



Ride On Newsletter

June 2025

Ride On Bus Service Changes and Zero Fare Start on Sunday, June 29



Montgomery County's Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is preparing to launch a major transformation of the MCDOT Ride On bus system through the [Ride On Reimagined Service and Implementation Plan](#). This plan marks the most comprehensive update in Ride On's history and is a result of years of planning, community input and coordination with our regional partners. Ride On's usual May service change has been moved to Sunday, June 29 to ensure a seamless rollout and better alignment with the implementation of WMATA's Better Bus Network, also launching on June 29. The new transportation network will introduce streamlined connections to Metro, as well as route and timing adjustments for more efficient service, based on public feedback and travel patterns.

Additionally, Montgomery County Department of Transportation will implement a **zero fare** policy on all Ride On, Ride On extRa, Ride On Flex and Flash buses beginning Sunday, June 29, 2025. This policy expands upon existing programs that already offer free rides to youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, and Montgomery College students. The zero fare policy is part of a broader effort to improve transit accessibility and encourage more residents to use public transportation.

Metrobus fares will continue at \$2.25. The Kids Ride Free, Seniors Ride Free, and Disabled person/attendant free rides continue with the applicable SmarTrip card.

The Youth Cruiser SmarTrip card becomes mandatory for free rides on January 1, 2026.

Riders can learn more about how changes may affect them by reviewing Ride On's [final summary of changes](#). The new schedules are available at [RideOnBus.com](#) and in print starting Saturday, May 31.

A [comprehensive list of Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) on the MCDOT Ride On changes webpage is available to help riders understand what's changing, why it's happening and how it may impact their commutes. Riders will notice new routes, discontinued or modified routes and new travel options designed to reduce wait times, and improve reliability and access to jobs, schools, medical centers and other essential destinations.

The FAQs include:

- New Route Numbers and Changes: Which routes are being renamed, combined or discontinued.
- Service Frequency: How often buses will arrive.
- Route Discontinuation: Explains decisions based on ridership data, duplication with other services, or better alternatives being introduced.
- Metrobus Integration: Details on how Ride On coordinated with WMATA to enhance regional connections.

The full details on the [Metrobus changes](#) occurring at the same time can be found online. Metro also released a [Frequently Asked Questions page](#).

Specific Changes:

Beginning on Sunday, June 29, MCDOT Ride On will discontinue Route [10](#) which will be replaced with portions of new Metrobus routes [M12](#), [M42](#), [M44](#), and [M60](#), adjust routes [29](#), [34](#), [41](#), [42](#), [43](#), and introduce a new Route [40](#), while WMATA adjusts routes [L8](#) and [T2](#). Riders are encouraged to [review these changes](#) carefully and plan trips accordingly.

The changes reflect a shift of resources to allow for more reliable service where demand is higher. New signs have been placed at bus stops which will continue to show the current bus service, along with the new bus route names that will go into effect on Sunday, June 29.

Riders can plan trips and get real-time MCDOT Ride On bus arrival information with the [Ride On Trip Planner](#) app. Metrobus riders can determine new route names and changes using the [WMATA trip planner page](#).

Next Stop in MCDOT Ride On 50th Anniversary Art Contest Tour Opens June 25



MCDOT Ride On is excited to announce the next stop in our 50th Anniversary Art Contest tour from June 25 - July 8 at the **Isiah 'Ike' Leggett Executive Office Building** at 101 Monroe Street in Rockville. The art contest, which celebrates 50 years of Ride On service in Montgomery County, was open to all Montgomery County middle school students and ran from March 15 - April 15, 2025.

Many riders begin using Ride On service as children, utilizing the bus system to travel with family and independently to get to school, activities, and social engagements. In this contest, students were encouraged to use their creative thinking and unique artwork to celebrate the past, present, and future of the Ride On bus system. The goal of the contest was to educate students about Ride On and encourage them to use Ride On when traveling in Montgomery County. Winning artwork depicts one or more Ride On services and captures the value that Ride On brings to the community.

After reviewing 96 entries, 10 finalists' art was selected to be featured in the "art tour" hosted at various Montgomery County Government buildings. Art will be featured at each stop for 2 weeks before moving to the next stop in the tour. Publicly accessible stops for the art tour will be announced in advance of their showing dates.

Ride On is proud to give middle school students in Montgomery County a platform to share their artistic talents. We're thrilled to share this work with the public and encourage residents to visit a tour stop near them.

Ride On Flex Six Year Anniversary



Montgomery County's National Association of Counties (NACo) Innovation Award Winning [Ride On Flex](#) on demand transit service was launched six years ago to help riders get around Rockville and Glenmont/Wheaton. The simple and convenient bus service is hailed for its ease of use and reliability.

Using Flex is straightforward and has proven to be a convenient option for Montgomery County residents. All riders do is download the Ride On Flex app or call 240-301-3842 to request a pick-up spot and a drop off location within one of the two service zones. The microtransit service, which launched in 2019, was the first on-demand bus service in the region using a mobile app to book rides and a 2020 National Association of Counties (NACo) Innovation Award Winner.

The Flex has no fixed stops or a set schedule. It comes when the rider books their trip within the service hours. After a customer books a ride, the app allows them to track their bus and receive real-time updates on the vehicle's estimated time of arrival. Riders are notified when the bus is two minutes away and again when it arrives. Boarding is at designated corners, not at bus stops. Curb to curb service is provided for people with disabilities. They should include that need in their settings when first using the app.

All riders must have a booked reservation to ride. The cost to ride is the standard Ride On fare, which as of June 29, 2025, will be zero.

Service is only provided within the two Flex zones – Rockville and Glenmont/Wheaton. The Rockville zone covers an area of about 0.7 square miles. The Glenmont/Wheaton zone is larger, covering 3.4 miles. Riders can travel to and from any location within the same zone but cannot travel between zones.

The Flex buses are smaller, 11-person vehicles so they can easily navigate neighborhood streets. Each bus features mobility device accessibility and free WIFI.

The Flex was created to help reshape the way County residents think about getting around in the Rockville and Glenmont/Wheaton zones, as well as to help the environment by cutting back on the use of cars and to provide a dependable on-demand service for residents.

As [Ride On](#) looks for ways to continue to upgrade and improve service moving forward, the bus service is working on additional new initiatives. Ride On launched a comprehensive study – the [Ride On Reimagined Study](#) – in the Fall of 2021. The study aims to take a critical look at the County’s current and future bus network and transit systems, including Metrobus and the planned Purple Line, to pinpoint where improvements can be made. The study is based on experience and feedback from the community. Up to 16 new Flex zones are included in the study results. The results of study can be found on the [Ride On website](#).

Montgomery County Department of Transportation’s focus is to provide a seamless transportation system for people of all ages, incomes and abilities that supports the community. In addition, the department aims to reduce the number of single occupant vehicles on the roads, especially during rush-hour times, and to help increase the efficiency of the infrastructure and address climate and air quality concerns.

Montgomery County Division of Transit Services plans, schedules, and manages over 80 bus routes using 375 County owned and operated buses including the [Flash](#), [Ride On Bus](#), [Ride On extRa](#) (a popular limited stop service on MD 355), and [Ride On Flex](#). Montgomery County’s transit system is designed to complement the service provided by the other transit providers in the County and is integrated with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority’s [Metrobus](#) and [Metrorail](#) and the Maryland Transit Administration’s [MARC commuter rail](#) and [MTA commuter bus](#) systems. Learn more at [RideOnBus.com](#).

Montgomery County Unveils Newly Designed ‘Ride with Pride’ Bus to Celebrate June as Pride Month



The Montgomery County Maryland Department of Transportation (MCDOT) recently unveiled a “Ride with Pride” themed Ride On bus that will operate during June, which is recognized as Pride Month. This is the third year the County has wrapped a bus for Pride month.

The newly designed bus has the tagline “Radiating Love” with bright colors radiating from a central point. Dedicated to uplifting LGBTQ+ voices, culture and civil rights, the bus is also adorned with Ride with Pride messaging and neon lights to stand out at night.

In addition to the Pride Bus, all MCDOT buses will have #RidewithPride poster displays on board in June, with a QR code that will link to the [MCDOT Ride with Pride webpage](#) with information about the historical and cultural significance of Pride month.

“This bus is a visible reminder that Montgomery County stands with our LGBTQ+ residents,” said County Executive Marc Elrich. “We believe government should help create a community where everyone feels safe, welcomed and valued. The ‘Ride with Pride’ bus sends that message to anyone who sees it or rides it. We still have work to do to achieve full equality, but this is one way we show that we're not backing down.”

The Pride Bus will be deployed on bus routes throughout the County and riders are encouraged to share photos of the bus on [social media](#) @MCDOTNow and @RideOnMCT.

"We are excited to introduce this bus as a representation of our commitment to supporting our diverse community," said MCDOT director Chris Conklin. "Public transportation has always played a vital role in creating a safe and welcoming society and uplifting groups that have historically been marginalized. The Ride with Pride bus is a way to let them know they are seen and supported."

Thank You, Montgomery County! Generosity Shown in Annual Give and Ride Food Drive Allows Manna Food Center to Help Many Families



We're proud to announce the success of this year's Ride On Food Drive, held from May 25–31, 2025. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to help fight hunger in our community!

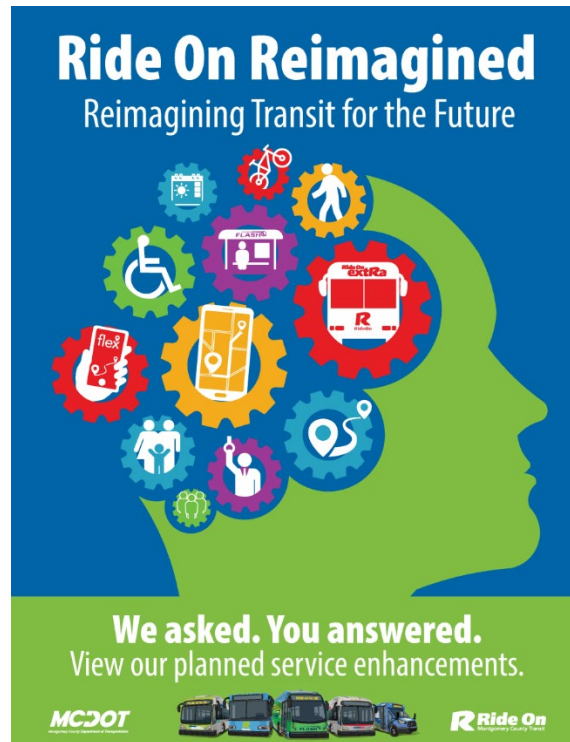
The "Give and Ride Free" campaign allowed Ride On passengers to donate a non-perishable food item directly on the bus in exchange for a free ride—and you showed up in a big way!

The food drive was held in partnership with Montgomery County Public Libraries and Manna Food Center, an organization dedicated to ending food insecurity in Montgomery County. All donations go directly to Manna to support local families in need.

We are grateful to every passenger, resident, and County employee who participated. Your kindness and community spirit helped make this effort a success and truly reflect the values that make Montgomery County such a special place to live and serve.

Thank you for riding with purpose and giving with heart.

Get Ready: Ride On Reimagined Year 1 and the Better Bus Network Launch on June 29, 2025



On June 29, 2025, Montgomery County and the region will take a major step forward in public transportation when Ride On Reimagined Year 1 and WMATA's Better Bus Network both officially launch. These coordinated updates are designed to work hand in hand, improving service, simplifying transit, and helping you get to where you need to go faster and more reliably across both transit services.

What's changing with Ride On Reimagined Year 1?

Ride On Reimagined is Montgomery County's plan to update and modernize Ride On bus service based on data and community feedback, ensuring our transit system reflects how and where people travel today – not where they traveled 20 years ago.

Year 1 of the Ride On Reimagined service plan brings:

- New routes designed to serve growing areas and simplify rider navigation.
- Route adjustments to improve on time service and better meet current demand with where riders live, work, and travel.
- Route retirements in favor of more effective service.
- Improved frequency for shorter wait times on busy routes, including better weekend and evening service.

What's changing with WMATA's Better Bus Network?

The Better Bus Network reimagines Metrobus routes across the Washington D.C. region, including Montgomery County, as part of WMATA's transit system redesign.

Here's what will be different:

- Streamlined route naming system for clarity and ease in identifying Metrobus services by location, e.g. all Montgomery County routes will begin with the letter "M".
- More frequent service where riders need them most on high demand routes.
- Expanded coverage in underserved areas to address transit gaps and better regional connectivity, especially in areas where Ride On and Metrobus overlap.

Navigating Both Systems Together

These changes were planned in collaboration to make transfers and navigation more aligned. By aligning our service changes, Ride On and WMATA reduce confusion and give riders a more seamless transit experience across both systems.

How to prepare:

- Visit [Ride On Reimagined Frequently Asked Questions](#) for a list of affected routes
- Visit [WMATA's Better Bus webpage](#) for updates
- Use [WMATA's trip planning tool](#) to see the changes ahead of the service change
- Use the [Ride On Trip Planner](#) to see new trip options on June 29
- Look out for new signage at transit centers and affected bus stops

The coordinated effort between Ride On and WMATA represents a shift in how we deliver bus service to Montgomery County and the larger region, with a goal of building a transit system that works better for everyone. Stay tuned for more updates as we count down to June 29. A better, more reliable transit system is just around the corner, and we're excited to Ride On with you into the future.

Ride On Senior Corner: What Ride On's New Zero Fare Policy Means for Seniors in Montgomery County



Beginning Sunday, June 29, all Ride On buses including Ride On ext*Ra*, Flex, and Flash will transition to a **zero fare** policy. This policy expands upon existing programs that already offer free rides to youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, and Montgomery College students. The zero fare policy is part of a broader effort to improve transit accessibility and encourage more residents to use public transportation.

What does this shift to zero fares mean for seniors in Montgomery County? Read below for a list of frequently asked questions on the upcoming policy change, and at that means for you.

Will I still need a Senior SmarTrip card?

Seniors will no longer need to show or tap a Senior SmarTrip card to ride for free on any Ride On, Flash, ext*Ra*, or Flex bus. However, Metrobuses will still require Senior SmarTrip card to be used for discounted fares.

How will Ride On count riders without collecting fares?

Every Ride On bus is equipped with an automatic passenger counter that counts each passenger as they enter the bus. These devices will continue to track ridership as we transition to zero fares.

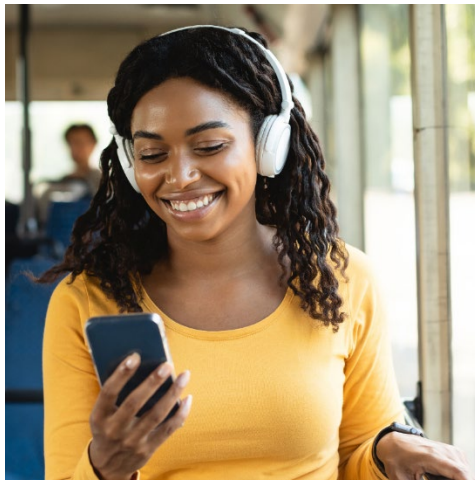
What happens if I try to use my SmarTrip card on a Ride On bus after the zero fare policy starts?

Nothing. Fareboxes will be non-operational and disconnected from their power sources. Fareboxes, SmarTrip Card readers, and Flash Ticket Vending Machines will also be covered with decals that remind riders that the fare will now be zero.

How can I check to see if my route is affected by the June 29 service change?

Riders can visit the [Ride On Changes webpage](#) to find a list of changing routes. Some changes may require riders to take different routes than before. New and alternate routes are listed under each changing route in the FAQ section.

MCDOT Ride On GovDelivery SMS/Text Short Code Was Changed from 468311 to 62463 on June 11, 2025



As of June 11, 2025, Montgomery County Ride On's GovDelivery SMS/Text short code number, which allows riders to opt-in to receive service alerts, was changed from 468311 to 62463.

The 468311 number was a shortcode that was shared with many governments throughout the country. Mobile carriers throughout the US and Canada will no longer support shared shortcodes as of July 1, 2025. As a result, mobile carriers will only support dedicated shortcodes like 62463, which is dedicated to the Montgomery County, MD, Government.

Those currently subscribed to MCDOT Ride On text alerts will now receive text messages from 62463. Beginning June 11, 2025, riders not already subscribed should text MONTGOMERY RIDEON to 62463 to receive the most up-to-date bus service information, including route detours, delays, and special events, via text message. This is the fastest and most convenient way to stay updated on the latest Ride On information.

Take Ride On to Montgomery County Splash Pads



Summer is here, and the weather is HOT! Keep cool this season and visit one of the county's many splash pads and interactive fountains! Let the kids run free through the jets or let out the kid in yourself and cool down in the fountains. Many of the splash pads are free to the public, making them a cheap and easy alternative to pool days.

- **[Rockville Town Square Splash Pad](#)**: Located in the center of Rockville Town Square, this splash pad is free and open to the public from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 12-8 p.m. Sunday. Take Ride On Route [45](#) to Rockville Town Square to visit this splash pad.
- **[Silver Spring Interactive Fountain](#)**: This splash pad is also a work of art! Entitled "Silver Creek" by Deirdre Saunder, this Italian mosaic glass tile fountain is a 26' diameter installation that also acts as a free splash pad in the summer. The fountain is open for play from sunrise to dusk. To get to this downtown Silver Spring splash fountain, take Ride On routes [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [19](#), [20](#), or [28](#).
- **[South Germantown Splash Playground](#)**: The SplashPark is one of the most popular features of South Germantown Recreational Park. Kids will have an excellent time and stay cool playing in the one-of-a-kind 280-jet water maze, cave with a waterfall, water bucket drops, slide, and spraying animals. Admission is \$6.50 per person, ages two & up. Discounts for batch ticket purchases and family passes are also available. Take Ride On Route [98](#) to get to the SplashPark.
- **[SprayGround at Good Hope Neighborhood Recreation Center](#)**: This small spray ground area outside the Good Hope Recreation Center got a glow up over the winter and now has a new look and enhanced safety. This splash pad is free and open Monday - Friday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday: Noon-6 p.m. Ride On Route [39](#) has a stop just outside the Good Hope Neighborhood Recreation Center.

- **[Fair Hill Shopping Center](#)**: This Olney shopping center also has a free splash fountain to beat the heat in the summer months! The fountain is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 10:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Take Ride On Route [52](#) to get to the Fair Hill Shopping Center.
- **[Maryvale Park Splash Pad](#)**: The Maryvale Park Splash Pad offers an opportunity to cool off from the summer heat. The splash pad is open daily from Saturday, May 25 until Monday, Sept. 2, 2024 (Labor Day), and features an interactive water spray and staff onsite during hours of operation. Open Daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Ride On routes [49](#) and [52](#) will get you close to this Rockville oasis.

Of Note

Silver Spring VanGo, Bethesda Circulators and Free Shuttles for Seniors

Did you know that Montgomery County has two free circulators? The VanGo Circulator, or Ride On [Route 28](#), makes traveling through Downtown Silver Spring easy and convenient. Buses run every 30 minutes and serve Silver Spring's art district as well as community and health centers, lodging, shopping, and transportation connections. Visit [here](#) for more details.

The Bethesda Circulator connects riders to 8 public parking garages, the Bethesda Metro Station and 20 convenient stops along the way that get you to and from your favorite Bethesda destination - all for free! Three circulators on route arrive at each stop every 10-15 minutes. Visit [here](#) for more details.

MCDOT also provides free shuttles to recreation centers, shopping, and medical appointments for some senior populations. Shuttles provide point to point service while circulators travel a specific route with multiple bus stops.

Ride On Courtesy Stop Program

Montgomery County Ride On bus riders are now able to request to be dropped off between stops when traveling late at night. Available after 9 p.m., the Courtesy Stop program lets riders request to be dropped off at any point along the regular bus route, in addition to designated bus stops. Riders can request a Courtesy Stop on any MCDOT Ride On bus or WMATA Metrobus. However, Metrobus Express and Limited Stop buses, such as Flash, operating in Montgomery County, are excluded from the program. The requested stop must be along the regular bus route, and cannot be at an intersection, along a highway or freeway. A bus operator can refuse a requested stop if the driver deems the undesignated stop as unsafe.

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:

When will Ride On and WMATA's new bus service changes launch in 2025?

1. June 17
2. June 29
3. June 25
4. July 1

Last month's question:

Which annual event in May encourages commuters to ditch their cars and use bikes or public transportation to promote a better environment and healthier lifestyle?

1. Earth Day
2. Car Free Day
3. Bike to Work Day
4. World Environment Day

Answer: (3.) Bike to Work Day

For the most up-to-date service information, riders should follow @RideOnMCT on [X](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Bluesky](#), [Threads](#), 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 **62463 (previously 468311)** to receive text alerts.

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

If you need an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) reasonable accommodation to access Ride On bus service, contact MC311 by voice at 240-777-0311, by email RideOn.CustomerService@montgomerycountymd.gov or TTY 711.

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.