



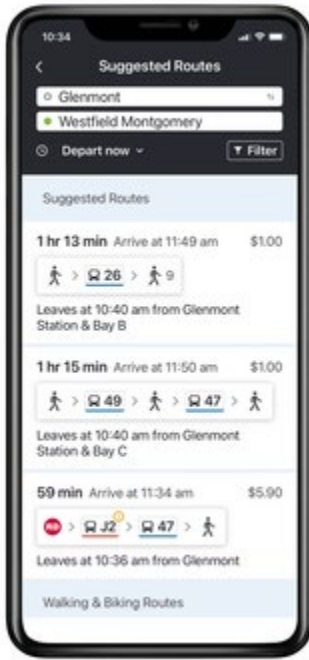
## Ride On Newsletter

July 2023

### New Ride On Trip Planner App Available for Download



Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) partnered with Moovit, a global mobility trip planning mobile app software company, to launch a new Ride On Trip Planner – a Ride On bus passenger load and local trip planning app. This new, innovative app will allow riders to plan their next trip and to tell how crowded a Ride On bus is – before it arrives – with the crowdedness indicator on the app. Riders can choose if they want to get on the arriving bus, wait for the next bus depending on how many people are on the bus, or choose another travel option, such as other local transit services, bikeshare, and scooter. It gives riders more control over their transportation experience. The app also includes dashboards for the Ride On Central Communications team to monitor bus loads and more quickly dispatch additional buses when buses are full.



The Ride On Trip Planner app is easy to use and can be downloaded from the [Google Play](#) or [Apple](#) app store, or accessed with our [desktop version](#). Riders can select their trip origin and destination and then pick the most desirable route that fits their travel plans. Once the route is chosen, the app will give the exact time the next bus will arrive, while providing step-by-step directions on how to get to the bus stop and how to get to the rider's destination after getting off the bus. The app will also notify riders when it's time to get off the bus, without having to worry about missing their stop. The app was created to alleviate stress and worry about bus times and continue to reduce the spread of infectious diseases with the crowdedness indicator.

During the first 30 days of the app's release, Ride On looked for user feedback. Riders were encouraged to download the app, use all its features, and share their experience with Ride On by emailing comments to [RideOn.TripPlanner@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:RideOn.TripPlanner@montgomerycountymd.gov), through MC311 or via social media. This feedback was used to optimize the application for its official release on July 5. Additional comments are welcome.

Riders can continue to plan trips online with Ride On Real Time ([www.rideon.app](http://www.rideon.app)). For more information, visit [www.RideOnBus.com/TripPlanner](http://www.RideOnBus.com/TripPlanner).

## Ride On Re-Introduced the After 9 p.m. Courtesy Stop Program on July 2

An advertisement for Ride On's Courtesy Stop Program. The top part features a green banner with a large blue 'R' and the text 'LATE NIGHT RIDERS'. Below this, on a blue background, is the text 'Ride On's COURTESY STOP Program allows passengers to request a drop off along the route when &amp; where it is safe to do so after 9 p.m.' To the right of this text is a small photo of a person's hand holding a red vertical pole on a bus. At the bottom of the advertisement are three logos: MCDOT, RideOnBus.com, and Ride On.

Ride On is excited to re-introduce our Courtesy Stop Program, which is designed to enhance the customers' experience and provide greater convenience during late-night travels. Passengers can request a drop-off at any location along our regular routes after 9 p.m., subject to a few limitations.

- Starts after 9 p.m. until end of service
- exclusively for drop-offs (boardings will not be permitted)
- the exact location of the stop will be at the operator's discretion, ensuring that it is safe for both passengers and the operator.
- front door only when exiting at requested stops
- must be on the regular route (bus will not divert)
- there will be no intersection, highway or freeway drop offs
- express buses are exempt from this initiative.

Passengers should inform the operator when boarding if they know they will request a courtesy stop; when nearing the drop off location, pull the bell cord, proceed to the front door, and ask the operator to stop at a safe location.

More details about the Courtesy Stop Program can be found online [here](#).

## **Metro Lift Creates More Equitable, Affordable Access to Transit Across the Region**



Metro's new reduced fare program, Metro Lift, started June 20. This new program offers 50% off Metrobus and Metrorail trips for local customers living in DC, Maryland, and Virginia and enrolled in SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). The program is designed to expand access, increase affordability, and advance equity for people across the region.

It is free to enroll in Metro Lift. Customers who qualify for Metro Lift must show that they are current recipients of SNAP benefits. The fare discount will be valid for one year after enrollment and will be available up to 48 hours after online enrollment, and immediately for those that enroll in person.

## Enrollment Information

### What you need

- SmarTrip® card for you and each member of your household being enrolled
- Active SNAP EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) card
- Copy of your SNAP proof of benefits (if you are applying for your household)
- Current photo identification (ID) card issued by the U.S., DC, Maryland, or Virginia
- Phone number

### How to Enroll

#### Online

- Go to [wmata.com/MetroLift](http://wmata.com/MetroLift).
- Complete the enrollment form for you and/or members of your SNAP household.
- Discount will be loaded to SmarTrip card up to 48 hours after enrollment.
- Use your SmarTrip card and go.

#### In-person

- Schedule an appointment to visit in-person enrollment centers:
  - Online at [wmata.com/MetroLift](http://wmata.com/MetroLift); or
  - By Phone at 1-888-SmarTrip (888-762-7874).
- In-person enrollment will be available at the following locations:
  - **Metro Center Metro Station** 12th & F Street NW Entrance - Mezzanine Level
  - **Metro Headquarters** 300 7th Street SW, Washington, DC 20024
  - **New Carrollton Metro Office** 4100 Garden City Dr, Hyattsville, MD 20785
- Bring required materials for you and/or your SNAP household members.
- Use your SmarTrip card and go

Visit [wmata.com/metrolift](http://wmata.com/metrolift) or call 888-SMARTRIP to learn more.

As the result of a detailed fare equity study, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) reduced fares on August 1, 2022, from \$2 to \$1.

## Ride On Celebrated Pride Month with the Ride with Pride Bus and Inclusive Initiatives



In honor of Pride Month, Ride On proudly showcased its commitment to inclusivity and support of the LGBTQ+ community. One of the highlights of this celebration was the introduction of the Pride Bus, which was wrapped with the Intersex Progress Pride Flag, adorned with Ride with Pride messaging, and features eye-catching neon lights that made it stand out, especially at night. This dedicated bus symbolized Ride On's unwavering support for LGBTQ+ voices, culture, and civil rights.

Throughout the month of June, all MCDOT buses displayed #RidewithPride posters on board. To further engage riders and provide educational resources, the posters featured a QR code that directed users to the [MCDOT Ride with Pride webpage](#). This webpage offers valuable information about the historical and cultural significance of the LGBTQ+ community, fostering awareness and understanding.

To kick off this exciting initiative on June 1<sup>st</sup>, Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich, along with county officials, took part in the [inaugural journey of the Pride Bus](#). Their ride led them to a special ceremony held outside the Executive Office Building in Rockville, where the [Progress Pride Flag was raised](#). This symbolic act not only demonstrated the county's commitment to diversity and equality but also served as a powerful reminder of the progression of LGBTQ+ rights.

Ride On is proud to support and celebrate Pride Month by creating a safe and inclusive environment for all riders. The Ride with Pride Bus and the #RidewithPride poster displays on all MCDOT buses in June served as a reminder of our ongoing commitment to equality, acceptance, and respect for the LGBTQ+ community. We invite everyone to join us in celebrating Pride Month and to ride with pride on Ride On buses throughout Montgomery County in the future. Together, let's continue to promote inclusion within our community and beyond.

## Ride On Annual Food Drive Collects a "Ton" of Food

**Ride On Food Drive · May 21-27, 2023**  
Donate a non-perishable food item on any Ride On bus and get a **FREE** trip!  
*If transferring to another bus, bring an additional donation.*

Montgomery County Department of Transportation is partnering with Manna Food Center, County Public Libraries & Regional Service Centers to help fight hunger.  
Visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/food-drive.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/food-drive.html) for drop-off locations.

MCDOT Ride On MC PL PUBLIC LIBRARIES manna food center

Ride On's annual food drive partnership with Manna Food Center collected 2,309 pounds of food this year, a 12% increase over last year. The food drive took place from May 21-27. Non-perishable food items were dropped off on all Ride On, extRa, Flex and Flash buses. Riders who donated food had their bus fare waived.

MCDOT has conducted the food drive for more than 30 years in partnership with [Manna Food Center](#). Last year, the food drive expanded to include five Montgomery County Public Libraries and the County's five Regional Services Centers, which also took in non-perishable food donations this year.

Ride On would like to thank everyone who helped make this food drive possible, especially those who donated food to help feed our community.

## Ride On to Participate in 2023 Montgomery County Fair



Ride On is excited to be partnering with Pedestrian Safety and other MCDOT programs to staff our largest booth ever at the 2023 Montgomery County Agricultural Fair this August 11-19. Our teams will be there to answer questions about our programs and services, distribute informational materials, and share fun giveaways.

The Montgomery County Agricultural Fair is celebrating its 74th year in the County. The fair features local and national entertainment, livestock and agricultural exhibits, carnival rides and games, as well as tents from local businesses and organizations.

To save time and money, attendees are encouraged to take Ride On buses when visiting the fairgrounds. The nearest Ride On stops and routes are listed below.

- Route 54: Stops 24844 and 24838
- Route 55: Stops 22638, 22636, 22514, and 22634
- Route 59: Stops 22638, 22636, 22514, and 22634
- Route 61: Stops 24640, 24652, 22516, and 22632
- Ride On extRa: Lakeforest Transit Center

## Spotlight Interviews with Ride On Employees Donna Mitchell and Vance Young



**What is your name?** Donna Mitchell

**How long have you been working with Ride On?** 3 years 3 months

**What is your role here at Ride On?** Office Service Coordinator – I run the entire office and am responsible for giving operators their uniforms and handling all the aspects regarding the financial duties that are entailed.

**What are some things you like about working with Ride On?** I love being here because this is a smaller depot, we are family oriented, and there are great benefits. When I first came on board, I was a contractor so the atmosphere as far as being just a number is different because now, I feel like I'm a part of a family. I love being here!

**What is a positive message you would like to share with everyone?** Montgomery County, and not just for Ride On, offers opportunity for potential for growth. We have a program called the PACE where you can spend 6 months to a year working in another position to learn a new trade to add to your resume to help you grow within the organization.



**What is your name?** Vance Young

**How long have you been working with Ride On?** 8 and a half years

**What is your role here at Ride On?** Bus Operator

**What is a positive message you would like to share with everyone?** Leave your cars at home and come and Ride On with us!

**What is the most important aspect of working with Ride On?** Safety. We love what we do and we love taking people where they need to go.



## Discover Montgomery County with Ride On This Summer



As the temperature rises and the days are longer, it's time to embark on exciting summer adventures in Montgomery County. From picturesque parks to vibrant cultural events, there's something for everyone to enjoy. And the best part: Ride On has convenient bus routes that will take you directly to these summer attractions. Here are some of the must-visit destinations and the Ride On routes that will get you there.

- Brookside Gardens - Immerse yourself in the beauty of nature at Brookside Gardens. With stunning floral displays, serene walking trails, and a variety of themed gardens, it's a true oasis. Take Ride On Route 49 to Glenmont Metro Station and transfer to Ride On Route 10 for easy access to this botanical paradise.
- Strathmore - Enjoy world-class performances at Strathmore, a renowned arts center that hosts a wide range of concerts, exhibitions, and events. Ride On Route 46 will take you directly to this cultural hub, allowing you to indulge in the arts and enrich your summer.
- Cabin John Regional Park - Discover the wonders of Cabin John Regional Park, offering a wide range of recreational activities, including hiking, picnicking, and even a miniature train ride. Take Ride On Route 47 to access this family-friendly park and enjoy a day filled with outdoor fun.

- Cool off at a Local Pool - Ride On Route 10 will take you to the Wheaton/Glenmont outdoor pool, offering a variety of pools and water features for all ages to enjoy.
- Arts in Silver Spring – Take the Flash to the Silver Spring Arts District on Colesville Road between Fenton Street and Georgia Avenue and enjoy the AFI Theatre, the Filmore music venue, Round House Theater, or the Regal Majestic & IMAX.
- Explore A Museum - Immerse yourself in art, history, and culture at Montgomery County's renowned museums. Ride On Route 301 will take you to the Glenstone Museum, where you can admire stunning contemporary art exhibits.
- Montgomery County Agricultural Fair - Experience the excitement of the annual Montgomery County Agricultural Fair from August 11-19. From thrilling rides to live entertainment and yummy fair food, it's an event not to be missed. Hop on Ride On Route 54, which will take you directly to the fairgrounds in Gaithersburg. Be sure to stop by our Ride On booth for information about our services and more.

These summer attractions in Montgomery County are easily accessible by Ride On bus routes, allowing you to enjoy the best that the county has to offer without the hassle of driving and parking. Plan your summer activities, hop on a Ride On bus, and make the most of the sunny days ahead. We're here to connect you to the best the county has to offer.

## **An Interview with TAG Member Lorin Obler**



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

I have been using Ride On for 12 years, since I moved to Montgomery County in 2011.

**What routes have you ridden the most over the years and for what reasons?**

I have most often used the 15 and 12, to get from my house to the Silver Spring Transit Center (where I pick up the Red Line to my office in Washington, DC). I also regularly use the Route 12 to visit friends in Takoma Park; the Route 9 to get to the track at Blair High School, where I often run; and the Route 1 to get to Friendship Heights for medical appointments.

### **What do you like the most about your Ride On experiences?**

I like the fact that the 12 and 15 (and 19) stop just 150 feet from my house—which is partly why I chose to live where I do. I also like that the buses I ride usually follow the schedules pretty closely and are not often late. Finally, I like the audio announcements of the next stop so I don't miss my stop, and that these are usually loud enough to hear over the other noise on a bus.

### **How has Ride On changed over the years from a rider's perspective?**

I really have not noticed many changes since I started riding, at least not on the routes that I regularly use. Probably the biggest change in my time here has been the construction of the Silver Spring Transit Center, which of course has changed the experience of catching the bus and getting from the bus to the Red Line in Silver Spring.

### **What other family members use the Ride On system and for what purposes?**

Over the years, I have often taken my daughter on Ride On to get to downtown Silver Spring or to the Long Branch pool. Now she's in high school, and still sometimes rides the buses to the Silver Spring Transit Center or to Blair High School.

### **What recommendations do you have for Ride On?**

I'd like the interior of the buses to be a little more brightly lit at night. I have a visual impairment—which is why I ride the buses so often—and in the dark it can be hard for me to get around the bus or even see which seats are already occupied. I don't know if this is a feasible change, since it likely only affects a small portion of riders. But I have noticed that the interior of Metro buses are better lit and I have an easier time when riding those buses at night.

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

I think I can provide an independent, objective perspective on what is working well with Ride On and what could be improved. I hope I can provide the perspective not just of a single rider, but also represent the experience of riders with visual impairments—an important segment of Ride On's ridership.

### **What have you learned the most as a TAG member?**

I have only joined the TAG in the last couple of months, so I haven't learned so much yet. I was glad to get the early notification about the Trip Planner app, and have started to test that out with planning my trips.

## **Of Note**

### **Phase Three of Glenmont Metro Station Bus Bay Closures to Begin July 10, 2023**

Metro began replacing the glass canopies at the Glenmont Station on Sept. 12, 2022. During the glass canopy construction, some bus bays have been closed in phases and the associated bus routes have been temporarily relocated. Phase Three is now projected to begin July 10, 2023, with the closing of Bays E & F. The information below shows temporary locations of the affected bus routes.

#### **Phase 3: Bus Bays E and F will be closed**

- Ride On 10 (Twinbrook) & 10 (Hillandale): Use Bus Bay D
- Ride On 26 (Montgomery Mall Transit Center): Use Bus Bay C
- Ride On 31 (Wheaton): Use Bus Bay C
- Ride On 49 (Rockville): Use Bus Bay C
- The FDA shuttle: Use Bus Bay D
- Metrobus Y2, Y7, Y8 (Silver Spring): Use Bus Bay D
- Metrobus C8 (College Park) & C8 (North Bethesda): Use Bus Bay H
- Metro Access & Metrobus Shuttle: Use Bus Bay D

### **Montgomery County Transit System Maps Available**

System maps are now available at all Metro Stations and TRiPS stores to pick up at your leisure. Distribution sites and corresponding routes are listed [here](#). To view the map digitally, visit our website [here](#). Please call MC311 if you have any questions.

### **Bienvenidos Resources and Services Fair**

Montgomery County hosted the latest Bienvenidos Resources and Services Fair on Saturday, June 10. This is a reoccurring event in Spanish, for families newly arrived in Montgomery County and/or minors reunified with family members. The Bienvenidos Fair serves as a platform for the resources, services, and support systems offered by the county to be shared with newcomers. Ride On is proud to participate in this event as part of our commitment to fostering a welcoming community environment. Stay tuned for information on the next Bienvenidos Fair! For any questions, please email [bienvenidos@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:bienvenidos@montgomerycountymd.gov).

### **Senior Connection**

Montgomery County residents aged 60+ can receive rides and assistance getting groceries through Senior Connection. Senior Connection is a local non-profit that provides an array of free services to Montgomery County, MD, residents aged 60+. For more information, call 301-962-0820, go to [www.seniorconnectionmc.org](http://www.seniorconnectionmc.org), or email [susan.girard@seniorconnectionmc.org](mailto:susan.girard@seniorconnectionmc.org).

## **Connect-A-Ride**

Connect-A-Ride is a free referral service that provides adults over 50 and those with disabilities with information about their transportation options for medical services, errands, social activities and more. For more information, visit <http://ow.ly/VS6L50OtzN5>

## **Federal Transit Administration Grant Supports Ride On Conversion to Electric Bus Fleet**

Ride On has received more than \$20 million in grants from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). FTA Administrator Nuria Fernandez visited the Ride On Brookeville, Silver Spring Depot to feature our Zero-emission buses and Smart Energy Microgrid bus charging infrastructure in an informational video. The video highlights how, with the support of the FTA, we are transitioning to a clean and green bus program powered by solar micro-grid technologies. Ride On has 14 electric buses in service with 60 more on the way.

The Zero-emission bus grants include millions of dollars in funding for workforce programs. The grants are part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda, which is rebuilding our nation's infrastructure from the bottom up and middle out with good paying jobs that grow the American economy by creating a manufacturing and innovation boom.

Watch the video [here](#).

For the most up-to-date service information, riders should follow @RideOnMCT on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and [Instagram](#). In addition, information is available at RideOnBus.com, by subscribing to receive email alerts at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govdelivery](http://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](http://montgomerycountymd.gov/mcdot), follow @MCDOTNow on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and [subscribe](#) to MCDOT's "Go Montgomery!" newsletter.