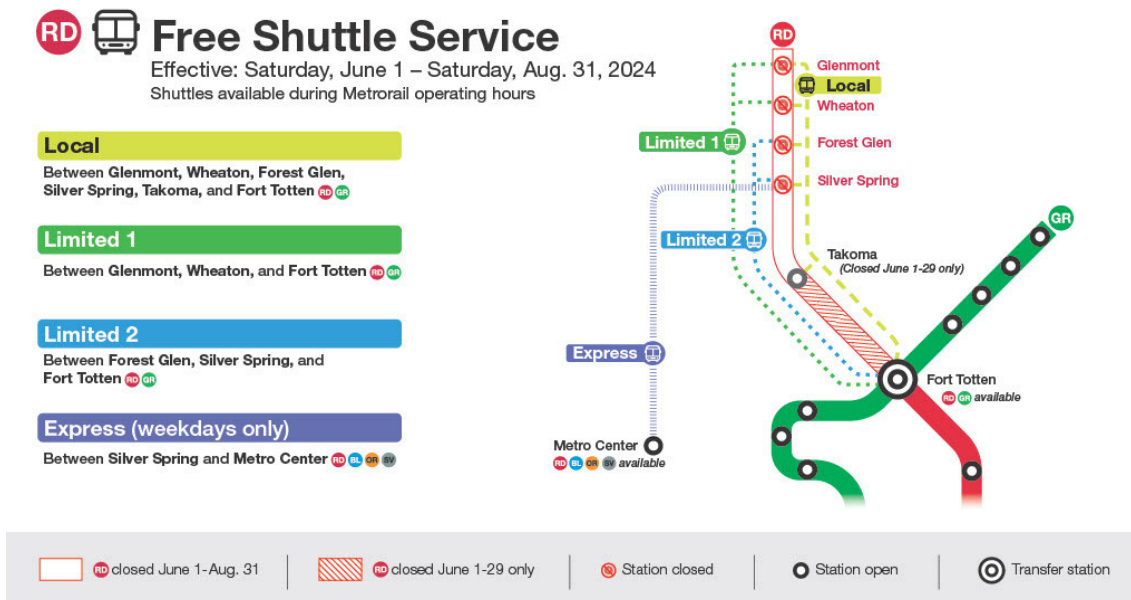
A Ride On Guide to Montgomery County Events



Warmer weather means Montgomery County sponsored events are in full swing! Spend time with the family at one of the many upcoming free events in the county. The best part? Ride On can get you there quickly and easily. And for those under 19, 65+, or with disabilities the ride is free!

- **Public Safety Day**: Public Safety Appreciation Day brings together law enforcement agencies and Fire Rescue Services serving the residents of Montgomery County for a day of celebration with the community. Join us for a day of FREE fun to meet and interact with local law enforcement and fire rescue personnel through interactive displays, education, and FREE giveaways. Ride On Routes 54, 55, or 59 can take you to this day of fun!
- **Truck Day**: Celebrate Public Works Week by attending MCDOT's annual Truck Day Celebration on June 1, featuring truck demonstrations and the much anticipated Paint the Plow contest! To get to Truck Day at the Gaithersburg Ride On bus depot, take Ride On Route [43](#) or [61](#).
- **White Oak Day**: Join the Montgomery County Department of Recreation on Saturday, June 1, for the 12th annual White Oak Day at White Oak Community Recreation Center! Bring yourself and your friends and family to enjoy great food, live music, inflatables, vendors and more. To visit this family friendly event, take Ride On routes [10](#) or the [Flash orange route](#) to get near White Oak Day.

Travel Alternatives for Metro Summer Red Line Closure



Metro, along with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), Montgomery County, and the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) will offer a range of travel options for customers affected by this summer's Red Line closures starting Saturday, June 1 through Saturday, August 31.

There will be Free Limited-stop and Local shuttle buses, with Express service between Silver Spring and downtown DC in addition to more than seven miles of bus only lanes along sections of Georgia Avenue between Glenmont and Silver Spring with adjustments to signal timing to prioritize buses to reduce shuttle travel times.

Four stations will be closed for the duration of construction – Glenmont, Wheaton, Forest Glen, and Silver Spring – with the Takoma Station closed June 1 – June 29 only. Due to capacity limitations at Fort Totten and Takoma, Red Line trains will run every 6 minutes all day, including rush hours when trains normally run every 5 minutes. Red Line customers may notice more crowded trains at peak times. After 9:30 p.m., trains will run every 10 minutes as normally scheduled. Free shuttle buses will run every 4-8 minutes, providing frequent connections to the closed stations.

SERVICE INFORMATION

June 1 – June 29, 2024

- Free shuttle buses replace trains between Glenmont and Fort Totten
- Stations closed: Glenmont, Wheaton, Forest Glen, Silver Spring, and Takoma
- Green Line service available at Fort Totten

June 30 – Aug. 31, 2024

- Free shuttle buses replace trains between Glenmont and Takoma
- Stations closed: Glenmont, Wheaton, Forest Glen, and Silver Spring
- Green and Red Line service available at Fort Totten
- Takoma Station reopened. Customers traveling between the closed stations and Takoma should use the local shuttle bus, or limited stop shuttle bus to the Red Line via Fort Totten

TRAVEL ALTERNATIVES

Free Shuttle Service Free local, limited-stop, and express shuttles available during Metrorail operating hours. Shuttles will be available at all closed stations for customers with accessibility needs. To request an accessible shuttle, please ask a Metro team member onsite.

Saturday, June 1 to Saturday, Aug. 31, 2024

- **Local:** Local service stopping at all stations between Glenmont, Wheaton, Forest Glen, Takoma, and Fort Totten
 - AM/PM Peak - approximately every 4 minutes
 - All other times, weekends, and holidays - approximately every 8 minutes
 - Estimated travel time: 61 minutes
- **Limited 1:** Limited-stop service between Glenmont, Wheaton, and Fort Totten
 - AM/PM Peak - approximately every 4 minutes
 - All other times, weekends, and holidays - approximately every 8 minutes
 - Estimated travel time: 37 minutes
- **Limited 2:** Limited-stop service between Forest Glen, Silver Spring, and Fort Totten
 - AM/PM Peak - approximately every 4 minutes
 - All other times, weekends, and holidays - approximately every 8 minutes
 - Estimated travel time: 25 minutes.
- **Express:** Express service between Silver Spring and Metro Center
 - Weekday only – approximately 8 minutes all day
 - Estimated travel time: 39 minutes

Rail Alternatives

Metrorail

Customers at the closed stations who use Metro's Park & Ride facilities may wish to Park & Ride from other Red Line or Green Line stations including.

Red Line

- Shady Grove, Rockville, Twinbrook, North Bethesda, and Grosvenor-Strathmore

Green Line

- Greenbelt, College Park – U of Md, Hyattsville Crossing

MARC Train

MARC train [Brunswick Line](#) – Service to/from Rockville, Garret Park, Kensington, Silver Spring and Union Station. [More information is available on the MARC website.](#)

MARC train is offering promotional \$3.00 one-way fare from Kensington and Silver Spring to Union Station on the Brunswick Line. Weekly and monthly tickets will also be discounted to \$22.50 and \$81.00, respectively.

Please note, the project does not impact the MARC Brunswick Line at Silver Spring and regular service will continue. [Visit the Brunswick Line website for schedule information.](#)

Bus Alternatives

Glenmont

- Ride On [31](#), [41](#), [51](#), and [53](#)
- Metrobus [Y2](#), [Y7](#), [Y8](#) between Medstar Montgomery Medical Center and Silver Spring Station
 - Weekday service from 4:30 a.m. to 1:40 a.m.

Wheaton

- Ride On [4](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [31](#), and [34](#)
- Metrobus [Q2](#), [Q4](#) between Rockville/Shady Grove and Silver Spring stations
 - Weekday service from 4:30 a.m. to 1:40 a.m.
- Metrobus [Y2](#), [Y7](#), [Y8](#) between Medstar Montgomery Medical Center and Silver Spring Station
 - Weekday service from 4:30 a.m. to 1:40 a.m.

Forest Glen

- Ride On [7](#), and [8](#)
- Metrobus [Q2](#), [Q4](#) between Shady Grove and Silver Spring stations
 - Weekday service from 4:30 a.m. to 1:40 a.m.
 - Stops on Georgia Ave at Forest Glen Rd
- Metrobus [Y2](#), [Y7](#), [Y8](#) between Medstar Montgomery Medical Center and Silver Spring Station
 - Weekday service from 4:30 a.m. to 1:40 a.m.
 - Stops on Georgia Ave at Forest Glen Rd

Silver Spring

- Ride On [4](#), [8](#), [9](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [16](#), and [18](#) between Silver Spring Station and Takoma Langley Crossroads Transit Center
 - Saturday service between Silver Spring Station and Takoma Langley Crossroads Transit Center. Refer to timetable for trip details.
 - Sunday service between Takoma Station and Takoma Langley Crossroads Transit Center. Refer to timetable for trip details.
- Metrobus [S2](#) between Silver Spring Station and Federal Triangle (10th and Constitution)
 - Weekday service every 15 minutes, 24/7
- Metrobus [S9](#) between Silver Spring Station and Franklin Square
 - Weekday service 5 a.m. – 11 p.m.
- Metrobus [70](#), [79](#) between Silver Spring, Georgia Ave-Petworth, Shaw-Howard U, Mt Vernon Sq, Gallery Place, and Archives stations, extended to L'Enfant Plaza early morning and late night only
 - Weekday service available 24/

Takoma

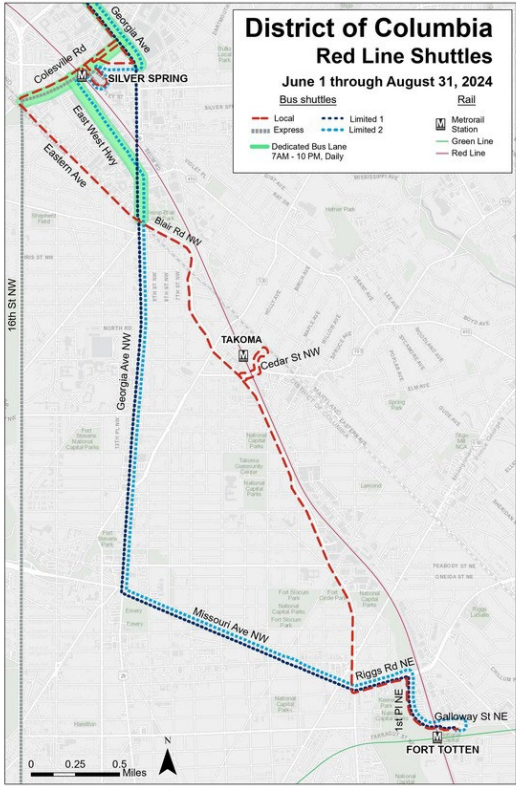
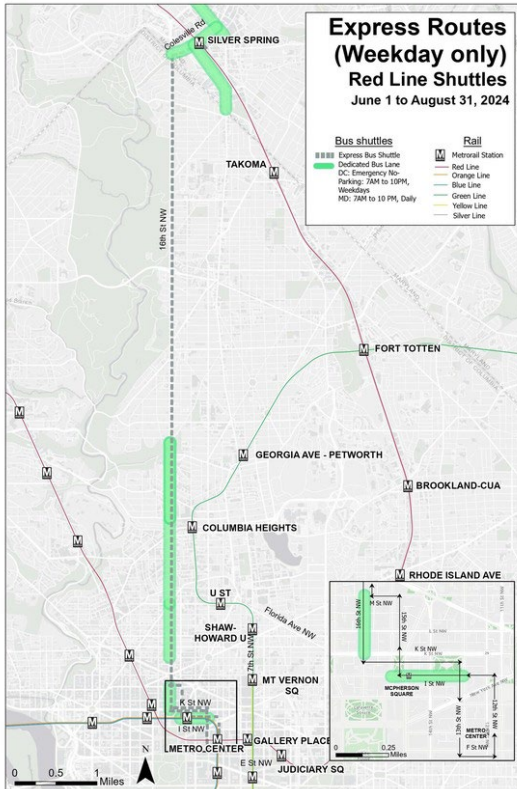
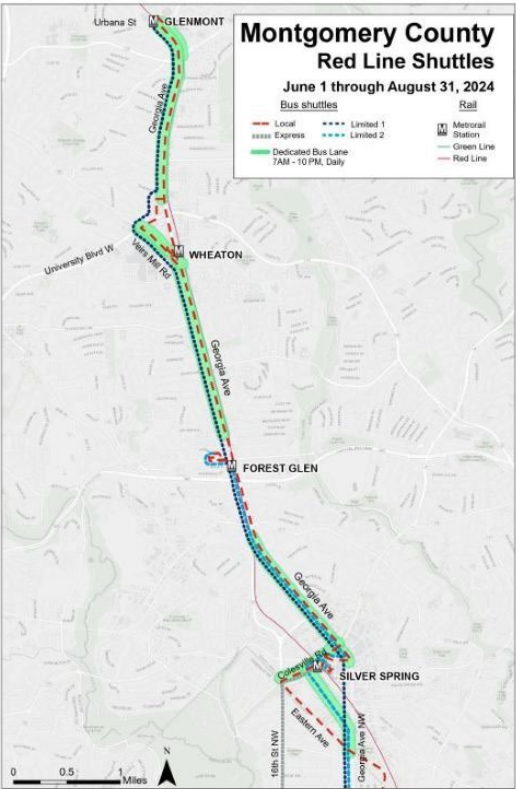
- Ride On [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [16](#), [17](#), and [18](#) between Silver Spring Station and Takoma Langley Crossroads Transit Center
 - Saturday service between Silver Spring Station and Takoma Langley Crossroads Transit Center. Refer to timetable for trip details.
 - Sunday service between Takoma Station and Takoma Langley Crossroads Transit Center. Refer to timetable for trip details.
- Metrobus [52](#), [54](#) Takoma, Columbia Heights, U Street, Metro Center, Smithsonian, McPherson Sq, L'Enfant Plaza stations
 - Weekday service available 24/7
- Metrobus [59](#) between Takoma, Columbia Heights, McPherson Sq and Federal Triangle stations
 - Weekday service during AM/PM peak periods
- Metrobus [62](#), [63](#) between Takoma, Georgia Ave – Petworth, U Street, Metro Center, and Federal Triangle
 - Weekday service from 5 a.m. - midnight

MTA Commuter Bus

MTA Commuter Bus routes may also be an option for some customers. Check for route and schedule information by visiting the [MTA Commuter Bus website](#).

Prior to the closure Metro will have in-person teams at the affected stations to provide information to and assist customers. For detailed information about the summer construction go to wmata.com/majorconstruction.

The following maps illustrate the dedicated bus lanes along the corridor that will speed bus travel.



Ride On's Approach to Mental Health Awareness and Support

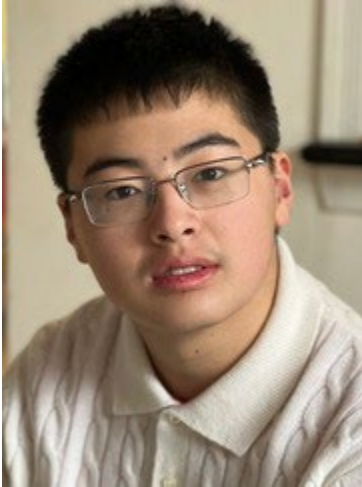


May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and Ride On recognizes the importance of providing resources and support to ensure the mental health and resilience of our team. Mental health deserves a seat at the front of the bus.

There are various resources available to support the mental health of our bus operators. One of the key resources available to our bus operators is the self-care training video, designed to equip them with tools and strategies for managing stress and maintaining emotional well-being that can help alleviate the challenges inherent in their demanding roles. In addition to educational resources, Ride On also offers the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a confidential counseling service with access to licensed mental health professionals who can provide support and guidance on a wide range of issues, including major life changes, stress, anxiety, and other concerns.

Mental health is an essential component of overall wellbeing and is just as important as physical health. By providing access to training, resources, and support services, we aim to create a work environment where operators feel valued and empowered. Ride On is more than just a transit system – we're a community that supports one another. Together, we're riding towards a brighter, more compassionate future.

Interview with Transit Advisory Group Member Kaiyu Wen



How long have you been riding with Ride On and what year did you begin?

I have been riding Ride On since I was young. My first time riding was probably around 2013 or 2014 while I was still in elementary school.

Why did you start riding Ride On?

First time riding with my bus was with my grandparents to and from the Asian supermarket. Later, I started riding the bus to the Metro station to go downtown.

What routes do you ride the most and for what reasons?

My local route is the 54 which I use to get to and from Rockville and Gaithersburg. Lately though, I have used the 76 a lot more frequently to get to and from school. I also use the 74 to get to and from metro around one or twice a month for when I need to go downtown.

What do you like the most about riding with Ride On?

A lot of people do not realize how freeing riding the bus is, even if you have an automobile at your disposal. Although it is comfortable and fast, the fact that I have the freedom to wake up 20 minutes later each day and catch the 76 and read a book instead of taking my 6:30 school bus or drive is what makes this service so great.

How do you view your role as a Ride On Transit Advisory Group (TAG) member?

I see myself as representing the county's youth at the decision table. As a student myself, I understand how important access to education is and I think an improved Ride On is a key component to that. I also think of it as a way of giving back to the transit agency that has given me so much.

How likely are you to recommend Ride On to someone else?

I think Ride On is an invaluable community asset that everyone in the county should try out, even if it for just one trip out of many in your day (I myself still drive for many of my trips). It's safe, quick and reliable with an amazing team of people behind it. I have recommended the 76 to many people at my school and they all agree that it has been amazing to have another option besides driving or the school bus.

Be a Better Bus Hero, engage with Metro on proposed Better Bus Network



The 2025 network redesign seeks to connect people to places they want to go when they want to go with frequent, reliable service.

Metro today announced the launch of our next phase of the Better Bus Network Redesign project to create a bus network to meet the transit needs of our rapidly changing region. Starting May 13 through July 15, we invite you to be a Better Bus Hero by sharing your opinions on the proposed new bus routes.

Metro's Better Bus Network Redesign effort builds on improved service and recent high ridership to deliver a new network that better meets the needs of our communities, including where, when, and how people travel in the region. The proposed redesign seeks to coordinate service with more transportation options to advance equity, sustainability, and increase access to jobs across DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

"Better Bus is an opportunity to rethink, redesign, and revitalize bus service to better serve the needs of our customers," said Metro General Manager and Chief Executive Officer Randy Clarke. "Everyone has a chance to be a Better Bus Hero by engaging with us in a variety of ways including surveys conducted on buses, Public Hearings, and pop-up events during the public comment period."

Over the next two months, we'll be listening to those across the region who want to make bus service better and provide an opportunity to discover the benefits of Metro's proposed Bus Network Redesign. Through our "Discovery Days" events you'll be able to explore an interactive expo to learn about the proposed redesign, talk with project staff, and share your feedback. We're also working with our local government partners and organizations to host community and pop-up events, as well as ride-alongs in areas most impacted by the changes.

The Proposed 2025 Better Bus Network uses current resources to reconfigure bus service, especially on nights and weekends, to make buses more convenient to use. With the proposed service changes there will be some trade-offs, but the result will be routes that are more direct and save existing customers a combined 10,000 hours every weekday. The proposed network also standardizes route names across the system to make bus routes easier to understand.

This proposed 2025 Better Bus Network prepares Metro for the future by creating the building blocks of the expanded bus network the region deserves, serving recent and planned growth areas, and providing more frequent all-day, all-week service. The year-

one plan also ensures service is scalable to a Visionary Network that can be achieved as sustainable, predictable funding is made available.

Visit the [Better Bus website](#) to explore the proposed network. More interactive tools will be available starting May 13.

Ride On Announces "What Drives You" Contest Winners



On Wednesday, March 13, Ride On launched the new "What Drives You" campaign aimed at amplifying voices and stories of riders. The year-long campaign will collect rider experiences powered by a series of social media-based contests.

The first of these contests, which also began March 13, asked riders to share memories of Ride On and detail how Ride On shaped their lives up to today. Ride On is proud to announce the three winners of this contest are Malaka Khlok, Juan Orellana, and Lynn Barclay.

The first-place prize went to Malaka, who shared the story of his mother's journey to United States citizenship. "My mom always dreamed of becoming a U.S. citizen. But after we moved to Montgomery County, she worried transportation would hold her back. Then we discovered Ride On! Thanks to their reliable buses, Mom could attend English classes and citizenship prep courses at the senior center. Ride On wasn't just transportation, it was her bridge to a brighter future. Every ride was a step closer to her dream. And recently, that dream came true – Mom passed her citizenship exam! We're so incredibly proud of you, Mom!"

Our second-place winner was Juan, who told us about his experience navigating the County as a new resident. "I came to the U.S. in 2007. In those days it was very hard for me to find a job due to my lack of English, so someone told me about the ESOL program in Wheaton Mall. I figured out how to attend this program, but since I lived in

Rockville, I needed to commute to get there on time. I was worried about the daily bus fare, because I could barely pay bills with my part-time job, until the teacher told us that we could get a student bus card for free. That helped me to attend the school for four years. I strongly believe that without that support it would have been harder to achieve my dream of learning a second language and subsequently getting a better job or the job I wanted."

The third-place entry came from Lynn, whose experience with a stranger at a bus stop in Bethesda blossomed into a decades-long love story. "As a regular Ride On customer, I was at the Bradley Boulevard-Aberdeen Road bus stop in Bethesda some 16 years ago. Normally, I was the only person there at that time, but one day a stranger showed up, a man around my age who lived not far away. We had a brief conversation. After that, we saw each other occasionally at the stop or the Bethesda Metro station. Over time, we got more friendly. Eventually, he invited me out on a date in a handwritten note that said, "I'd like to take you out for a drink, dinner, a movie and/or ride around on a bus in Bethesda." Fifteen years later, we're still a couple. For Valentine's Day last year, he gave me a toy bus that looks just like the old blue Ride On buses. He'd added the route number -- 36 -- of the bus we took that brought us together. Who needs dating sites when there's Ride On?"

We're looking forward to hearing more of your stories! Stay tuned in the coming months for more opportunities to enter to win.

Celebrating National Transportation Week

The graphic features a stylized logo on the left consisting of three overlapping curved lines in green and blue. To the right of the logo, the text "NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION WEEK" is written in large, bold, blue capital letters, with "MAY 12-18" in green below it. Further right is a circular inset image of a blue bus with "38 WHEATON" on its destination sign and "5076" on its front. At the bottom center is the "Ride On MCDOT" logo, with "Ride On" in green and "MCDOT" in blue, and "Montgomery County Transit" in smaller text below "Ride On".

**NATIONAL
TRANSPORTATION
WEEK MAY 12-18**

Ride On MCDOT
Montgomery County Transit

National Transportation Week is a time to recognize the crucial role that transportation plays in the lives of our community members. From May 12-18, we celebrate the diverse modes of transportation that enable us to reach our destinations efficiently and safely. Ride On understands the significance of transportation and its impact on people's lives. We are proud to be a vital part of Montgomery County's transportation network, providing essential bus services that connects residents to work, school,

healthcare, and recreational activities. As we commemorate this week, we extend our gratitude to our dedicated team of bus operators, maintenance staff, and all transportation personnel who work to ensure the safety, reliability, and efficiency of our transit system.

National Transportation Week also serves as a time to reflect on the importance of sustainable transportation solutions. As we face environmental challenges, it becomes crucial to prioritize eco-friendly options that reduce emissions and promote cleaner air. Ride On is actively working towards a greener future by investing in zero emission buses, with a goal of an all-electric fleet by 2035, implementing eco-friendly practices, and continuing to explore innovative ways to make our operations more sustainable.

This week is an opportunity to engage with our community and raise awareness about the benefits of efficient transportation. We encourage you to explore the various modes of alternative transportation available and consider the positive impact they have on our daily lives. From reducing congestion on roads to enabling us to explore new destinations, transportation plays a pivotal role in shaping our experiences.

At Ride On, we are proud to be at the forefront of the transportation network that keeps our County moving. Together, let's embrace the power of transportation and acknowledge the invaluable contributions it makes in our lives.

Ride On to Launch "Day in the Life of a Ride On Bus Operator" Video Series



We are thrilled to launch our new video series titled "A Day in the Life of a Ride On Transit Operator," where we provide an inside look into the daily experiences and challenges faced by our dedicated transit operators. Through this series, we aim to highlight the vital role these operators play in keeping our community moving smoothly. Each episode will offer a glimpse into the diverse responsibilities and experiences encountered during a typical workday, showcasing the dedication and professionalism of our transit team.

The primary goal of this video series is to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation for the hard work and commitment of our transit operators. By sharing their stories and showcasing the diverse aspects of their job, we hope to humanize their role and create a stronger connection between our riders and the operators who serve them. This series also serves as a platform to raise awareness about the challenges and rewards of a career in transit operations, encouraging interest and respect for this essential profession.

Through "A Day in the Life of a Ride On Transit Operator," we aim to engage and educate our community about the intricacies of public transportation and the individuals who make it possible. By shedding light on the experiences and perspectives of our operators, we hope to inspire dialogue, empathy, and support for public transit services. Ultimately, this series reflects our commitment to transparency, community outreach, and celebrating the unsung heroes who play a vital role in our daily lives. We invite you to join us on this journey of discovery and appreciation for the dedicated professionals behind the wheel of Ride On buses.

Of Note

May Service Change Now in Effect

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) adjusted seven Ride On bus route schedules on Sunday, May 5, to improve efficiency and on-time performance. Although service levels are staying relatively the same, the changes reflect a shift of resources to allow for more reliable service where there is higher demand. The new schedules will be available at rideonbus.com and in print. The routes impacted are listed below.

- Seven routes have timetable changes: [5](#), [34](#), [39](#), [76](#), [83](#), [97](#), [98](#).
- One route has a slight map change: [76](#).

Ride On Memorial Day Weekend Schedule

Ride On will run on an alternate schedule for the Memorial Day Holiday. Details of the schedule change can be found below.

- [Ride On](#)—Will operate on Sunday schedule.
- [Ride On Flex](#) and [Ride On extRa](#) – Not in Service
- Flash—will operate on the [Weekends and Holidays schedule](#) for the Orange Route. The Blue Route (normally weekday only) will not be in service.

Transit Advisory Group is Recruiting!

The Transit Advisory Group is actively recruiting new members! If you or someone you know is interested, especially those who are disabled, high school students or bilingual, please visit our TAG webpage [here](#) to apply to be a member. Your membership is free, and you will have a chance to make a difference within Montgomery County. Let your voice be heard!!

Youth Cruiser Card Events

The Youth Cruiser card is a SmarTrip card for Montgomery County residents under 19 years old that provides free rides on all MCDOT buses and most Metrobuses within the County. The Ride On marketing team is promoting our cards by going to high schools in the county to inform students about the benefits and register them to receive the cards. We have been to three schools so far and registered over 100 students. Five schools are on the calendar in the coming months, and we are continuously adding more schools. Middle schools will be our next focus. Students can also get the cards at their school or county libraries. More information can be found [here](#).

Transit Trivia!

Test your familiarity with Ride On's routes, services, and more with our transit trivia! The answer will be in next month's edition of our newsletter so make sure you tune in next month to see if you answered correctly!

Question: What is the name of Maryland's first Bus Rapid Transit Line (BRT)?

1. Flex
2. extRa
3. Flash
4. Zip

Last month's trivia Q&A Question: How many routes does Ride On currently operate?

1. 79
2. 82
3. 80
4. 83

Answer: 83

For the most up-to-date service information, riders should follow @RideOnMCT on [X](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and [Instagram](#). In addition, information is available at RideOnBus.com, by subscribing to receive email alerts at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govdelivery, or texting MONTGOMERY RIDEON to 468311 to receive text alerts.

For information on MCDOT programs and services visit montgomerycountymd.gov/mcdot, follow @MCDOTNow on [X](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and [subscribe](#) to MCDOT's "Go Montgomery!" newsletter.

Title VI: Montgomery County assures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Act of 1987, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity.