

Ride On Newsletter

March 2025

50 Years of Connecting Communities: The Legacy of Ride On



For 50 years, Montgomery County's Ride On service has been an essential part of the community, providing reliable and accessible public transportation to residents and visitors alike. Since its inception, Ride On has grown to become a cornerstone of the county's transit network, connecting neighborhoods, supporting local businesses, and enhancing the quality of life for countless individuals. This milestone offers an opportunity to reflect on the service's evolution, its impact, and the future of transit in Montgomery County.

Ride On began as a modest local bus service, created to meet the transportation needs of a rapidly expanding suburban population. Over the decades, it has evolved

into a comprehensive transit system, with routes spanning urban centers, residential neighborhoods, and key commercial areas. The service has continually adapted to the changing landscape of the county, expanding routes, increasing frequency, and implementing innovations to improve the rider experience.

The impact of Ride On extends beyond transportation. It has been a driving force for economic development, helping workers reach their jobs, customers access businesses, and students travel to schools and universities. For many, it is more than just a bus ride, it is a vital link to opportunity. Local employers have benefited from the system's reach, as reliable transit options contribute to employee retention and punctuality, while businesses enjoy greater foot traffic from riders exploring new areas of the county.

Ride On's commitment to accessibility and sustainability has been at the forefront of its mission. The service has progressively integrated features like, wheelchair ramps, and audio announcements to ensure all riders, regardless of mobility, can travel with ease. In recent years, the fleet has begun transitioning to electric and hybrid vehicles, reducing emissions, and supporting Montgomery County's ambitious environmental goals. This shift not only lessens the system's carbon footprint but also aligns with broader efforts to promote sustainable living and combat climate change.

Community engagement has been a pillar of Ride On's success. The service regularly solicits feedback from riders, collaborates with local organizations, and participates in public forums to understand and address the evolving needs of the community. This responsive approach has fostered trust and loyalty among passengers, many of whom have relied on the service for decades.

Looking ahead, Ride On remains committed to innovation and service excellence. Plans are in motion to enhance route efficiency, integrate with emerging transportation technologies, and further expand electric vehicle adoption. The future promises an even more dynamic and interconnected transit system, one that continues to serve as a lifeline for the community while adapting to the challenges and opportunities of a growing region.

As Ride On marks half a century of service, it stands as a testament to the power of public transportation to transform lives and communities. The system's enduring success reflects the dedication of its operators, planners, and county leaders, as well as the resilience and support of its riders. While the modes of transportation may evolve, the mission remains the same: to keep Montgomery County moving forward, together.

"What Drives You" March Madness! Ride On Contest Choosing Weekly Winners in March

How has Ride On changed your life for the better?

Share your Ride On story for a chance to win a prize package.

WHAT DRIVES YOU?

Since 1975 Ride On has helped people get to the places that are important to them.

MCDOT
Montgomery County Department of Transportation

Ride On
Montgomery County Transit

Ride On

March Madness has hit Ride On's "What Drives You" contest! To celebrate the excitement of the coming season, Ride On is selecting weekly winners in the What Drives You contest throughout March. Share your story with us to be one of our weekly winners!

In 2024, Ride On launched the "What Drives You" campaign aimed at amplifying voices and stories of riders. The special campaign collects rider experiences powered by a series of monthly contests. One of our selected winners was Deepti, who, along with her family, utilizes Ride On to reduce her impact on the environment.

"Ride On drives me...wholly and solely! I have wanted to do my bit to reduce my carbon footprint. As part of that, I sold my car in October of this year and am now car-free. Before I took the final plunge, I did a trial run for 9 months to see if I could survive without a car. During that period, I relied solely on Ride On to commute to work. The trial run made me realize that being car-free was absolutely doable, and to boot I realized that I enjoyed taking the bus."

"Since I sold the car, we rely on Ride On to run our weekly errands as well. My 8-year-old son absolutely loves taking the bus, more so than he did riding the car. We use bikes for last-mile connectivity, but it's mostly the bus that we rely on. Thank you Ride On...we literally can't do without you!"

In our 50 years of service, Ride On has touched the lives of millions of riders. People have used the service to help them get to schools to earn degrees, get to work to provide for their family, go to medical appointments, and go on countless adventures across Montgomery County. We'd love to hear the story of how Ride On has impacted your life for the better!

Share your story with us in one of the three ways listed below to win a prize package including gift cards and Ride On giveaways.

1. Share your story on our website submission page by clicking [here](#).
2. Post your story on Instagram, X (Twitter), or Facebook and tag the @RideOnMCT account.
3. Email your experience to rideon.customerservice@montgomerycountymd.gov for a chance to win.

Eligible entries may be used to further publicize the contest. Contest will run indefinitely, with a winner(s) chosen each month. Winners will be announced via email, [X](#), [Facebook](#), [Bluesky](#), and [Instagram](#) within a week of the end of a month.

March is Disability Awareness Month – How Ride On Delivers Accessibility to All Riders



March is Disability Awareness Month and at Ride On we're committed to making sure that public transit remains accessible, inclusive, and reliable for all riders, including those with disabilities. Ride On provides equitable transportation options that allow individuals with disabilities to travel independently and confidently. Our fleet and services are designed with accessibility in mind, ensuring riders have the necessary resources to navigate Montgomery County with ease.

Ride On buses feature several accessibility features. Designated priority seating near the front of the bus is available for riders with disabilities, seniors, and those who need extra assistance. All Ride On buses lower to the curb making it easier to get on and off the bus. Ride On buses are also equipped with wheelchair ramps making them wheelchair accessible. They also contain an optional wheelchair securement apparatus to keep wheelchairs secure in travel. Visual and audio stop announcements help riders with visual or hearing impairments stay informed about their route.

Ride On provides other resources:

- **Call-n-Ride (CNR):** provides discounted taxicab service to eligible low-income older adults (63 years and older), and adults with disabilities
 - Phone: 301-948-5409
 - Email: mcdot.cnrorder@montgomerycountymd.gov
- **Connect-A-Ride (CAR):** 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 by linking them to public, private, and volunteer transportation services, including escorted transportation
 - Phone: 301-738-3252
 - Email: connectaride@AccessJCA.org

Metro also offers the following resource:

- **MetroAccess:** a shared-ride, door-to-door service for people who generally cannot use public transportation due to a disability
 - Phone: 301-562-5360 (Voice), 800-523-7009 (Toll Free)
 - Website: wmata.com/service/accessibility/metro-access/

Additionally, riders with disabilities ride fare free with a valid Reduced Fare SmartTrip card or Metro Access Card. Visit our website for more information about resources provided for [older adults and riders with disabilities](#). Ride On is continuously working to improve accessibility across all our services. Through the [Ride On Reimagined Plan](#) we are evaluating ways to make transit even more convenient and accessible for all our riders, especially our riders with disabilities.

Ride On Launches 50th Anniversary Art Contest, Open to Montgomery County Middle School Students



Ride On is excited to announce an art contest to celebrate 50 years of Ride On service in Montgomery County. The contest is open to Montgomery County middle school students and will run 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 are 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 is to educate students about Ride On and encourage them to use Ride On when traveling in Montgomery County. Winning artwork should depict one or more Ride On services and capture the value that Ride On brings to the community.

Ride On, the primary public transportation system in Montgomery County, was launched in 1975 with 20 buses and was designed to provide service in Takoma Park and Silver Spring where large buses could not travel. Today, Ride On has a fleet of almost 400 ADA-accessible buses. The bus system is one of the busiest, and the second largest in the region, which operates 7 days a week with over 80 routes and 5,425 bus stops. In addition to the standard Ride On bus service operating throughout the county, Ride On services also include Ride On extRa, a limited stop faster service on state Route 355 and in the Shady Grove Life Sciences Corridor, Ride On Flex, an on-demand transit service in defined Rockville and Glenmont/Wheaton zones, and Flash, Ride On's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service which runs along US 29 from Silver Spring

Transit Center to Briggs Chaney/Burtonsville. For more information on Ride On routes and services, visit RideOnBus.com.

All contest participants will earn **5 SSL hours for participation**. Entries will be scored for relevance to the topic and adherence to contest rules, creativity, and execution in a blind judging process. The winning entry will receive a **\$100 Amazon gift card**, **second place entry will receive a \$75 Target gift card**, and **third place will receive a \$50 Visa gift card**. First place winner will also be displayed on all Ride On buses. Top 10 entries will be featured on an art tour around Montgomery County government buildings. The school with the most entries will receive a **\$500 gift card** to Michaels or Target for art supplies. Winners will be announced at the Ride On 50th Anniversary Celebration in May 2025.

Students and parents can learn more about the contest [here](#). Entries will be accepted beginning March 15 and until 11:59 p.m. on April 15, 2025. Good luck, and happy creating!

Montgomery County Transit Services for Federal Workers Returning to Office



Federal employees returning to in-person work can take advantage of accessible and convenient transit services from the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT). MCDOT Ride On buses service Federal work locations across Montgomery County and larger transit hubs to facilitate travel into Washington, D.C. Additionally, passengers who ride Metro buses or rail receive a free same-day transfer to Ride On buses.

“For those looking for commuting solutions, the good news is that the region is better connected than ever before, and in Montgomery County, public transit is affordable

with a fare of \$1 for all MCDOT Ride On buses,” said Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich. “MCDOT has steadily increased bus service over the last few years, with faster, high-frequency bus service that uses sections of dedicated bus lanes and traffic signal priority to reduce congestion impacts on bus speed.”

Public transportation ridership in Montgomery County has been steadily growing since the pandemic.

“Ride On has a growing ridership, with weekday ridership up to 58,000 in 2024 from 46,000 in 2023,” said MCDOT Director Chris Conklin. “The County hosts quite a few federal institutions and the hope is that employees returning to worksites will give transit a try and keep this momentum moving in a positive direction.”

In addition, MCDOT and other County agencies have been working with Federal agencies to expand parking available near select Federal installations.

List of Bus Routes Near Major Federal Offices Within Montgomery County:

- National Institutes of Health (NIH), 9000 Rockville Pike, Bethesda. Ride On boardings at the Medical Center Metro bus loop - [30](#), [33](#), [34](#), [46](#), [70](#), [101](#). The Metro Red Line and Metrobus Routes [J1](#) and [J2](#) service this location. MTA Commuter Bus [203](#) is also available at this location.
- Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, 8901 Rockville Pike, Bethesda. Ride On boardings at the Medical Center Metro bus loop - [30](#), [33](#), [34](#), [46](#), [70](#), [101](#). The Metro Red Line and Metrobus Routes [J1](#) and [J2](#) service this location. MTA Commuter Bus [203](#) is also available at this location.
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA), 10903 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring. Ride On bus route 10 boards on New Hampshire Avenue; Bus route 22 boards at FDA entrance bus loop; Flash boards to the left of the FDA bus loop - [10](#), [22](#) and [Flash](#). Metrobus Routes [K6](#), [K9](#) and [C8](#) are also available near the FDA Campus. MTA Commuter Bus [203](#) and [204](#) are also available at this location.
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Lansdowne Street (near N. Bethesda Metro Station), Ride On routes [5](#), [26](#), [38](#), [46](#), [42](#), and [101](#). Customers can board at 4 bus stops (South and North bound) at Marinelli Rd and Rockville Pike.
- Department of Energy Campus, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown. Ride On bus route 83 boards at Germantown Transit Center, Century Boulevard (Bus

Stop Id. 15012 / Bay F). All other Ride On bus routes board on GTC Aircraft Drive - [55](#), [61](#), [74](#), [75](#), [83](#).

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring. Ride On bus route 28 stops in front of NOAA; all other bus routes stop around the corner at the Silver Spring Transit Center - [1](#), [2](#), [4](#), [5](#), [8](#), [9](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [18](#), [19](#), [20](#), [21](#), [22](#), [28](#). The Metro Red Line, MARC Commuter Rail Brunswick Line and numerous Metrobus routes including [J1](#), [J2](#), [S2](#), [S9](#), [Q2](#), [Q4](#), [Y2](#), [Y7](#), [Y8](#), [Z2](#), [Z6](#), [Z7](#), [Z8](#), [F4](#), [70](#) and [79](#) service this location. MTA Commuter Buses [305](#), [315](#) and [325](#) are also available at the Silver Spring Transit Center.
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville. All Ride On bus routes board at Rockville Pike and Marinelli Drive - [5](#), [26](#), [46](#), [101](#). The Metro Red Line is also available at this location via the North Bethesda Stations.
- National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), 100 Bureau Drive, Gaithersburg. Ride On bus route 54 boards outside the gate to the NIST campus - [54](#).
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS), 6010 Executive Blvd., Rockville. Ride On bus boardings at Executive Boulevard and Jefferson Street (Bus Stop Id. 22052 or 22038) - [5](#), [26](#).
- Social Security Administration, 10229 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, 20903. All Ride On bus routes board at the Hillandale Transit Center - [10](#), [20](#), [22](#), and [24](#). Metrobus Routes [K6](#), [K9](#) and [C8](#) are also available near this location.
- National Cancer Institute, 9609 Medical Center Drive, Rockville. Ride On bus boardings at Medical Center Drive (Bus Stop Id. 23996) - [43](#), [Ride On extRa Pink](#).
- Department of Health and Human Services, 5600 Fishers Lane. Ride On bus route [10](#) and Metrobus route [C4](#) - Customers can board at 2 bus stops (opposite) both are located at Parklawn Drive and Parklawn Building.

Local Transportation Options and Incentives:

- MCDOT Ride On has four transit lines, including [Ride On](#), [Ride On extRa](#), [Flash Bus Rapid Transit \(BRT\)](#) and [flex book and go](#) bus service, providing about 80 bus routes throughout the County. Every ride is \$1 and free for [seniors 65 and over](#), [customers with disabilities](#) and [youth under 19](#) with specialized SmarTrip cards.

- Download the [Ride On Trip Planner App](#), which makes it easy to navigate regional transportation options. In addition to the local Ride On bus services, the app integrates Metro bus and rail, MARC commuter rail, Capital Bikeshare and other modes, displaying the fastest arrival times.
- Metrorail - [schedule/timetable](#), [fare](#) / [fare options](#), [Trip Planning](#)
- Metrobus - [schedule/timetable](#), [fare](#) / [fare options](#), [Trip Planning](#)
- MARC Train- [schedule](#), [fare](#), [Trip Planning](#)
- MTA Commuter Bus - [schedule](#), [fare](#), [Trip Planning](#)
- Fairfax County launched bus service between Northern Virginia and Bethesda with the [Fairfax Connector Express Route 798](#) in September 2024.
- Montgomery County's Bus Rapid Transit line, [Flash](#), runs on US 29/Colesville Road and provides direct access to the FDA building from the Silver Spring Transit Center to the south and access as far north as Burtonsville. Flash buses arrive every seven to 15 minutes, allow bikes onboard and operate more like light rail, stopping at each of the modern, weather-protected stations. Flash offers amenities such as Wi-Fi and USB charging onboard. [Seven additional, integrated Flash corridors are planned](#), with the next, along Veirs Mill Road between Downtown Rockville and Downtown Wheaton, moving into construction later this year.
- The [Great Seneca Transit Network, Pink, and Lime extRa routes](#) launched last year and provide high-frequency service, running east-west connections between the Shady Grove Metro and the Traville Gateway Transit Center, adjacent to the Universities at Shady Grove in Rockville. The Pink Route links the busy Shady Grove corridor with the Life Sciences Center via Medical Center Drive. The Lime Route uses I-370 to provide an express route to RIO, Crown Farm and the heart of the Life Sciences Center at Adventist HealthCare Shady Grove Medical Center.
- MCDOT has been implementing bus priority projects for faster buses. In some cases, MCDOT works with the Maryland Department of Transportation's State Highway Administration (SHA). For example, the dedicated bus lanes on University Boulevard and Georgia Avenue help decrease bus travel time between Montgomery County and Washington, D.C. and provide faster and further-reaching access to Metro.
- Montgomery County's transit service was recently assessed with a two-year study, [Ride On Reimagined](#). The study looked broadly at all transit offered in the

County and engaged the public to make in-depth recommendations to better serve ridership needs. Changes to Ride On bus services to boost efficiency will take effect as early as this summer.

- Using transit to counter the stress of regular commuting to the office has well-documented health benefits. Public transit supports health by increasing step count, providing fresh air and allowing time to check emails and news while someone else does the driving. It also saves money compared to the cost and maintenance of a single-occupancy vehicle and parking fees.

Ride On Senior Corner: Travel Training with JCA



Travel Training

Free public transit workshop for ages 50+

Register for a Class: **Go where life takes you!**

April 11:
• BENJAMIN GAITHER CENTER

April 22:
• NORTH POTOMAC SENIOR CENTER

More Coming!

Most classes held weekdays 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Advanced Registration Required * No Walk-ins * Sign Up Today!

To reserve a seat or learn more:
Call 301-738-3252
Or email: ConnectARide@AccessJCA.org
www.AccessJCA.org

Interested in becoming more active but don't know where to start? The Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA) has partnered with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation to provide travel trainings to get you out and about again!

These free half-day workshops help Montgomery County residents aged 50+ get confident and comfortable taking public transportation. Participants learn how to read the Metro map, understand digital schedule signs, load a fare card, and where to find a station's emergency and accessibility features. The workshops run about three hours and include classroom training, a trip on a Ride On bus, a visit to a Metro station, and a one-station round-trip train ride.

Mark your calendars and make sure to register early for the upcoming April workshops as workshops are subject to cancellation with low interest. Workshops are currently scheduled for **April 11 at the Benjamin Gaither Center** and **April 22 at the North Potomac Senior Center**.

Advanced registration for the workshops is required. To register or for more information, call 301-738-3252 or email ConnectARide@AccessJCA.org.

Breaking Barriers: Women Driving the Future of Transit, From Rails to Roads



Women's History Month is a time to celebrate the contributions of women who have shaped our world, and their impact on the transportation sector is undeniable. While often overlooked, women have been instrumental in building, operating, and advocating for transit systems that connect communities and drive progress. From the early days of streetcars to the cutting-edge innovations of today, women have been at the forefront, paving the way for a more accessible and equitable future.

Historically, women's roles in transit were often confined to support positions. However, their influence extended far beyond the expected. During World War II, with men away at war, women stepped into traditionally male-dominated roles, operating streetcars and buses, proving their capability and resilience. These contributions were crucial in maintaining vital transportation links during a critical time.

Today, women are breaking down barriers in all aspects of transit. They are engineers designing advanced infrastructure, planners creating sustainable transportation

networks, operators driving buses and trains, and leaders shaping policy. Their presence is transforming the industry, bringing diverse perspectives and innovative solutions to the table.

The Impact of Women in Transit:

- **Improved Safety:** Studies have shown that women often prioritize safety concerns in transit planning and operations, leading to safer and more secure systems for all.
- **Enhanced Accessibility:** Women's advocacy has been crucial in promoting accessible transit for people with disabilities, the elderly, and families with children.
- **Increased Equity:** Women are driving efforts to ensure that transit systems serve the needs of all communities, particularly those who rely on public transportation the most.
- **Sustainability:** Women are championing sustainable transportation solutions, such as electric buses and expanded bike and pedestrian infrastructure, to reduce environmental impact.

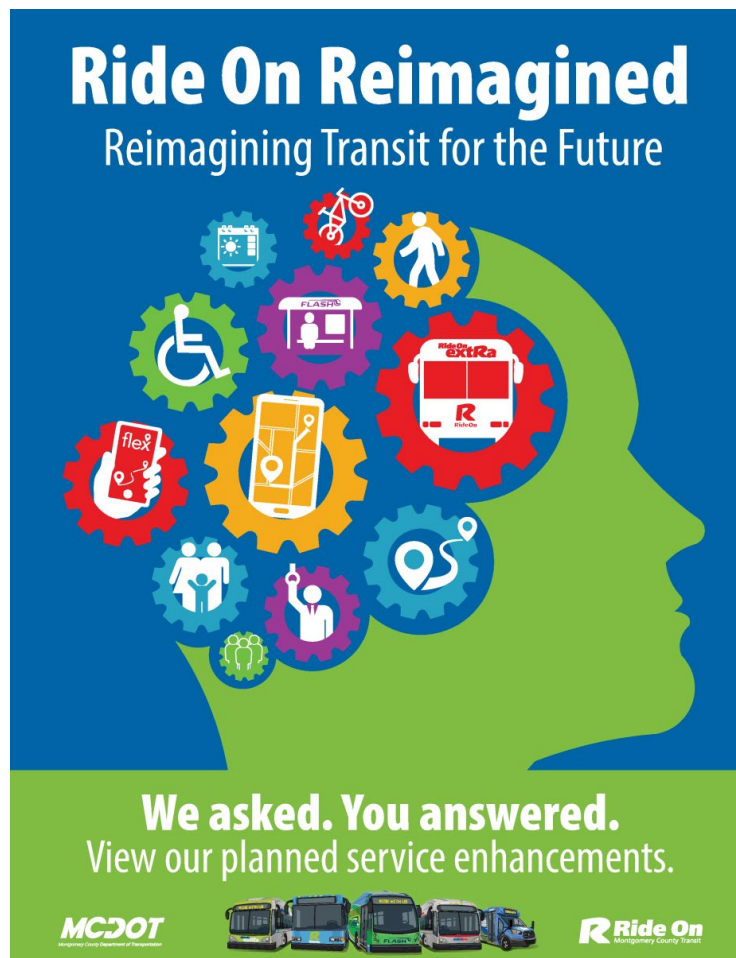
Spotlight on Montgomery County, MD:

Montgomery County, Maryland, is a prime example of women's growing influence in transit. Ride On and its connection to the Washington Metro system are vital lifelines for residents. Women are actively involved in every aspect of these systems, from management and planning to operations and maintenance.

- **Ride On Bus System:** Women are employed as bus operators and supervisors, ensuring the smooth and efficient operation of Ride On. Their dedication to public service is essential in providing reliable transportation for residents.
- **Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT):** Women hold leadership positions within MCDOT, influencing policy decisions and shaping the future of transportation in the county. Their expertise in areas such as transit planning, traffic engineering, and pedestrian safety is crucial in creating a safe and efficient transportation system.
- **Advocacy and Planning:** Women are also active in local advocacy groups, pushing for improvements to transit infrastructure and advocating for the needs of riders. Their voices are vital in ensuring that transit systems meet the needs of the community.

The contributions of women in Montgomery County and beyond are a testament to their dedication and expertise. As we celebrate Women's History Month, let us recognize and honor the women who are driving the future of transit, making our communities more connected, accessible, and equitable. Their work is essential in building a sustainable and inclusive transportation future for all.

Building a Better Ride On: What You Need to Know about the Ride On Reimagined Final Report



The Montgomery County Department of Transportation Ride On Reimagined Service and Implementation Plan is the culmination of over two years of research, planning, coordination, and development that examined the transit landscape of Montgomery County, including Ride On and Metrobus service. Ride On currently operates over 80 routes, many of which have been unchanged since their implementation in the 1970s, making this redesign a vital process to better align with the current and future needs of

Montgomery County's riders. The implementation of the Ride On Reimagined Service and Implementation Plan will take place in phases over the next several years, transforming Ride On service and delivering the most significant transit improvements in decades. Here's what you need to know about the key changes and benefits:

Year 1: Immediate Changes

The first phase of implementation focuses on changes that will immediately improve service for thousands of riders.

- **New and Adjusted Routes:** Route realignments will reduce redundancy and improve efficiency
- **Great Seneca Transit Network:** Ride On extRa Lime and Pink routes launched in fall of 2024 as phase 1 of the GSTN
- **Service Enhancements Within Current Budget:** Improvements will focus on increasing service frequency and optimizing routes without requiring additional funding beyond the current budget allocations
- **WMATA & Local Transit Integration:** Coordination with WMATA's Better Bus Network Year 1 changes

Year 5: Network Expansion

By the 5 year mark, Ride On will have a visibly restructured route network for better coverage and efficiency.

Funding Note: Year 5 network changes progress as resources become available and are dependent on a funding increase of 5% per year after Year 1

- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Expansion and New Connections:** Implementation of MCDOT's Flash MD 355 (Phase 1) and Viers Mill Road BRT projects
- **Purple Line:** Expected completion and full operation by Year 5
- **Ride On Flex Service:** 8 new proposed Flex microtransit zones, providing on-demand, flexible travel options for areas with lower ridership demand
- **Route Modification:** Several routes will have changes for more direct connections to reduce travel times and expand weekend service

The Vision Network: Future Growth

The Vision Network represents the full, ideal build out of Montgomery County's transit network with all possible proposed improvements implemented.

Funding Note: Progress is dependent on the availability of funding and will be implemented in phases as new funding sources become available

- **Seamless Regional Transit Integration:** Stronger coordination with WMATA and MTA to ensure a connected transit network
- **BRT System:** Full implementation of the Flash BRT network along high demand corridors with 8 new BRT lines and 4 new high-capacity Ride On ext*Ra* lines
- **New Ride On Flex Zones:** Expansion of Ride On's flex service through 19 new Flex zones throughout Montgomery County
- **Upgraded Frequencies:** Over 30 routes will have improved weekday frequencies and 38 routes will have improved weekend frequencies
- **New Weekend Service:** 26 routes will have new weekend service
- **Great Seneca Transit Network:** GSTN will be fully implemented
- **Access:** The proposed Ride On Vision Network increases access and improves travel times to key destinations throughout the County. Today, 130,000 people can access Wheaton Station within 30 minutes using transit at 8:00 a.m. on weekdays. The Vision Network increases access to Wheaton Station to 303,000 people – a 142% increase

The Ride On Reimagined plan is about building a better, faster, and more accessible transit system to serve Montgomery County's future. The first phase of implementation is just the beginning, setting the foundation for expansions through 2030 and beyond. These changes are designed for you, our riders. Montgomery County residents are encouraged to review the final report to understand the upcoming improvements and how they can benefit from the redesigned network. To learn more about the plan and how it will shape the future of public transportation in Montgomery County, read the [Ride On Reimagined Final Report](#).

Wheels of Gratitude: Celebrating Transit Heroes and Montgomery County's Ride On



March 18th marks National Transit Employee Appreciation Day, a moment to pause and recognize the unsung heroes who keep our communities connected. In Montgomery County, this day shines a spotlight on the dedicated individuals powering Ride On, the county's vital bus service. These employees are more than just drivers; they're the lifeblood of our transportation network, ensuring accessibility and mobility for all.

More Than Just a Job: The Heart of Public Transit

Transit employees are more than just drivers and mechanics; they are the face of public service. They include:

- **Bus Operators:** Navigating busy streets, ensuring passenger safety, and providing courteous service.
- **Maintenance Staff:** Keeping vehicles in top condition, ensuring reliability and safety.
- **Customer Service Representatives:** Answering questions, providing directions, and assisting passengers with diverse needs.
- **Dispatchers and Planners:** Coordinating schedules, managing routes, and responding to emergencies.
- **Administrative and Support Staff:** Handling the behind-the-scenes work that keeps the system running smoothly.

These individuals often work long hours, in varying weather conditions, and under pressure to maintain schedules. Their commitment to public service is essential for a functional and accessible community.

Ride On: Montgomery County's Essential Link

Ride On is a cornerstone of Montgomery County's infrastructure, providing crucial transportation for residents of all walks of life. Its employees:

- Empower individuals to access employment, education, and healthcare, fostering economic opportunity and well-being.
- Contribute to a greener future by reducing reliance on personal vehicles, mitigating traffic congestion, and lowering carbon emissions.
- Offer a lifeline for seniors, people with disabilities, and those without access to private transportation, promoting inclusivity and independence.

Showing Our Appreciation: A Community Effort

On March 18th, let's express our gratitude to these essential workers:

- **Offer a Sincere "Thank You":** A simple gesture of acknowledgment can make a significant difference.
- **Share Positive Feedback:** Let Ride On know when you've had a positive experience by recognizing exceptional service. Submit a compliment via MC311.
- **Extend Small Acts of Kindness:** A smile, a kind word, or a small token of appreciation can brighten their day.
- **Amplify Appreciation on Social Media:** Share your appreciation on social media using hashtag #RideOnAppreciation.
- **Recognize their year-round service:** Transit employees work in all weather, and often in stressful situations.

A Culture of Gratitude: Beyond a Single Day

While National Transit Employee Appreciation Day provides a focused opportunity to celebrate transit workers, let's cultivate a culture of appreciation throughout the year. By recognizing their vital contributions, we can strengthen our communities and ensure the continued success of public transportation. These are the people that keep our communities moving and deserve our respect.

Take Ride On to Spring Break Destinations



Planning a getaway or staycation this spring break? Ride On can help! Whether you're hopping on a plane or staying closer to home, Ride On offers standalone transportation as well as linking to regional, national, and international transportation providers. Read below for a list of transit-friendly options for your spring break travels!

Heading out of town?

- **BWI Airport:** To get to this international airport take Ride On to Shady Grove Metro. The Metro Red Line links to the MARC Train to BWI.
- **DCA (Reagan National):** To get to D.C.'s international airport, take Ride On to Metro's Red Line and transfer to the Yellow Line into the District.
- **Union Station:** Is train travel more your vibe? To travel out of Union Station take Ride On to Metro's Red Line. From there you can connect to Amtrak or MARC trains.

Staycation Ideas – Accessible by Ride On:

- **Brookside Gardens:** Enjoy the beautiful spring weather with a tranquil walk through Brookside Gardens. The towering trees and blooming flowers will make you forget you're still in the heart of Silver Spring! To get to this oasis take Ride On Route [10](#) or [31](#).
- **Glen Echo Park:** Glen Echo Park's unique history includes a Chautauqua, an amusement park, a Civil Rights battleground, and a historic carousel. Since 1971, the National Park Service has owned and operated the site and today,

with the help of the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture, offers year-round cultural and recreational activities. To visit Glen Echo Park, take Ride On [Route 29](#).

- **Rockville Town Square:** For dining, shopping, and fun events, take Ride On Routes [45](#), [56](#), or [63](#) to Rockville Town Square. If the weather makes an unpredictable turn as it so often does in the spring, head to Rockville Public Library or catch a movie just a short walk away.

Interview With Operator Antonio Lucas



What is your name and position?

My name is Antonio Lucas. I'm a bus operator out of the Gaithersburg Depot.

Why did you become a transit operator?

I became a transit operator in 2016. I was working as an electrician, and they were having layoffs. So, my idea at the time was to get my foot inside the county in some way, shape or form, but once I started driving as an operator for Ride On, I really loved the job. I love my co-workers and I love helping people. This was the perfect job for me, so I ended up staying in the idea of eventually moving up within transit services.

What's your favorite part about being a transit operator for Ride On?

I think it's the feeling of being able to be there for people because some people don't have an automobile or vehicle to get back and forth to work. So being able to be there for people, seeing the joy on someone's face when they arrive at their destinations and seeing rider's reactions on how I operate the vehicles in a safe manner really makes my day.

Being an operator with Ride On, what would you say the atmosphere is like within the Ride On family?

That's another reason why I decided to become a transit operator with Ride On and not transfer anywhere else. I love the interaction with my coworkers and there are a lot of

good people within the management team. I know quite a few drivers that go out their way for the customers. The operators here are genuinely good people and I love surrounding myself with people that care. This is the only job that I've ever worked for where the employees are just genuinely great people.

What are some of the things that you have seen Ride On do for their operators to show appreciation?

Ride On does a lot for the operators. We have a transit rodeo that a lot of the operators attend with their families. We have Christmas parties every year. Ride On does a lot for the operators. I think a lot of operators are happy to work for Ride On.

Of Note

Save the Date for Ride On's 50th

Ride On will mark 50 years of service in 2025, and we want to celebrate with you! Mark your calendars for the month of May 2025, and be on the lookout for how you can participate. We promise the festivities will be worth the wait!

Public Information Meeting on US 29 Flash Bus Rapid Transit - Phase 2

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) invites you to attend a Public Information Meeting to learn more about the US 29 Flash Bus Rapid Transit Phase 2 Project, which will improve the existing US 29 Flash Bus Rapid Transit services by providing dedicated bus lane(s) from Sligo Creek Parkway to Tech Road. We encourage you to attend this meeting to learn about the progress of the project, ask questions, and provide feedback. A project presentation will be held at 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Meeting Details:

Tuesday, April 8, 2025, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. EST

[Montgomery Blair High School](#), Cafeteria

51 University Boulevard East

Silver Spring, MD 20901-2451

For more information visit:

[US 29 Flash Bus Rapid Transit Phase 2 Project Website](#)

Spring Weather Bus Safety Tips

March weather can be unpredictable! Stay prepared with these Ride On safety tips:

- Rainy days: Bus floors may be slippery—hold onto handrails when boarding.
- Windy weather: Watch for flying debris at bus stops.
- Bicyclists & pedestrians: As more people enjoy the outdoors, always check before crossing bike lanes.

Ride On's Partnership With Glenstone Museum

Ride On has partnered with Glenstone Museum to give our riders access to this cultural haven. Glenstone tickets are reserved within hours of release, or you can ride with us on the Route 301 and visit anytime during normal hours. Remember: there is no public parking at Tobytown. Parking is limited at Glenstone, so please park at the Nancy Dacek Community Center or Rockville Metro Station.

Plan Your Next Trip with the Ride On Trip Planner

Have you downloaded the Ride On Trip Planner App yet? This new, innovative app allows 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 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](#).

Sign Up for Email and Text Alerts

Ride On communicates with customers directly through our email and text subscription service. Subscribing to these alerts means you'll get the latest Ride On service and program information sent straight to your inbox and/or cellphone. To subscribe, visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govdelivery, or text MONTGOMERY RIDEON to 468311 to receive text alerts.

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 day is National Transit Employee Appreciation Day?

1. March 7
2. March 18
3. March 19
4. March 31

Last month's question:

Ride On began service in 1975. 11 years prior, which president signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that banned segregation on public transportation?

1. John F. Kennedy
2. Lyndon B. Johnson
3. Richard Nixon
4. Harry S. Truman

Answer: (2.) Lyndon B. Johnson

For the most up-to-date service information, riders should follow @RideOnMCT on [X](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Bluesky](#), 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](#), [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.