

## Ride On Newsletter

October 2024

### Montgomery County Wins APTA Innovation Award for Brookville Smart Energy Solar Charging Depot



The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and Department of General Services (DGS) have been awarded the 2024 Innovation Award by the [American Public Transportation Association](#) (APTA) for the Brookville Smart Energy Solar Charging Depot in Silver Spring.

The 2024 APTA Awards recognize those in the public transportation industry in North America who have demonstrated significant leadership, are outstanding role models of excellence and whose accomplishments and innovations have greatly advanced public transportation. This prestigious national award is among the most competitive.

“Montgomery County continues to receive national recognition and accolades for our innovative Brookville Smart Energy Solar Charging Depot,” said Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich. “This project is a clear example of how we’re taking meaningful steps toward building a cleaner, more sustainable future. By investing in zero-emission infrastructure like this, we’re not just reducing our carbon footprint—we’re leading by example. This depot is a model for how we can power our bus fleet with clean energy, and it moves us closer to achieving our goal of a fully zero-emission bus fleet by 2035. The work we’re doing here in Montgomery County is setting the standard for other communities across the country. Congratulations to MCDOT, DGS, and AlphaStruxure for their work in making this project a reality for Montgomery County and a model for jurisdictions across our nation and globe.”

The Brookville Depot features solar panels installed on tall canopies with charging stations, onsite battery storage and backup generation at an existing MCDOT Ride On bus depot. It will provide clean, renewable energy to charge up to 70 electric buses by 2026, with ample electric storage. The project contributes significantly to expanding the needed infrastructure for the growing MCDOT zero-emission bus fleet.

The project was completed through a partnership between DGS and [AlphaStruxure](#), a leader in Energy as a Service (EaaS) solutions. The microgrid and charging infrastructure was delivered at no upfront cost to the County through the EaaS contract, a long-term agreement ensuring predictable operating expenses and guaranteed performance for sustainability, resilience and reliability.

“The Brookville Depot provides a critical first step in transitioning our bus fleet of nearly 400 buses to zero-emission by 2035,” said MCDOT Director Chris Conklin. “This project will serve as a model for municipalities across the country for large-scale fleet electrification.”

MCDOT and DGS released a [Zero Emissions Bus Transition Plan](#) this past spring. MCDOT is actively seeking federal funding to purchase additional buses. Montgomery County already has started construction on an even larger microgrid needed to support the transition.

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

## **Ride On Celebrates Anniversaries of Flash and extRa Service in October**

Montgomery County’s original Ride On extRa limited-stop service celebrated seven years of helping riders get around MD Route 355 quickly and efficiently on October 2, 2024. The simple and convenient bus service is hailed for its speed and reliability.

Using extRa is straightforward and has proven to be a convenient option for Montgomery County residents. The service, which launched in 2017, is an interim step to the Bus Rapid Transit system that MCDOT envisions for MD 355.

The Ride On extRa on MD 355 makes just 13 stops and operates every 20 minutes Monday through Friday, 5:25 – 9:30 a.m. and 3:25 – 7:30 p.m. between the Lakeforest Transit Center in Gaithersburg and the Medical Center Metro Station in Bethesda. Ride On extRa connects to half of the County’s transit services, including Metrobus, Metrorail, MARC train, MTA Commuter buses and 44 Ride On routes.

Ride On extRa recently expanded service to include the Great Seneca Science Corridor with the launch of the Pink and Lime Routes on September 8, 2024. These high frequency,

limited stop routes run every 10-15 minutes between the Shady Grove Metro Station and the Great Seneca Life Sciences Center.



The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) also celebrated the four-year anniversary of the County’s first rapid transit service—the Flash—on Monday, October 14. More than 700,000 riders have used the frequent and reliable Flash service.

The Flash currently operates on Colesville Road/Columbia Pike (US 29) and connects the downtown Silver Spring Transit Center with White Oak, Briggs Chaney and Burtonsville with stops along the way. Flash buses feature bike racks inside, free WiFi service and USB ports.

The Flash has two routes that each start at the Silver Spring Transit Center. The [Orange route](#) makes 10 stops from the Transit Center to Briggs Chaney. The [Blue route](#) makes five stops from the Transit Center, ending at the Park and Ride in Burtonsville.

The service—which uses 60-foot-long articulated buses—carries more than 1,800 riders per day. Buses run every 15 minutes from 5:30 a.m. until midnight seven days a week and every 7 to 8 minutes during peak hours where routes overlap. At full capacity, the buses can transport up to 80 passengers and are more time-efficient than traditional buses.

The US 29 Flash was the first step in creating a [network](#) of rapid transit lines in the County. The County is performing preliminary engineering and design for its next two planned Flash corridors along [MD 355](#) (Rockville Pike) and [MD 586](#) (Veirs Mill Road). It also is in preliminary planning stages for New Hampshire Avenue and North Bethesda (Westlake Terrace, Rock Spring Drive, and Old Georgetown Road).

The service along US 29 links a continuous corridor of neighborhoods, retail operations, job centers and regional Park and Ride lots. The route serves the Food and Drug Administration headquarters in White Oak and expands transit connection options near the new Adventist Healthcare White Oak Medical Center and the emerging East County development that includes Viva White Oak.

Flash has distinctive, modern stations along the route that feature weather protection, pre-payment kiosks and real-time transit information.

Bus safety features include Mobileye, a pedestrian detection system that alerts bus operators when a pedestrian is approaching the vehicle’s path. Flash buses are the first in

the region to use this new technology, which further supports the County's Vision Zero Initiative to eliminate serious and fatal injuries related to traffic incidents.



## **MonsterFlash Decorated Bus is Back for Another Season of Halloween Fun**



Spooky season is back again and so is the MonsterFlash bus! Celebrate the season with the Halloween-themed decorated Flash bus at 'MonsterFlash Story Hour' at Twinbrook Library on Saturday, October 26 and the HalloWheaton event on Sunday, October 27. Details for the events can be found below.

### **MonsterFlash Story Hour at Twinbrook Library**

Join Montgomery County Public Libraries and MCDOT for MonsterFlash, a fun, family-friendly event at Twinbrook Library on Saturday, October 26, from 10 a.m. to noon. This bilingual, family-friendly event will feature story time, a dance party, a scavenger hunt, and a tour of MonsterFlash, MCDOT's not-so-spooky "haunted" bus.

Enjoy this partnership to showcase the Veirs Mill Corridor and its community. Veirs Mill Flash BRT project team staff will be on hand to answer questions.

### **MonsterFlash at HalloWheaton**

Join MonsterFlash at HalloWheaton on Sunday, October 27, from noon to 4 p.m. at Marion Fryer Town Plaza in Wheaton. MonsterFlash is an annual tradition at this family-friendly festival, which also includes activities such as s'mores roasting, mask and pumpkin painting, beer garden, craft projects, a costume contest and more!

MCDOT is working to implement [Flash bus rapid transit service](#) across the County, starting construction in the Veirs Mill Road corridor next year to implement Flash service and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety in the corridor. These improvements will make bus service faster and more reliable while also making biking and walking safer and easier.

## Important Reminder: Stay Safe at Bus Stops



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

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

## Interview with Transit Advisory Group Member Suzanne Ludlow



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

I have been riding occasionally since 1997, more regularly in the past five years.

### **Why did you start riding Ride On?**

I started taking Ride On because I like the convenience that comes with not having to fight traffic or find a parking spot.

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

My usual bus routes are Ride On 12 and 14. They took me close to my office or to the Takoma Metro to go into DC. Recently, I have had issues with my feet and walking became difficult. After surgery on my right foot, I was not able to drive but was able to get out and around on public transit.

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

There is good service in my neighborhood and there are seats available, which helped a lot after my surgery. It also feels safe and reliable.

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

I have had a variety of experiences riding on Ride On, most recently as a disabled passenger using a variety of accommodations. I can bring my varied experiences to evaluating issues with buses, stops, routes, etc. My past career in planning and city management also allows me to know how public transit fits into meeting community needs.

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

I frequently recommend it, especially to anyone with limited mobility.

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

## Real Time Information Has a New Look: Connectpoint ePaper Displays



Montgomery County recently launched Phase 1 of the Great Seneca Transit Network (GSTN) on September 8. Phase 1 includes the Lime and Pink routes – two new high-frequency, limited stop routes with faster service during weekday peak hours, and extended service on weekends. The GSTN connects neighborhoods and businesses, improving mobility and access to crucial jobs in the healthcare, biotech, and education sectors of Montgomery County. The GSTN is also a crucial factor in supporting the continued growth of the medical sciences industry by providing new efficient options to travel and will improve transit equity for all residents by connecting riders to jobs, healthcare providers, and medical facilities.

A key feature of the new Great Seneca Transit Network routes are the branded shelters integrated with the CP-32 model of Connectpoint’s award-winning ePaper Digital Bus Stop® displays, along with Connectpoint’s Falcon, a text-to-speech button. These 32” real time displays will provide passengers with updated travel information 24/7. The benefits of real time information in public transportation are endless, including bus arrival or departure times, any service changes to a line, public service announcements, delays, and more, allowing passengers to make informed travel decisions.

The Connectpoint Digital Bus Stop® display offers groundbreaking technology via solar power and operates reliably in temperatures ranging from -4°F to 140°F. They are also equipped with ePaper technology that provide crystal-clear readability any hour of the day or night.



Currently, there are approximately 65 real time information bus shelter monitors throughout the county. These are targeted for transitioning to the ePaper technology starting in late 2025. In addition, we are testing a bus stop pole mounted version for high ridership bus stops. These ePaper Digital Bus Stop® displays can be retrofitted to existing bus stops or shelters and managed remotely via their single cloud-based content management system, Connectpoint Asset Management (CPAM™). With CPAM™, the system health, power, and content across the ePaper bus stop displays can be managed remotely for on-the-go changes and performance visibility, and can also be converted into an emergency message system if needed.



These ePaper Digital Bus Stop® signs are award-winning and have been deployed by over 30 transit agencies nationwide. Ride On plans to continue to improve its transit experience for existing riders and for increased ridership in the future. For more details on the new GSTN service and its features, visit [here](#).

## **Ride On Operator Antonio Lucas Receives Transportation Association of Maryland's Driver of the Year Award**



*Pictured (from left to right) is President of TAM's Board of Directors Suzanne Kalmbacher, TAM Driver of the Year Antonio Lucas, and Travis Johnston, Director of the Office of Local Transit Support at the Maryland Transit Authority.*



The Transportation Association of Maryland (TAM), a statewide organization dedicated to improving the mobility of all Maryland citizens, hosted its Annual Excellence Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, September 18, at the Chesapeake Bay Beach Club in Stevensville, MD.

TAM's Annual Awards Ceremony honors organizations and individuals in the following categories: Friend of Transit; Outstanding Transit Innovation; Outstanding Leadership; Outstanding Transit Employee; Outstanding Non-Profit Agency; Outstanding Transit System; and Driver of the Year.

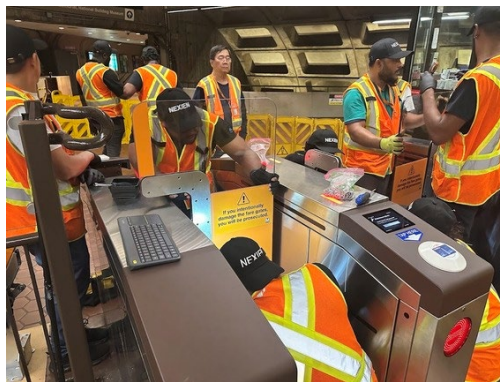
This year, Ride On operator Antonio Lucas received the TAM Driver of the Year Award for his strong work ethic, continued demonstration of excellence, and exceptional displays of compassion and customer service.

On February 23 at approximately 6:35 p.m., Ride On Central Communications received a phone call from Montgomery County Police asking to pass along a critical lookout for an elderly woman with dementia in Gaithersburg. Messages were sent to all bus operators in Gaithersburg, asking them to be on the lookout for the missing woman.

A few minutes later, bus operator Antonio Lucas found the missing woman at the Germantown Transit Center. He escorted her to a nearby restaurant, bought her food to eat, and waited with her until police arrived. This kindness did not go unnoticed. After appearing on WUSA 9, Mr. Lucas received a personal telephone call from Governor Wes Moore thanking him for his service.

Congratulations to Mr. Lucas on winning this award. We are proud of the work he does every day serving Montgomery County.

## **Metro finishes installing more-secure faregates at all 98 Metrorail stations, fareboxes on 1,500 buses**



All 98 stations across the Metrorail system now have more secure, retrofitted faregates to deter fare evasion. The improvements have led to an 82% drop in fare evasion in the Metrorail system. More than 1,200 five-foot-tall gates and taller fences have been installed across all stations. The project began in July 2023.

“We have seen incredible results from the taller faregates,” Metro General Manager Randy Clarke said. “We are never going to completely stop fare evasion, but these go a long way in addressing the problem.”

Metro has also recently completed the installation of new fareboxes across all 1,500 of its buses. Customers often could not pay on buses because of farebox malfunctions. Metro Transit Police regularly patrol bus loops and individual bus routes to enforce payment.

Fare evasion is one of WMATA customers’ biggest concerns, according to Metro surveys. Customers said it made them feel unsafe and that it was unfair to those who paid fares.

“Tackling fare evasion has been one of the Board of Directors top priorities,” said Metro Board Finance and Capital Committee Chair Matt Letourneau. “Not only does fare evasion cost us badly needed revenue, it is fundamentally unfair to all our customers who pay their hard-earned money.

“By cracking down on fare evasion through new faregates and better enforcement, we’ve also been able to make our system safer by deterring those with bad intentions from riding. The Board appreciates the hard work of staff to address this issue and improve our system.”

Metro Transit Police continue to patrol stations for fare evasion and have written more than 10,000 fare evasion citations so far this year. That’s nearly three times the number of tickets written through the same period last year and 2,000 more citations than all of 2019. Revenue from the tickets goes to the local governments.

So far this year, MTPD has arrested more than 250 individuals stopped for fare evading and found to have open warrants. Police have also recovered 16 guns.

Fare evasion increased to record levels during the pandemic, leading to a loss of \$40 million of fare revenue a year. Metro relies on those fares to help keep buses, trains, and MetroAccess services running.

For those who need help paying, Metro has several [fare discount programs](#). Nearly 8,500 people have signed up for [Metro Lift](#), a half-off fare program launched in June 2023 for low-income individuals enrolled in SNAP. Those over age 65 are eligible for half-off fares with a [Senior SmarTrip card](#). D.C. students are eligible for the [Kids Ride Free](#) program.

So far this year, rail ridership is up 9% compared to last year. The number of paid trips where a customer tapped a physical or mobile SmarTrip card is up 30%.

It’s easier than ever to pay your fare by adding SmarTrip to a [mobile wallet](#). More than 30% of trips are paid for by tapping your smartphone, allowing customers to skip the fare vending machines.

Earlier this year, Metro finished installing credit card readers on all exit fare machines so customers can easily add funds to their SmarTrip card if they don’t have enough on their card to exit the system.

## Public Transit Available to Take Residents to Montgomery County's 14 Early Voting Centers During the Presidential General Election



Early voting for the 2024 Presidential General Election will be held from 7 a.m. - 8 p.m. from October 24 through October 31, including Saturday and Sunday. Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Ride On bus service has several routes available to transport voters to the [early voting centers](#).

Montgomery County Ride On and Metrobus routes that will serve early voting centers:

- Activity Center at Bohrer: Ride On route [59](#) (closest)
- Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center: Ride On route [48](#)
- Damascus Community Recreation Center: Ride On route [90](#)
- Executive Office Building: Ride On routes [44](#), [46](#), [47](#), [54](#), [56](#)
- Germantown Community Recreation Center: Ride On route [98](#)
- Jane E. Lawton Community Recreation Center: Ride On route [34](#) (closest)
- Marilyn J. Praisner Community Recreation Center: Metrobus routes [Z6](#) and [Z7](#)
- Mid-County Community Recreation Center: Ride On routes [26](#), [39](#) and [49](#)
- Nancy H. Dacek North Potomac Community Rec. Center: Ride On route [301](#)
- Potomac Community Recreation Center: Ride On route [37](#)
- Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Station: Ride On routes [52](#) and [53](#) / Metrobus routes [Y2](#) and [Y8](#)
- Silver Spring Civic Building: Ride On routes [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [19](#) / Metrobus route [F4](#)
- Wheaton Library & Community Recreation Center: Ride on routes [9](#) and [31](#)/ Ride On [Flex](#) / Metrobus routes [Y2](#), [Y7](#) and [Y8](#)
- White Oak Community Recreation Center: Ride on route [10](#) / Metrobus routes [Z6](#) and [Z8](#) (closest)

The [Ride On Trip Planner](#) app is a free regional public transportation planner that will find your fastest route.

For information on the approved early voting centers and hours of operation, go to the [early voting information page](#).

Ride On [bus fare is only \\$1](#) and monthly passes are \$22.50 using SmarTrip, cash or tokens. [Seniors 65 or older](#), [persons with disabilities](#) and [youth 18 and under](#) ride free using specialized SmarTrip cards.

## Take Ride On to Montgomery County Farms



Fall weather means cooler temperatures, cozy clothing, warm drinks, and visits to local farms. Take Ride On to one of the farms, breweries, or vineyards below for some fall fun amongst the changing leaves.

- **[Honey Acres Farm](#):** Honey Acres Farm in Boyds offers stables, music and farm classes, and event venue spaces. They even rent out the beautiful historic farmhouse that sits on the property. For education, relaxation, and fun, take Ride On Route [76](#) to get to Honey Acres Farm.
- **[Koiner Farm](#):** Koiner Farm is the first urban farm in Maryland to be permanently preserved under a conservation easement. The easement permits the continued agricultural use of the property and protects access for the public. Koiner Farm hosts educational programs for local schools and community groups, while maintaining the farm with help from interns and volunteers. To get to this unique destination in the heart of Montgomery County, take Ride On routes [20](#) or [28](#).
- **[Lone Oak Farm Brewery](#):** Lone Oak is not just a brewery at a farm; rather, it's a farm with a brewery. It's 28.66 acres of bucolic fields and streams, a pond, and wide-open spaces. It's wildflowers and wildlife. It's crops – barley and hops – and berries and hay. It's bees raised to produce honey. It's sunsets and a majestic, pre-Civil War oak tree. To see all this and more, take Ride On routes [52](#) or [53](#) to Lone Oak Farm Brewery.

- **Red Wiggler Community Farm:** Red Wiggler Community Farm is a sustainable Care Farm where people with and without developmental disabilities come together to work, learn, and grow healthy food. Red Wiggler offers volunteer opportunities, school visits, tours, and special events throughout the year. To visit this community farm, take Ride On Route [90](#).
- **Camp Olympia Riding Center:** This Rockville property offers summer camps in the warmer months, but their Riding Center is open all year. They offer lessons year-round with a very flexible schedule. They also have special programs which include horse shows, Spring and Winter Break Camp, one day camps for school holidays, birthday parties, Girl Scout Badges and CHA Riding Instructor Certification Clinic. Take Ride On Route [53](#) to get to this equestrian paradise.

## 'What Drives You?' Campaign Wants to Hear Your Ride On Stories

**How has Ride On changed your life for the better?**

Scan the QR code to share your Ride On story for a chance to win a prize package.

*¿Cómo ha mejorado su vida gracias a Ride On?*  
*Escanee el código QR para compartir su historia sobre Ride On y tener la oportunidad de ganar un paquete de premios.*

**WHAT DRIVES YOU?**  
 Since 1975 Ride On has helped people get to the places that are important to them.

*¿Qué lo moviliza?*  
 Desde 1975 Ride On ha ayudado a las personas a llegar a los lugares que son importantes para ellas.

**MC DOT**  
 Montgomery County Department of Transportation

**@RideOnMCT**

**Ride On**  
 Montgomery County Transit

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

The first of these contests, which also began March 13, asked riders to share memories of Ride On and detail how Ride On shaped their lives up to today.

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

In our 49 years of service, Ride On has touched the lives of millions of riders. People have used the service to help them earn degrees, provide for their family, 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! Visit our submission page [here](#) to share your story with the Ride On team, and stay tuned in the coming weeks for information on the next What Drives You contest!

## **FTA Issues First General Directive to Protect Transit Workers from Assaults**



The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has issued its first-ever general directive, Directive 24-1, to address the growing issue of assaults on transit workers. Between 2013 and 2021, transit agencies reported a 120% increase in assaults on transit workers. To counter this alarming trend, the Federal Transit Administration and the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) are holding over 700 transit agencies across the United States accountable by requiring them to take immediate action to safeguard their employees. These agencies must assess the risk of assaults, develop strategies to mitigate them, and provide the necessary information to FTA within 90 days, with a deadline of December 26, 2024. If the transit agency serves a large population (over 200,000), they must also involve the Joint Labor-Management Safety Committee in their assessments.

USDOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg recognizes the vital role frontline transit workers have in keeping the nation moving and emphasized the Biden-Harris Administration's

commitment to prioritizing worker safety. Building on past initiatives aimed at reducing the number of transit worker assaults, Directive 24-1 is another step that continues to push to protect essential transit employees. In 2021, the FTA requested information on transit worker safety, and in 2022, they issued Special Directives to nine U.S. transit agencies that accounted for nearly 80 percent of all assaults. Moving forward, updated safety regulations will be implemented under Directive 24-1 to further enhance transit worker protection across the U.S.

## Montgomery County Celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month



Montgomery County was proud to join the nation in celebrating National Hispanic Heritage Month, an annual observance from September 15 to October 15. This month-long celebration honors the history, culture, and contributions of Hispanic and Latino communities across the country. In Montgomery County, the festivities included vibrant events such as the inaugural Hispanic Heritage Festival and Health Fair, where community members gathered to enjoy food, music, dance, art, and more.

The festival, which took place on October 6 at Marian Fryer Town Plaza, offered a great opportunity for families and residents of all backgrounds to experience the richness of Hispanic traditions. The celebration featured performances showcasing various Latin American music and dance forms, allowing attendees to immerse themselves in the cultural diversity that defines the Hispanic experience.

Beyond the festivities, the event highlighted the importance of community well-being. The accompanying health fair provided resources, screenings, and information to help ensure that every individual has access to essential health services. This initiative underscores the County's dedication to the health and well-being of its diverse population, with a focus on addressing the needs of Hispanic residents.

While Hispanic Heritage Month is ended on October 15, Montgomery County offers programs and events that celebrate diversity throughout the year. You can find out more about these programs by visiting the Office of Community Partnerships [website](#). From business owners to educators and public servants, the Hispanic community plays a vital role in the County's vibrant cultural fabric.

## **Of Note**

### **Connect-A-Ride Serves Area Seniors**

Connect-A-Ride (CAR) is a free referral service that provides adults over 50 and adults with disabilities information about their transportation options for medical services, errands, social activities and more. CAR links callers with public, private, and volunteer transportation services, including escorted transportation. In addition, the program assists callers with their applications for transportation programs like Call-N-Ride and Metro Access. They also offer free workshops on how to use public transportation. Call 301-738-3252 Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. CAR is funded by Montgomery County Government and operated by Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA).

### **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.

### **Connect With Ride On**

Are you following Ride On's social media accounts yet? Ride On communicates and connects to our riders using Instagram, X, Facebook, Threads, and YouTube. Our social media presence allows us to share exciting news and new programs as well as keep riders up to date on any detours, stop changes, or construction impacting our routes. On our Instagram account you can find interviews with riders and operators, featured trips to locations on Ride On routes, and regular updates through our new "Ride On Run-Down" series. Find us at @RideOnMCT on your favorite social media platform.

We also communicate 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. To subscribe, visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govdelivery](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govdelivery), or text MONTGOMERY RIDEON to 468311 to receive text alerts.

### **Plan Your Next Trip with the Ride On Trip Planner App**

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](#).



## 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 month is the Ride On Flash anniversary?

1. January
2. March
3. July
4. October

### Last month's question:

What year did Ride On launch its first electric buses as part of its transition to a greener, more sustainable fleet?

1. 2019
2. 2024
3. 2021
4. 2020

Answer: (4) 2020

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

For information on MCDOT programs and services visit [montgomerycountymd.gov/mcdot](http://montgomerycountymd.gov/mcdot), follow @MCDOTNow on [X](#), [Facebook](#) 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](mailto: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.