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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Christopher R. Conklin
Director

AGENDA

Joint TMD Advisory Committee
Friendship Heights / Silver Spring / Greater Shady Grove / Bethesda / North Bethesda

March 20, 2024
8:30 – 10:00 a.m.
Teams Format

- I. Welcome **Sandra Brecher / Jim Carlson**
- II. Presentation: *Visualize 2050* **Cristina Finch**
Principal Planner-MWCOG
- III. County Updates **Sandra Brecher**
Chief, Montgomery County Commuter Services
- IV. Around the Room Announcements **All**
- V. Adjourn

Information Items

- *Montgomery County Executive Elrich Releases Recommended \$7.1 Billion Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget*
- *MTPD to begin issuing citations under new law*
- *A year into strategic plan, Metro marks improvements in ridership, customer satisfaction*
- *Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich and County Council President Andrew Friedson Join in Launch of Completed Dedicated Bus Lanes Project*
- *Montgomery County Offering Adult Bike and E-Scooter Classes in April, May and June*
- *Bike To Work Day 2024 – Registration Now Open*

Montgomery County Executive Elrich Releases Recommended \$7.1 Billion Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget

For Immediate Release: Thursday, March 14, 2024

County Executive Proposes Record Funding for Education, Affordable Housing and Economic Development and Does Not Propose Any Tax Rate Increases



Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich today released his recommended Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Operating Budget of \$7.1 billion, which is an increase of 4.9 percent from the FY24 approved all funds budget (County Government plus outside agencies).

The FY25 budget reflects growing demands for services, increased costs for operations, fulfilling contracts with County labor partners, a commitment to schools and a strengthened approach to economic development activities.

To access the entire recommended FY25 budget, [click here](#). To watch the County Executive's FY25 recommended budget presentation, [click here](#).

The County Charter requires the County Executive to present a recommended budget by March 15 of each year. The recommended budget will be reviewed by the County Council over the next two months. The Council will adopt the new County budget in May, and it will go into effect on July 1.

“This recommended budget makes significant investments to improve the quality of life for our community without raising taxes,” said County Executive Elrich. “Our County’s current resources, while increasing, cannot fully support the growing needs of the community and demand for services. Consequently, I am not able to recommend funding for all requests for service enhancements I have received from stakeholders, community groups and County departments. Working within our current resources, my plan balances the needs of the community, economic forecasts and the growing cost of doing business. Looking to the future, we will need to have frank conversations about the structural imbalance that exists between the growing demands for County services and the revenue streams we currently have available to us.

“To continue to thrive, we must be able to provide businesses with access to talented employees and good infrastructure; provide residents with access to quality education and employment opportunities, affordable housing, safe neighborhoods, and a transportation infrastructure system that works well; ensure that our most vulnerable neighbors remain housed and have access to services so they can live healthy and thriving lives; attract talent to County government to deliver the services residents demand most; and address climate change, which is a threat to our very existence. This budget addresses each of these challenges.”

The recommended FY25 budget incorporated feedback from the County’s very diverse population. Over the course of four months, County Executive Elrich conducted 10 community conversations on the budget. These took place in five regions of the County, plus focused sessions with the Montgomery County PTA, older adults, and three sessions conducted in languages other than English (Chinese, Spanish, and Amharic). In addition, residents were able to participate virtually at several of these sessions making them more accessible. Over 3,000 people attended these conversations (in-person and online).

“I want to thank everyone who participated in this budget process,” said Elrich. “I received numerous letters and e-mail messages from and held meetings with members of the community regarding service needs. The feedback I received from the community conversations, letters, e-mail messages and meetings has been invaluable and was used in informing my funding recommendations for FY25. I also want to thank the incredible work of our community partners. County government alone could not reach everyone who needs assistance. Through our partnerships with nonprofit organizations and faith communities, we continue to connect more deeply with our residents to deliver much needed services.”

Highlights of the FY25 Recommended Operating Budget:

- Preserves vital services for County residents without any tax increases
- Includes reserve balance of 11.6 percent, \$106.1 million above the 10 percent reserve target
- Funds 98.2 percent of MCPS’ request at \$3.3 billion and provides third largest funding increase of \$106.8 million over last year’s approved budget
 - \$132 million above State’s Maintenance of Effort requirements
- Fully funds Montgomery College’s request
- Record funding of \$365 million for climate change and environmental initiatives

- Provides key investments in public safety departments to enhance crime prevention, fire, and corrections and rehabilitation services
- Record \$169 million in funding for affordable housing, including \$65 million in new funds
- Significant investment of \$27 million for economic development, a 17 percent increase
- Provides 3 percent inflationary adjustments to all of the County's nonprofit partners

Public Schools and Services for Children:

"In order for Montgomery County to succeed, MCPS must succeed," said Elrich. "My recommended budget increases County funding for the MCPS budget by \$106.8 million, which is the third largest ever increase for MCPS. Per-pupil funding grows by \$888, and my recommended MCPS budget exceeds the State's Maintenance of Effort requirement by \$132 million. In addition to funding provided directly to MCPS, this budget contains significant funding to County departments supporting the mission of our school system and ensuring that children have access to early childhood care and programs, healthcare and mental healthcare services in our schools as well as funding to addressing youth safety needs."

Highlights include:

- Third largest increase for Montgomery County Public Schools if approved - \$3.3 billion - \$106.8million increase from FY24
- \$132 million above the State's Maintenance of Effort Requirement
- Funds 98.2 percent of the Montgomery County Board of Education's request
- Fully funds the negotiated compensation agreements for teachers and other MCPS employees to retain and recruit outstanding educators and other essential school staff
- Shifts \$33 million to MCPS' base operating budget to address anticipated end of federal pandemic relief funding on September 30, 2024
- \$45.7 million in funding for school health services in the Department of Health and Human Services, which includes:
 - \$2.2 million in additional funding to provide dedicated nurses for schools designated to be a "community school" under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future
 - \$600,000 to open the School Based Health Center at South Lake Elementary School
- Expands the "Excel Beyond the Bell Program" to two additional middle schools - Eastern and Benjamin Banneker
- Funds expansion of RecZone program and ongoing support for the Youth Safety Initiative Program
- \$440,000 increase for the Summer and Winter Break Children's Food program
 - After leveraging additional State funding, this program is estimated to serve nearly 72,000 children in Montgomery County in FY25.
- \$1.1 million in funding (\$231,000 to be provided by budget amendment) for the Children's Opportunity Alliance (COA)
 - An increase of \$343,000 over FY24 approved budget
- \$22.6 million for the Early Care and Education Initiative (ECEI)
 - Funds programming such as Working Parents Assistance and the County's Supplement to the State Child Care Scholarship Program that will provide childcare subsidies for families with incomes up to 450 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.
 - Allocates funds for EquiCare Subsidy Seats Grant Program that will cover the cost of quality childcare for infants and toddlers (age 6 weeks to 36 months) seats for families that do not meet the eligibility criteria for current early childhood public programs.

Support for Individuals and Families:

“Economic and social inequities exist in our community that are life or death struggles for many of our residents,” said Elrich. “I believe that my administration and this County should be judged first and foremost on how we take care of the most vulnerable as well those most impacted by historic inequities. My FY25 recommended budget makes targeted investments in programs that help uplift those who are struggling most.”

Highlights (in addition to the student/education programs listed above) include:

- Nearly \$3 million to increase homeless shelter capacity and provide overflow sheltering in the winter months
- An additional \$1.8 million in enhancements for Montgomery Cares to provide funding to cover nearly half of the cost of care
- \$600,000 in ongoing infectious disease prevention
- Funding to provide a 3 percent increase to the Developmental Disabilities Supplement Program, the Adult Medical Day Care Supplemental Program and all our nonprofit partners
- Over \$17 million to address food insecurity - including \$3 million in HHS and \$14.3 million in the Office of Food Systems Resilience
- Enhancements in County funds for the Summer and Winter Break Children’s Food Program to reduce hunger for children when schools are closed

Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change:

“As I have said many times before and as we know all too well, we are facing a climate crisis that is not easily solved and cannot be solved at the County level alone,” said Elrich. “We must do what we can and hopefully serve as a model for other jurisdictions around the country. I am recommending \$365 million toward our efforts to fight climate change. My budget adds funds to help low-income residents access federal incentives and tax credits for climate-friendly investments that are available via the Federal Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 and the Jobs Act of 2023. We are investing in our continued transition to electric vehicles, expanding solar infrastructure, improving the tree canopy, reducing pollution in our rivers and streams as well as engaging more County residents in adopting local climate solutions.”

Highlights Include:

- Recommending \$365 million to fight climate change through transit, increased renewable energy, improved building efficiency, and nature-based solutions
 - \$19.1 million for the Montgomery County Green Bank - an increase of almost \$500,000 over FY24 budget
- Adds \$9 million in new spending to further the County’s efforts to fight climate change, including:
 - \$275,000 to help under-resourced building owners like nonprofits and small businesses comply with the County’s Building Energy Performance Standards
 - Adds funds to help low-income residents access federal incentive and tax credits for climate-friendly investments
 - Enhancements to build out the County’s electric vehicle charging infrastructure
 - Adds a position and operating support to build out the County’s solar charging infrastructure
- Adds funds to support climate change solutions in the transportation sector, clean energy efforts, and zero waste efforts

Transportation and Transit:

“While we are making some important improvements including the Great Seneca Transit Network, I continue to be concerned about our ability to build transportation infrastructure,” said Elrich. “Additional resources are essential, particularly to support important investments to enhance mobility within and around the County, support economic development, and improve safety for transit riders, pedestrians, bikers and drivers. While Northern Virginia races ahead of us targeting taxes to implement transportation improvements and address congestion, we continue to be hamstrung by constrained resources and lack of authority to implement solutions as done in Northern Virginia. We need to understand the importance of targeted taxes as an investment in a successful future.”

Highlights Include:

- Provides funds for the launch of the Great Seneca Transit Network that will provide frequent transit service and improve mobility and access to jobs in Rockville, Gaithersburg and Shady Grove areas
- Provides much needed funding for repairs and accessibility improvements for bus stops and bus shelters
- Adds funds to address backlog of roadside tree and stump removal and tree plantings
- Adds funds for residential road resurfacing
- Additional funding to help us achieve our Vision Zero goal, including funding to install raised pavement markers, refresh crosswalk markings and maintain street signs as well as an increase to the Safe Routes to School program

Affordable Housing:

“Our goal is to produce, protect and preserve as much affordable housing in our County as possible,” said Elrich. “When families are displaced due to high housing costs, schools, neighborhoods and communities are negatively impacted. My FY25 recommended budget allocates over \$169.4 million, including \$65 million in new funding, to expand the preservation and production of affordable housing to our most economically burdened residents. I am recommending \$56.2 million in the Housing Initiative Fund (HIF) that includes \$22.9 million for our Rental Assistance Program. Additionally, I am recommending \$113.2 million in funding for three Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), including the Affordable Housing Acquisition and Preservation project, the Nonprofit Preservation Fund and the Revitalization for Troubled and Distressed Common Ownership Communities project.”

Highlights Include:

- FY25 budget allocates over \$169.4 million to expand the preservation and production of affordable housing to our most economically burdened residents
- \$56.2 million in the Housing Initiative Fund
- \$22.9 million for the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) to continue providing rental assistance and supportive services to help the County’s most vulnerable residents
- \$113.2 million in CIP budget
- \$65 million in NEW capital funding for the Affordable Housing Acquisition and Preservation project
- Funding for the Nonprofit Preservation Fund, and the Revitalization for Troubled and Distressed Common Ownership Communities project
- Continues funding to support the “Building Neighborhoods to Call Home,” “Design for Life” and “Home Ownership Assistance” programs

Public Safety:

“We are expanding our efforts to make our communities safe and secure,” said Elrich. “The recommended FY25 budget includes funding to increase recruitment and improve staffing of first responders, investing in new technologies that will help suppress crime and apprehend criminals while continuing our commitment to a holistic approach to provide resources and

services that create more positive opportunities for young people. Additionally, we continue to invest in our best public safety resource, the men and women who serve to protect and rescue us.”

Highlights Include:

Police Department

- Expands the innovative “Drone as a First Responder” pilot program to Germantown/Gaithersburg and Bethesda and extends hours in Silver Spring and Wheaton
- Establishes a grant program to aid affected businesses in establishing safety plans as required by Bill 14-23
- Funds tools to support digitization of critical historical records catalogues and installation of computer/printer kiosks at district stations to facilitate community access to public records

Correction and Rehabilitation

- Funds to provide for the year-round operation of the Pre-Release Center, which is a national model
- Funds to repair kitchen equipment in support of the relaunched Bakery Program, which provides crucial employment skills
- Continue retention bonuses for correctional health nurses

Fire and Rescue Service

- Leverages funds from the State’s Emergency Service
 - Transporter Supplemental Payment Program (ESPP) to:
 - Provide additional staffing at Sandy Spring Fire Station 40
 - Launch a new Girls Fire Camp to diversify gender representation in the fire service by empowering girls to consider firefighting careers
- Adds three firefighter positions in the Fire and Explosives Investigations Unit to increase effectiveness and free up law enforcement personnel
- Adds funds for early detection cancer screenings and provide COVID booster vaccinations for career firefighters

Mental Health and Substance Misuse

- As federal funding terminates, the current Mobile Crisis Teams are funded with County funds and two additional teams are recommended - for a total of seven teams
- Establishes the Opioid Abatement Fund in the budget, funded with the County’s share of proceeds from the State’s legal settlement with opioid manufacturers and distributors
- Establishes the Office of Prevention and Harm Reduction using Opioid Abatement Funds
- Continues programming that provides targeted emergency interventions, public awareness campaigns and grant funding

Libraries and Recreation:

“Last year we began offering free passes to residents to our Department of Recreation fitness centers; our libraries continue to find new and creative ways to engage audiences of all ages, and recently we opened the Silver Spring Aquatic and Recreation Center to great fanfare,” said Elrich. “It is evident from the positive response to these programs and resources that our libraries and recreation centers matter to the residents and communities of Montgomery County. In our FY25 budget, I am pleased to increase funding to meet public demand for online publications as well as increasing non-English language books and materials. Additionally, we are going to continue our free access to fitness centers and provide additional funding to senior programming.”

Highlights Include:Libraries

- Enhancements to expand access to digital materials to meet increased public demand
- Expansions to the County's World Languages Collection to serve customers who speak languages other than English

Recreation

- Continuation of free fitness passes for Montgomery County Recreation centers
- Expansion of Excel Beyond the Bell to Eastern and Benjamin Banneker middle schools
- Expanding RecZone, a youth program at high schools
- Funds for Senior programming and the Senior Barbecue Bonanza

Economic Development:

"My FY25 Recommended Operating Budget includes a more targeted and improved approach to economic development with approximately \$27.3 million to support growing the County's economy, an increase of 17 percent from the FY24 Approved Operating Budget," said Elrich. "While we're at the center of the #3 biohealth cluster, we've been assessing what critical pieces are missing; we're working to make sure that companies don't tell us 'we'd love to come here but for...'. This budget gives us capacity to add critical pieces of the puzzle to bring and retain these important businesses. My recommendation builds on our goal for an inclusive and innovative economy by leveraging our talented workforce, our existing biohealth strengths, innovation economy, location and quality of life assets. Economic development is not the responsibility of any one department or organization, and these activities are funded through multiple County departments and economic development organizations. Through these combined efforts, the County supports business and startup growth, attracts domestic and international relocation and measures impact to continuously improve service delivery."

Highlights Include:

- Provides a total of \$27.3 million to support growing the County's economy, an increase of 17 percent from FY24
 - Funding for "BioHub Maryland at Montgomery County" to train our workforce at a state-of-the-art multifunctional facility equipped with cutting edge industrial bioprocessing equipment
 - New capital investments to refresh our existing incubators into innovation centers
 - Establishes a robust partnership with private and nonprofit partners for fostering entrepreneurship and innovation
 - Creates a new industry-led County alliance focused on the high tech and life sciences sector ecosystem in Montgomery County
 - Proposes establishment of a \$7.5 million fund for High-Growth Small Business to support companies with high growth potential and grow jobs in the County. The fund will provide access to much-needed capital to start or grow these businesses
 - Two additional business liaisons for the Montgomery County Business Center team to provide outreach and direct assistance for businesses
- Total budget of \$2.4 million to WorkSource Montgomery - a 21 percent increase of the prior fiscal year that includes support for the Summer RISE youth program and programming at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility to support successful reentry opportunities

Community Partners:

“This budget strengthens and improves the County’s relationship with community partners,” said Elrich. “The services offered by our partners help us to address poverty and social inequity, provide emergency services and health care, serve disconnected youth in our community and ensure that seniors and persons with disabilities receive quality services. These partnerships help our neighbors who are most in need access critical services. I am recommending a three percent inflationary adjustment for nonprofit contracts across County government. Additionally, this budget also expands the capacity of the Office of Grants Management by creating a pool of flexible funding - some of this will be used to help us go after federal grants.”

Highlights Include:

- Provides a three percent inflationary adjustment to all nonprofit service provider contracts and community grants
- \$6.5 million to continue to fund all multi-year Community Grants Non-Departmental Account awards
- \$2 million for Nonprofit Technical Assistance and Management Support grants
- \$1.2 million for a Community Projects Fund for small grants
- \$1 million for a nonprofit incubator
- \$1.5 million in cost sharing grants to provide matching funds for capital projects
- \$1.2 million for Nonprofit Security Grants - \$900,000 in this budget plus and additional \$300,000 to be submitted by budget amendment

Effective and Sustainable Government:

“My recommended operating budget makes significant investments in one of our greatest assets - our employees and the operations of the Montgomery County government,” said Elrich. “As part of the recommended FY25 operating budget, we are recommending increases to the Board of Elections to handle the 2024 Presidential Election. My budget provides funding for the Department of Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions (TEBS) to continue to modernize Montgomery County Government information technology systems. And we are making significant changes to the Cable Fund by identifying additional revenue streams and a strategic plan to guide our Public, Education, and Government communications efforts moving forward.”

Highlights Include:

- \$4.4 million increase to the Board of Elections to support for the Presidential Election
- \$333,000 in funding for the Public Election Fund
- Funds to modernize the County’s information technology systems and enhance Cybersecurity
- To take advantage of efficiencies in technology, shifts MC311 to the Department of Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions
- Provides for ways to explore novel uses of artificial intelligence (AI) to provide efficient information technology services and revolutionize the way County government functions
- Expands capacity of the Office of Grants Management by creating a pool of flexible funding for federal grant pursuit and management tools that can be allocated strategically across departments

Creating a 21st Century Workforce:

“Our Office of Human Resources (OHR) works to build a strong and resilient workforce to meet the service needs of our diverse and growing community - today and into the future,” said Elrich. “With historically low unemployment rates and increased teleworking career options, the County - like every local government - is experiencing persistent staffing challenges. In recognition of these new realities, I have directed repurposing of six existing positions and funding for online hiring platforms, to strengthen our recruitment program. Along with the new applicant tracking system, these resources will

bring the County's recruitment and hiring efforts current with best practices, reduce time to fill and bring increased visibility to the County as a preferred employer. The budget also funds management training programs, to increase the effectiveness of the County's leadership teams. Additionally, to reform the County's long outdated classification plan and bring transparency to the County's pay practices, the budget funds a comprehensive review of job classes and compensation structures, with a view towards developing and implementing a competitive pay philosophy."

Highlights Include:

- Funds to modernize our recruitment practices, enhance leadership effectiveness, and foster transparency and equity in our classification and compensation structures
- Repurposes six vacant positions for the Office of Human Resources and increase funding for online hiring platforms to strengthen the County's recruitment efforts
- Provides ongoing funds for a management training program that we piloted in FY24 - this is critical to increase the effectiveness of the County's leadership teams
- Funds to finally update the County's long outdated classification plan and bring more transparency to the County's pay practices
- Centralizes labor relations functions within the Office of Labor Relations by repurposing five vacant positions from elsewhere in County government to bolster these efforts
- Eliminates 60 positions and repurposes 40 positions, the vast majority of which have been vacant for longer than one year

Use of Additional Federal Reimbursement:

"The County has been approved to receive \$33 million in reimbursements from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for COVID-19 related expenditures - we are just waiting for the check," said Elrich. "Consistent with the County's fiscal policy, this revenue assumption is not included in this budget submission. It is highly likely that we will receive these revenues while the Council is considering my recommended budget. When we receive the funding, I intend to submit the following items as budget amendments using the revenue from this reimbursement so the Council can consider them as part of the FY25 Recommended Operating Budget package."

Allocation of Additional Federal Reimbursement for COVID Costs		
Department	Amendment	Amount
DGS	Support for BlackRock Center for the Arts	\$260,000
EDF	Fund for High Growth Small Businesses	\$7,500,000
HHS	Newcomers Program	\$7,155,143
NDA - COA	Additional Funding for Children's Opportunity Alliance	\$231,200
NDA - KID	KID Museum Programmatic Enhancements	\$1,145,366
NDA - Vision Zero	La Abuelina Outreach Phase 2	\$50,000
OEMHS	Additional Nonprofit Security Grants	\$300,000
OFSR	Food Staples Program	\$3,500,000
POL	Cadet Program	\$495,498
POL	Equipment Planned Lifecycle Asset Replacement Fund	\$500,000
POL	Technology Maintenance Contract	\$1,600,000
REC	Damascus Senior Center Rental Space	\$74,472
REC	IT Enhancement for ePact Software and Equipment	\$145,100
TEBS	Customer Relationship Management Software	\$400,000
TEBS	Web 2.0 Project	\$1,500,000
CIP	Sexual and Gender Minorities Health Center Project	\$500,000
CIP	Transportation Land Purchase Project	\$1,000,000
CIP	Incubator Enhancement Project	\$3,000,000
CIP	Glen Echo Park Spanish Ballroom Capital Project	\$3,250,000
Total		\$32,606,779

Other Enhancements:

“My budget fully funds the request of Montgomery College,” said Elrich. “Because of the efforts begun by my Administration, and in collaboration with the Montgomery College, I am pleased to report that the East County Education Center will offer classes during the spring 2024 semester, with a more robust schedule launching in summer and fall 2024. Additionally, I am recommending a budget increase for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission of 6.2 percent for the Administration Fund and 6.3 percent for the Park Fund, and an 8.5 percent rate increase for WSSC consistent with the request from the Commission and in line with the approved spending affordability limit. As part of the final year of the negotiated three-year phased implementation plan, my budget increases the Payments to Municipalities budget by \$2.1 million, including the estimated cost for speed camera reimbursements. For the third year in a row, I have included funding for the Office of the People’s Counsel, and I hope that this will be the year that the Council will include this funding.”

Highlights Include:

- Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission - total budget increase of \$10.8 million (including debt service)
- WSSC Water - 8.5 percent rate increase per the Spending Affordability Guidelines, consistent with the request from the Commission
- Payments to Municipalities budget increases by \$2.3 million and reflects the final phase of the three-year negotiated plan to address tax duplication issues
- Fully funds the request of the County Council and adds two additional staffers to the Office of Inspector General to support MCPS investigations
- Adds funding to restore the Office of the People’s Counsel in the Legislative Branch

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Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

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For immediate release: March 12, 2024

MTPD to begin issuing citations under new law that toughens enforcement of fare evasion

Legislation also increases penalty for assaults on transit operators

DC Fare Evasion Enforcement



Beginning on Monday, March 18, Metro Transit Police (MTPD) will enhance the issuing of citations for fare evasion in the District, following the passage of the Secure DC Bill. The emergency legislation, passed unanimously by the DC Council and signed by Mayor Muriel Bowser, includes a provision requiring anyone stopped for fare evasion to provide their true name and address, allowing police officers to issue civil citations.

The new law also increases the penalty for assaulting bus and rail operators or Metro employees under the Transit Operator Protection and Enhanced Penalty Amendment Act.

Before the Secure DC Bill passed, MTPD officers could engage an individual who did not pay the fare but were unable to compel compliance. Instead, officers could only ask an individual to leave the station or go back and pay their fare, severely limiting enforcement efforts. Under the new law, anyone who refuses to provide their true name and address may be arrested and face a fine of up to \$100 for failing to comply.

In November 2022, Metro launched a new safety initiative to crack down on fare evasion. The civil fine in the District is \$50, and in Virginia and Maryland, fare evasion is a criminal violation punishable by up to a \$100 fine. Metro is also in the process of modifying faregates at all 98 Metrorail stations with new salon-style doors that make fare evasion more difficult.

The Secure DC Bill provides additional tools for MTPD to stop and deter criminal behavior, and is critical to running a safe, efficient system. The changes also support Metro's Strategic Transformation Plan to provide safe, reliable service, support equity and sustainability, protect employees, and foster collaboration with our regional partners.

Metro offers reduced fare programs including Metro Lift for SNAP recipients, seniors, and student programs to make Metro equitable and affordable for everyone in our region to use public transit.

Additional information about Metro's fare enforcement efforts can be found at [wmata.com/paythefare](https://www.wmata.com/paythefare).

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Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

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For immediate release: March 7, 2024

A year into strategic plan, Metro marks improvements in ridership, customer satisfaction, public safety and fare collection while reducing expenses

Transformation program includes road map to autonomous trains, zero-emission buses and digitization to improve productivity and safety compliance

Sent on behalf of the WMATA Board of Directors

According to the [first annual report](#) on the results of Metro's Board-approved strategic plan, ***Your Metro, The Way Forward***, bus and rail ridership increased more than 4.5 million trips a month over the previous year, fueled by frequent, reliable, and safe service. Nearly half of Metrobus customers saw buses arrive every 12 minutes or less, and more than half of rail customers saw trains arrive every six minutes or less, on average.

The strategic plan also called for creative measures to reduce crime and improve customer perception of security. Crisis intervention specialists, partnerships with local law enforcement for enhanced station patrols, and more patrols onboard trains and buses have reduced Part I (violent) crimes by 14%.

"As reflected in the unprecedented levels of customer satisfaction, the investment in service frequency, reliability and security is helping people choose to come back to Metro and earning new customers," said Board Chair Paul C. Smedberg. "We are able to make substantial customer and service improvements, all while lowering our costs and becoming more operationally efficient."

While providing more frequent service, Metro has reduced costs by \$183 million through one-time budget actions, newly identified recurring operating cost efficiencies and salary/wage freezes. Metro has also sized trains to match ridership demand, launching its first six-car trains on its newest rail car fleet. Financially, Metro has outperformed expense projections with tight management controls, had a clean independent audit for the ninth straight year, and maintained its AA bond rating, keeping the cost of borrowing in check. At the end of the second quarter, Metro is tracking under its projected operating budget.

Metro's efforts to install new fare gates, as part of a program of enhanced enforcement, have reduced fare evasion in targeted stations by 70%.

The [annual report](#), released today with metrics showing progress over the first year of the plan's implementation, shows that targets were exceeded in key areas that advance our region's goals, including reductions in greenhouse emissions. Metro's emissions reduction saved the equivalent of driving about 200 million miles in an average gasoline-powered car.

"All these achievements in the past year have been possible because of the culture transformation underway at Metro. Internally, we are changing the way we approach our work including identifying efficiencies, introducing new ways to recognize and empower employees, and streamlining internal processes," Smedberg said. "Through unprecedented collaboration across Metro and a new organizational structure, these efforts are already showing benefits."

In tandem with the annual report, the Board is discussing with staff action plans that deliver a road map for autonomous trains, zero-emissions buses, and sweeping digitization to improve productivity and compliance. The full report is available to the public [here](#).

Press Releases - Department of Transportation

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Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich and County Council President Andrew Friedson Join in Launch of Completed Dedicated Bus Lanes Project on University Boulevard in Wheaton

For Immediate Release: Friday, March 8, 2024



Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich and County Council President Andrew Friedson today gathered at Wheaton Forest Local Park to celebrate completion of the dedicated bus lane project on University Boulevard (MD 193) between Amherst Avenue and Dennis Avenue in Wheaton.

Also joining today's event were Councilmember and Transportation and Environment Committee Chair Evan Glass, Councilmembers Gabe Alborno and Natali Fani-González, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Senior Vice President for Bus Services Leroy Jones, Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administrator (MDOT/SHA) Will Pines and Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Director Chris Conklin.

The brightly painted red dedicated bus lanes run along the park border on University Boulevard and were opened for use on late February. The dedicated bus lanes along the more than two-mile section of roadway will allow buses to travel with minimal motor vehicle traffic obstruction along one of the area's busiest and most congested corridors.

The dedicated bus lanes on University Boulevard are part of a larger MCDOT program, the Bus Priority Project, that will advance similar bus-only lanes. The bus lanes will provide faster, more reliable service along a route with critical service connections to MetroRail, Ride On, Metro buses and the Silver Spring Transit Center. The lanes are designated with solid red paint and "Bus Only" text.

"We are redesigning our approach to transit, to prioritize transportation options that are equitable and climate-friendly," said County Executive Elrich. "The University Boulevard dedicated bus lanes will improve the daily commute for thousands of workers, students and residents along this corridor who depend on public transportation. Additionally, these new bus lanes will also attract new riders to Metrobus and Ride-On services as a more convenient, safe and cost-effective option as compared to using automobiles. I appreciate the work of MCDOT and our partnership with Metro and Maryland State Highway to make commuting via bus better throughout Montgomery County."



The University bus lane corridor serves three Ride On bus lines (Route 7, Route 8 and Route 9) and WMATA's C2 and C4 Metrobus lines. The C2 and C4 Metrobus lines carry about 9,300 riders each weekday, the second-highest ridership route in the Washington, D.C., region.

"I want to thank MCDOT for their efforts to create a better bus experience for our customers," said Metro Senior Vice President Jones. "Frequent, reliable bus service provides pathways to opportunity for riders by connecting them to jobs, education, healthcare and vital services across the region. Our region as a whole will benefit from these improvements to our bus service by spurring economic development, reducing traffic congestion and improving health outcomes through the increase in physical activity and reduction in air pollution. Better bus service builds better communities."

MCDOT will monitor the effectiveness and safety of the bus lanes as a pilot program for 12 months. An evaluation will be done in December 2025 to confirm that the bus lanes are beneficial on this corridor.

"The new bus lanes allow us to improve service for thousands of riders with minimal impact on drivers," said MCDOT Director Chris Conklin. "A previous study conducted by the Maryland Department of Transportation showed that the lanes added, on average, fifteen seconds to vehicle commute times during rush hour. WMATA bus speed data showed that bus lanes will benefit transit operations and bus customers. Additionally, if we can make bus service more appealing by increasing speed and reliability, more people will choose bus service over driving. These lanes will move more people, faster."

WMATA partnered with MCDOT to seek approval for the project from the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT/SHA), which maintains jurisdiction over the State road.

"We are grateful for MCDOT advancing this project to improve Maryland's multimodal transportation system," said State Highway Administrator Will Pines. "Efforts such as these benefit the region by providing better transit connections to life's opportunities. This project serves as a model for the importance of state and county partnership in Montgomery County and across the state."

The new bus lanes will allow use by emergency vehicles and bicycles. Cars can only enter and utilize the bus lane approximately 100 feet prior to making a right turn, as indicated by striped, red lines.

Details about the dedicated bus lane project on University Boulevard can be found on MCDOT's University Boulevard Dedicated Bus Lane project page.

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

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Release ID: 24-032

Media Contact: Emily DeTitta, 240-372-2282



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NEW

Beginning March 25, @RideOnMCT bus stop #26686 at University Blvd E & Merrimac Dr. will be closed until April 7, to facilitate @PurpleLineMD work.

riders will be directed to use Bus Bay E at Takoma Langley Transit Center or stop #26684 at University Blvd & Forston St.



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MCDOT News Releases



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Montgomery County Offering Adult Bike and E-Scooter Classes in April, May and June

For Immediate Release: Thursday, March 14, 2024



The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) will be offering low-cost adult bike classes in April, May and June. The classes will include Learn to Ride and Basic Skills classes. MCDOT also will offer four free, walk-up electric scooter classes following select bike classes.

Advance registration is required to participate in the bicycle classes, with a cost of \$10 for Montgomery County residents. There is no charge for Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) or Capital Bikeshare For All members. However, registration is still required.

Bicycles and helmets will be provided at no charge for the adult Learn to Ride class participants and can be rented from WABA, if needed, for the Basic Skills class participants. E-scooter classes are free of charge.

"More people are riding bikes for recreation, exercise, or as a form of transportation," said County Executive Marc Elrich. "Biking is a lot of fun, a great family activity and good for the environment as an alternative to using a motor vehicle. However, it is important to learn how to bike safely and responsibly. I encourage residents to take advantage of these low-cost bike classes and appreciate MCDOT's efforts to offer them."

Participants in the Learn to Ride bicycle classes will learn how to start and stop, balance, glide, pedal and steer a bike. Each student will progress at their own pace. Students in the Basic Skills class should be able to ride a bicycle and will continue to practice basic biking skills. The classes will be led by experienced WABA instructors.

The classes are open to residents 18 and over, are limited to 25 people and fill up quickly.

Online registration is currently open for April classes on the WABA website under the Classes tab. Registration for May classes will open at 9 a.m. on Monday, March. 25, and June class registration will open at 9 a.m. on Monday, April 29.

Adult Learn to Ride Bike class schedule:

- **Saturday, April 6**
10 a.m.-1 p.m. White Oak Recreation Center, 1700 April Lane, Silver Spring.
- **Sunday, April 21**
10 a.m.-1 p.m. Upper County Recreation Center, 8201 Emory Grove Rd., Gaithersburg. *Free e-scooter class to follow.
- **Saturday, May 11**
10 a.m.-1 p.m. Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-Op, 201 Ethan Allen Ave., Takoma Park.
- **Saturday, May 18**
10 a.m.-1 p.m. Montgomery College (parking lot 13), 850 Hungerford Dr., Rockville. *Free e-scooter class to follow.
- **Sunday, June 9**
10 a.m.-1 p.m. Davis Construction at the Twinbrook Metro Center I, 12530 Parklawn Dr., Rockville.
- **Saturday, June 15**
10 a.m.-1 p.m. GEICO Chevy Chase Building, 5260 Western Ave., Chevy Chase.

Adult Basic Skills Bike Class schedule:

- **Sunday, May 5**
10 a.m.-noon, Westfield Montgomery Mall (former Sears parking lot), 7101 Democracy Blvd., Bethesda. *Free scooter class to follow.
- **Saturday, June 1**
11 a.m.-1 p.m. Bethesda Rescue Squad parking lot, 5020 Battery Ln., Bethesda.
- **Sunday, June 23**
10 a.m.-noon. Wheaton Ice Arena (back parking lot), 11711 Orebaugh Dr., Wheaton. *Free scooter class to follow.

Rain dates for all the adult bike and e-scooter classes will be one week after the original class date and time, except for the April 6 class (that rain date will be April 20).

Free two-hour adult e-scooter classes are being offered on a drop-in basis on four select days immediately following the bike classes on April 21, May 5, May 18 and June 23. E-scooter classes do not require pre-registration. Anyone 18 or over with a valid driver's license or ID can join. E-scooters are provided.

Montgomery County features a total of 112 miles of bike lanes, bike-friendly road shoulders and separated bike lanes, also known as cycle tracks, for bike riders to enjoy countywide. MCDOT installed the first eight miles of the County's separated bike lanes in 2014 and is continuing to build more throughout the County. Multiple protected bike lane projects are currently in the planning and construction phases.

"We have seen a great demand for adult bike classes," said Chris Conklin, director of MCDOT. "Over the past year, we have added four additional bike classes at two new locations. Since 2021, more than 680 residents have registered for these trainings. We expect this interest to continue to grow. We are actively expanding our protected bike lanes in Bethesda and Downtown Silver Spring that seamlessly connect these two locations. We are also working to expand the separated bike lane network in North Bethesda, with projects that will improve access to Metro and other destinations."

To register for the bike classes, visit waba.org/classes. For more information, and to view any future inclement weather cancellations, visit MCDOT's website here or call 240-777-8380.

For information on MCDOT programs and services visit montgomerycountymd.gov/mcdot, X, Facebook and Instagram and subscribe to MCDOT's "Go Montgomery!" newsletter, Instagram and subscribe to MCDOT's "Go Montgomery!" newsletter.

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NEW

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MCDOT News Releases

FREE EVENT

BIKE TO WORK DAY FRIDAY MAY 17, 2024



MCDOT Pit Stop Locations

Bethesda

Woodmont & Bethesda Avenues
(corner of Woodmont & Bethesda
Avenues near the Capital Crescent Trail)
6:30am - 8:30am
Contact: Kristin Blackmon
(301-656-0868)

Friendship Heights

The Shops at Wisconsin Place
Corner of Wisconsin & Western Aves
(adjacent to Metro station)
6:30am - 9:00am
Contact: Jim Carlson (301-318-0328)

North Bethesda at Pike & Rose

West of 935 Prose Street Parking Lot
(behind Pinstripes, next to Bark Social)
6:30am - 8:30am
Contact: Traci McPhail (301-770-8108)

Rockville Falls Grove

Thomas Farm Community Center
700 Falls Grove Drive
Rockville, MD 20850
(Located in Falls Grove Stream
Valley Park)
6:30am - 9am
Contact: Jennifer Bolick (202-462-3768)

Rockville Town Center

Rockville Town Square
(in front of Dawson's Market)
225 N. Washington Street
Rockville, MD 20850
6:30am - 9:00am
Contact: Michelle Golden
(240-876-7141)

Silver Spring

Veterans Plaza
8525 Fenton Street
Silver Spring, MD 20910
6:30am - 9:00am
Contact: Ruthann Eiser
(240-994-2077)

Wheaton Marian Fryer Plaza

2425 Reedie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902
7am - 9am
Contact: Maritza De La Vega
(240-994-4966)

GERMANTOWN - NEW LOCATION

BlackRock Center for the Arts
12901 Town Commons Drive
Germantown, MD 20874
7:30am - 9:30am
Contact: Paul Gatons (240-777-7162)

Working from Home? No Problem!

Bike to Your Local Pit Stop on

May 17th for Your

**FREE T-SHIRT* &
BIKE RAFFLE**

REGISTER FOR FREE TODAY AT
BikeToWorkMetroDC.org
(800.745.7433)

Free refreshments & giveaways.



#BTWD2024



Visit biketoworkmetrodc.org for pit stop locations and times.

*T-shirts available at pit stops to first 16,000 registrants.

Pit stops in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia!

The Bike to Work Day event is a program of the
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
and is funded by DDOT, MDOT, VDOT, and USDOT.



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Montgomery County Department of Transportation

Better Ways To Work!
Montgomery County Commuter Services