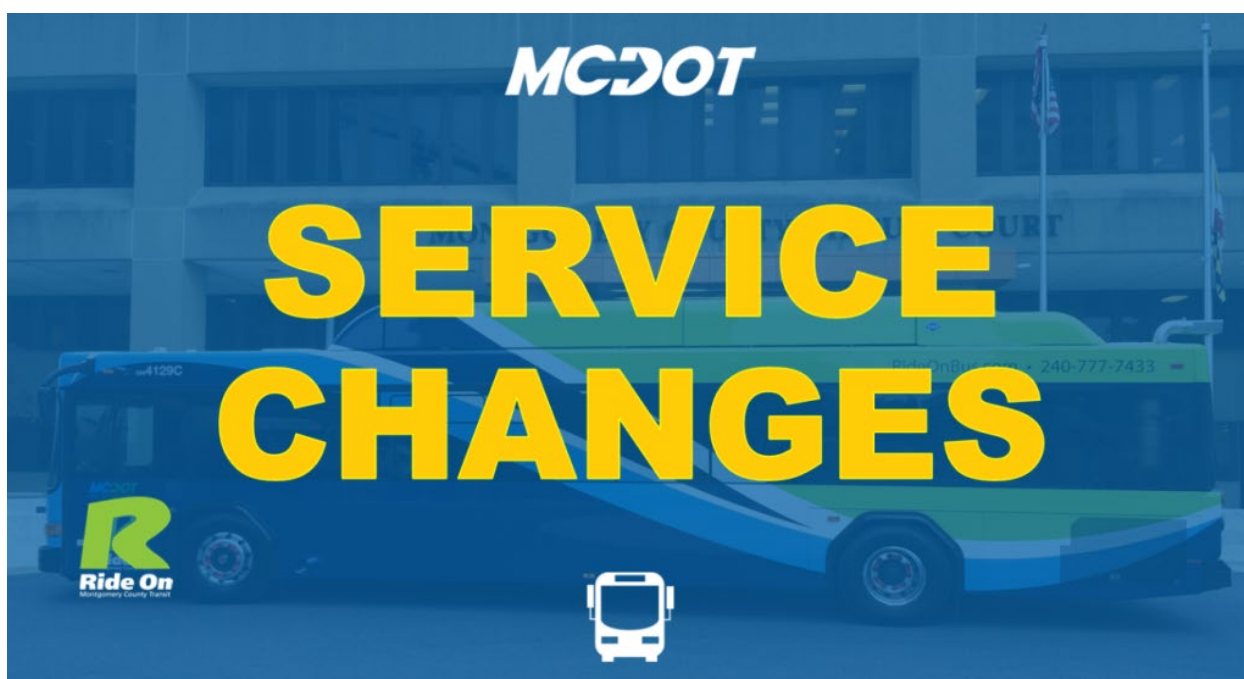




Ride On Newsletter

May 2023

Montgomery County Ride On Bus Schedule Changes Began on Sunday, May 7



The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) adjusted Ride On bus schedules on Sunday, May 7, to improve rider experience and efficiency based on ridership. Three routes including [16](#), [20](#), and [26](#) have running time adjustments to improve on-time performance. No other routes underwent changes.

The new schedules will be available at rideonbus.com and in print at [various locations](#).

Throughout the year, ridership data and on-time performance are monitored regularly to identify routes that could achieve increased efficiency with schedule updates, to better serve our riders.

Riders can get Ride On, extRa, Flex and Flash bus schedule and trip planning information by visiting the Ride On Real Time webpage [here](#).

County bus fares continue to be free for [seniors](#) (age 65 and older), [persons with disabilities](#) and [youth](#) under 19 (older if still in high school). Specialized SmarTrip cards are needed and Senior and Youth cards can be obtained through the MCDOT [Mobile Commuter Store](#), Silver Spring [TRiPS Commuter Store](#), any [County library](#) or the [Montgomery County Division of Treasury](#) in Rockville. Students can also obtain their "Youth Cruiser" card through their school.

Annual Montgomery County Ride On Food Drive to Run from May 21-27



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 for drop-off locations.



The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and Manna Food Center are once again asking Montgomery County residents to help fight hunger in Montgomery County.

The annual [Ride On Food Drive](#) will take place from May 21-27. Non-perishable food items can be dropped off on all Ride On, extRa, Flex and Flash buses. Riders who donate food will have 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 the Montgomery County Public Libraries and the County's five Regional Services Centers, which are also taking in non-perishable food donations.

“Chronic hunger is a crisis no person should go through. It affects the most vulnerable members of our community-seniors and children-the most,” said Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich. “Prior to the pandemic, one in three students in our County schools qualified for free and reduced meals; this year that number climbed to nearly 40 percent. Nearly 12 percent of our senior population lives in poverty. I have spearheaded a series of policies to address economic inequality, including raising the minimum wage and championing affordable housing. But if we want to ensure no one goes to bed hungry tonight, we must all take action today. I encourage all residents to donate non-perishable food items on County buses, or at any of the drop-off centers, between May 21 and 27.”

Food collected during the drive will be distributed by Manna Food Center through its network of locations across the County. Last year Manna Food Center donated 3.8 million pounds of food to more than 37,000 participants.

“Many of our residents are facing an unprecedented crisis,” said MCDOT Director Chris Conklin. “They are still recovering from the loss of income during the pandemic. They are experiencing rising food costs and lingering food shortages. Summer is around the corner, and we know that places an additional burden on families who rely on the school meal program. I encourage anyone who has the means to donate to this food drive do so.”

In addition to County buses, food donations will also be accepted at the following locations:

- Executive Office Building: [101 Monroe St.](#), Rockville. 240-777-5880
- County Council Office Building: [100 Maryland Ave.](#), Rockville. 240-777-5870

Regional Services Centers:

- Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center: [4805 Edgemoor Ln.](#), Bethesda. 240-777-8200
- East County Community Recreation Center: [3310 Gateshead Manor Way](#), Silver Spring. 240-475-6527
- Mid-County Regional Services Center: [2425 Reedie Dr.](#), Wheaton. 240-777-8103
- Silver Spring Regional Services Center: [One Veterans Place](#), Silver Spring. 240-777-5300
- Upcounty Regional Services Center: [12900 Middlebrook Rd.](#), Germantown. 240-777-8000

County Libraries:

- Davis Library (North Bethesda): [6400 Democracy Blvd.](#), Bethesda. 240-777-0922
- Gaithersburg Library: [18330 Montgomery Village Ave.](#), Gaithersburg. 240-773-9490
- Long Branch Library: [8800 Garland Ave.](#), Silver Spring. 240-777-0910

- Olney Library: [3500 Olney-Laytonsville Rd.](#), Olney. 240-773-9545
- White Oak Library: [11701 New Hampshire Ave.](#), Silver Spring. 240-773-9555

Manna Food Center Locations:





- Manna Food Center warehouse: [9311 Gaither Rd.](#), Gaithersburg. 301-424-1130
- Manna Food Center, administrative office: [12301 Old Columbia Pike](#), Silver Spring. 301-424-1130

Ride On Bus Operator Recruitment Happening Now

MCDOT is currently recruiting full-time bus operators to fill positions in all three depots – Silver Spring, Nicolson Court, and Gaithersburg. Experience is not necessary and applicants without a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) are encouraged to apply. We offer paid CDL training, opportunities for advancement and with the recently increased salary schedule for Ride On bus operators and transit coordinators, the benefits package is very competitive.

Transportation is one of the County's most important resources. MCDOT's Ride On bus service achieves an essential mission of the County by connecting people, communities, workplaces, educational institutions, and many other essential destinations. MCDOT operates over 80 bus routes, with nearly 400 buses, including [Ride On](#), [extRa](#) limited stop, [Flex](#) micro transit and [Flash](#) Bus Rapid Transit services.

Looking for a meaningful career in public service? Consider being a MCDOT bus operator. Our bus operators play an integral part in the communities they serve. They are committed to safety, customer service and a genuine care for the community. Does this sound like you? Then we want to hear from you. To learn more and to apply go to <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-transit/jobs.html>.

			
<p>“Great atmosphere. It’s like a second family. I get pleasure from knowing that riders trust me to get them safely to their destinations in a timely manner. Great advancement opportunities.” – Arline Christian, bus operator</p>	<p>“When I first started, I wanted to drive for just 2-3 years. But here I am, 20 years later and still having a great time. It is not just a job for me, it is a career.” – Alexander Folgar, Ride On bus operator</p>	<p>“I have been driving for MCDOT for 20 years. I like to give back to the County I live in. I like the good pay and the great benefit. I also like the flexibility in scheduling. I enjoy working for MCDOT.” – Nishantha Ranmuthu, Ride On bus operator with 20 years of service.</p>	<p>“I like how supportive MCDOT has been for women in the workforce. I love the customers and love helping the County with transportation. I also enjoy the great benefits, great pay and lots of growth opportunities.” – Noemy Bonilla, Ride On bus operator since 2014</p>

Feature Interview with Longest Serving Bus Operator - Bill Oliver



How long have you been a bus operator?

I was hired in February 1979. I have been with Ride On for 44 years.

What is the biggest change you have seen since you started working with Ride On?

Better communication, nicer equipment, new buses, and new uniforms.

What do you like most about your job?

I like meeting people.

What is your customer service mantra?

Being polite courteous, speak to people. You never know what people are going through. Sometimes people will not respond back, but be polite, courteous and speak.

What lessons has being a bus operator taught you?

The Smith System for driving a bus. I use it in when I operate my own vehicle as well.

What advice would you give to new bus operators?

Be patient, show love, be polite, and never judge a person.

What is a positive message you would like to share with everyone?

Try to be understanding.

Celebrating National Transportation Week: Ride On Keeps Our Community Moving

A promotional banner for National Transportation Week. It features a dark blue background with white and green text. At the top left is the MCDOT logo, and at the top right are the Ride On and FLASH logos. The main title "National Transportation Week" is in large, bold, white letters. Below it, white text invites users to share their favorite Ride On route and why for a chance to win, and provides instructions to enter by tagging @RideOnMct on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, using the hashtag #HopOnRideOn. At the bottom, a green banner contains the text "National Transportation Week Contest" in white and "May 15 - May 19" in black.

MCDOT **Ride On** **FLASH**

National Transportation Week

Share your favorite Ride On route and why for a chance to win! To enter, tag us @RideOnMct on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, using the hashtag #HopOnRideOn.

National Transportation Week Contest **May 15 - May 19**

National Transportation Week is here, and it's time to recognize the vital role that transportation plays in keeping our communities connected and moving forward. From May 15th to May 19th, we celebrate the diverse modes of transportation that enable us to reach our destinations efficiently and safely. This week serves as a reminder of the tireless efforts and unwavering dedication of the transportation professionals, from our

skilled bus operators to the dispatchers and maintenance staff, who work behind the scenes to keep our county moving.

Ride On understands the significance of transportation and its impact on people's lives. We strive to provide reliable, efficient, and sustainable transportation solutions for our community. During National Transportation Week, we take a moment to appreciate the dedicated professionals who make it all possible because their hard work and commitment keep the wheels turning. We salute their efforts in providing safe and reliable transportation services day in and day out.

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 electric 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 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 to our lives.

Ride On Celebrates National Transportation Week with Social Media Contest

The Federal Highway Administration highlights National Transportation Week May 15 - May 19 to increase public awareness of transportation, educate the public about transportation issues and provides a major opportunity to carry the message of transportation careers to students, teachers, and parents.

Ride On is hosting a social media contest through Friday, May 19 where riders can post about what makes their bus route(s) special and tagging @RideOnMCT and use hashtag #HopOnRideOn on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#). Each post will be counted as an entry for a chance to win great prizes. One entry per person. Each day one winner will be chosen and announced on Monday, May 22.

Happy National Transportation Week!

Introducing "Ride On Riders Speak": Amplifying Your Voice



At Ride On, we believe that the key to improving our services lies in listening to our riders. That's why we are thrilled about our video series "Ride On Riders Speak," created exclusively for you, our valued riders. This initiative aims to provide a platform for you to share your experiences, offer feedback, and be heard.

"Ride On Riders Speak" is all about putting your voice front and center. We understand that every rider has a unique perspective, and we want to celebrate the diverse stories and insights you bring. Through this video series, we aim to foster a sense of community and encourage open dialogue between our riders and the Ride On team.

Each episode of "Ride On Riders Speak" features interviews with riders like yourself, who generously share their thoughts, suggestions, and positive experiences with Ride On. From daily commuters to occasional travelers, each story adds depth and authenticity to the series.

We believe that your feedback is invaluable in shaping the future of Ride On. By hearing directly from you, we gain a deeper understanding of what matters most and identify areas where we can further enhance our services. Your input enables us to make informed decisions, implement improvements, and ensure that Ride On continues to be a reliable and customer-focused transit system.

We encourage you to actively participate in "Ride On Riders Speak" by sharing your thoughts and experiences with us. Whether it's a heartwarming story about a helpful bus driver, a suggestion to improve a particular route, or simply expressing your appreciation for our services, we want to hear it all. Your positive feedback not only motivates us but also serves as a testament to the hard work of our dedicated team.

We'll be releasing new episodes of the "Ride On Riders Speak" video series regularly on Fridays on our social media platforms. We invite you to watch, engage, and share these videos with your fellow riders. Together, let's make "Ride On Riders Speak" a powerful tool for positive change and a celebration of our vibrant community. Thank you for being a part of Ride On, and we can't wait to hear your stories in the upcoming episodes. Remember, your voice matters, and together, we can continue to create a transit system that truly meets your needs.

Ride On's Transit Advisory Group

The Transit Advisory Group (TAG) was created in 1997 by the Division of Transit Services. TAG is a consumer advocacy group that serves as an advisory board for the Division of Transit Services and provides feedback on Ride On policies and programs, passengers' and community needs. They are an important source of suggestions for improvements and new ideas. TAG also serves as the eyes and ears of Ride On management. TAG consists of 14 Montgomery County volunteers committed to serving a two-year term. In addition to these residents, three Ride On Operators also serve on the group. The group meets 3 – 4 times a year. **We are currently recruiting high school students and disabled riders. Please email your interest to RideOn.CustomerService@montgomerycountymd.gov.**

An Interview with TAG Member Freddy Wilbon



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

The first year I started riding ride on was with my mom in 1999, when Ride On had the blue and white color scheme bus logo.

Why did you or your family select Ride On to begin your public transit experience?

The Reason I chose Ride On Bus to begin my transit experience is because Ride On goes to places that other transit organizations don't go to. Also, after riding Ride On for the first time, I really liked how comfortable the seats were and how smooth the ride was as well.

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

I have ridden all of the Ride On bus routes in the county, but the route I ride the most is the Route 5 Bus (Twinbrook-Silver Spring) to get to and from work. I take Routes 47 and 42 if I am going to Montgomery Mall to shop.

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

I like that Ride On operators are very nice and helpful to me when I decide to hop on Ride On. I also like how Ride On has implemented new routes so I can get from one place to another in a timely fashion.

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

Ride On has changed a lot over the past years by providing schedule changes to improve community needs. Ride On has also added weekend services on multiple routes.

How did riding change during the pandemic?

It changed a lot. Frequent riders were not riding as much and at times buses were empty when I got on during the pandemic. I continued to ride Ride On because they took precautions on reducing the number of riders getting on the bus. I also liked that if a bus was full, operators would send a backup bus to help create space and prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

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

My family members use Ride On to get to and from work. They also use it to go to the mall and different local events.

What recommendations do you have for Ride On?

Please partner with Transit App to help with real-time data; doing so, would help commuters navigate during rush hour times.

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

As a Transit Advisory Group member, I like that my voice is heard. I view my position as someone who has a voice to help improve the ridership not only for myself but for the community in which I am a part of. My role is very important, and I am honored to be a part of this amazing group.

What have you learned the most as a TAG member?

I have learned that Ride On is more than just a bus that people ride every day. The management really cares about everyone that steps foot on one of their transit services. I am happy to know that there are improvements being made every day and that some cares that I make it to my destination safely.

Ride On Flex Celebrates Four Years of Service



Montgomery County's [Ride On Flex](#) on demand transit service is celebrating four years of helping 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 have to 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.

All riders must have a booked reservation to ride. The cost to ride is the standard Ride On fare. Riders can pay with cash or by using a SmarTrip card.

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.

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 385 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](#).

Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Supports Flex with a Grant Award

At its monthly meeting on April 19, members of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board approved support for 10 local planning projects as part

of its Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program, including \$60,000 for a Ride On FLEX micro transit post-COVID planning study. This study will evaluate travel behaviors and market opportunities, and service delivery options to reimagine FLEX for the future. The study will build upon a FY 2019 TLC-funded study which evaluated the first six months of FLEX and identified new areas for possible expansion.

Of Note

Ride On Reimagined

The Ride On Reimagined study is a comprehensive review of Montgomery County's bus system that will have the primary goal of recommending system-wide changes that address the current and future needs of the community it serves for both Ride On and Metrobus services. This study will take an in-depth look at Montgomery County's existing and planned transit systems, including Metrobus services that operate within the County limits and the future Purple Line. The study will also provide an opportunity to guide the future direction of Ride On through data analysis and community engagement. To learn more about the Ride On Reimagined study, visit [Ride On Reimagined - Montgomery County Division of Transit Services \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/RideOnReimagined).

Better Bus Network

Metro is working to build a Better Bus Network for you. The [Better Bus Network](#) is an initiative by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) aimed at improving bus service and making it more efficient and reliable for riders in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The Better Bus Network redesign involves a comprehensive review of the existing bus system, including routes, schedules, and bus stop locations. WMATA has conducted extensive public outreach and engagement to gather feedback from riders, community members, and stakeholders to shape the Better Bus Network redesign. This input helps inform decisions on proposed changes to bus routes and service. The Better Bus Network aims to enhance the overall transit experience, reduce travel times, increase service reliability, and improve accessibility for all riders. WMATA continues to work on implementing the Better Bus Network redesign and keeps the public informed about the progress and upcoming changes through their website, public meetings, and other communication channels. Sign up for Better Bus Network updates, so you know what's happening and to share your feedback.

Great Seneca Transit Network

The [GSTN](#) is a planned MCDOT/Ride On extRa bus service which will provide additional public transportation options to the communities in and around the Shady Grove Medical Center, Rio, and adjacent properties. The service will provide frequent and reliable connections between Shady Grove Station, Shady Grove Medical Center,

Universities of Shady Grove, and surrounding areas. Service will include timing to support student and medical shift schedules.

Flash Route Planning Stages

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is expanding BRT/Flash service which will provide high quality transit options that will improve the speed and reliability of the bus service in the following areas:

- [MD 355 Flash BRT](#)
- [New Hampshire Flash BRT](#)
- [North Bethesda Flash BRT](#)
- [Veirs Mill Flash BRT](#)

The project will transform mobility options by connecting riders to activity and employment centers. This new service will improve transit travel time and increase opportunity for users, including a significant number of minority and low-income riders living along highly congested corridors.

Bike to Work Day

National Bike to Work Day will be held on Friday, May 19, and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) will be one of the sponsors of this event. Bike to Work Day is held annually across the nation on the third Friday of May to celebrate bicycling as a fun, healthy and climate friendly way to get to work. MCDOT will sponsor seven pit stops with refreshments, music and local vendor displays at varying times throughout the morning of May 19. There will be free raffle prizes and a grand prize raffle of a new bike at each of the MCDOT-sponsored pit stops. Residents biking to work, as well as leisure riders, are encouraged to participate. For more information about this event, click [here](#).

Ride On staff will be at the following Bike to Work Day pit stops to provide information about our transit services and give away promotional items:

- Rockville Town Square at Dawson's Market, 225 N. Washington Street, 6:30-9 a.m.
- Silver Spring Downtown at Veterans Plaza, Ellsworth Drive and Fenton Street, Silver Spring. 6:30-9 a.m.
- Downtown Wheaton at Marian Fryer Town Plaza (co-sponsored with Montgomery Parks), 2424 Reedy Drive (next to the Wheaton Metro), Wheaton. 7-9 a.m.

Ride On Route 79 Detour Extended Through September 24

Due to ongoing construction, the Route 79 detour, which was originally scheduled to end in March 2023, has been extended through September 24, 2023. During the detour,

buses will be turning right on Gateway Center Drive, left on Stringtown Road, left on Clarks Crossing Drive, right on Snowden Farm Parkway, and then return back on route. Signs have been posted on route 79 bus stops that have been bypassed because of the detour.

Takoma Station Bus Bay A Shelter to be Replaced on Thursday, May 25

Takoma Station Bus Bay A shelter will be replaced on Thursday, May 25, from 10pm - 5am. During this overnight work, signs will be posted directing riders to Bus Bay B. Over the past few months, select Metro station shelters in various states of disrepair have been replaced with temporary plywood shelters. These plywood shelters wrapped with station-specific artwork will be in place until permanent stainless-steel shelters can be installed. The Bay A shelter will be the only Ride On shelter impacted at this station.

Silver Spring Metro Station Weekend Shut Down: Takoma to Forest Glen, May 20-21

Due to construction work, Metro will be operating a shuttle service to cover regular operating hours in support of the Red Line Takoma to Forest Glen shutdown this weekend, May 20-21. First and last buses are scheduled to meet first and last trains at Takoma and Forest Glen Stations. Shuttle information is as follows.

Takoma

- Express - Bus Bay E (Stop #1003260)
- Local - Bus Bay B (Stop #1003568)

Silver Spring Transit Center

- Local northbound to Forest Glen - Bus Bay 116 (Stop #2005467)
- Local southbound to Takoma - Bus Bay 117 (Stop #2005468)

Forest Glen

- Express - Bus Bay D (Stop #2005442)
- Local - Bus Bay C (Stop #2003896)