

T&E COMMITTEE #3
July 14, 2016

MEMORANDUM

July 12, 2016

TO: Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee
FROM: Glenn Orlin, ^{GO}Deputy Council Administrator
SUBJECT: Discussion—senior transportation programs

In the FY17 Operating Budget the Council approved two funding initiatives to enhance senior transportation: lowering the eligibility age for the Call-'n'-Ride Program from 67 to 65, and extending Seniors Ride Free on Ride On and Metrobus to include Saturdays from 9:30am-3:00pm (starting September 3). Given these changes, the Committee Chair believes this would be a good opportunity to bring together several staff and providers to briefly describe the range of senior transportation programs in the county and, especially, to identify where there are overlaps or gaps in service. The range of County programs are briefly described on ©1-2.

Last December 3 the County Executive convened a Summit on Aging that brought together more than 400 stakeholders from government, business, nonprofit, advocacy, faith-based, and healthcare organizations as well as County seniors. One of the subject areas was senior transportation; the challenges, solutions, and priorities identified during the summit are summarized on ©3-5.

The panelists invited to present and partake in the ensuing discussion are:

Shawn Brennan, Mobility Manager, Aging and Disability Services,
Department of Health & Human Services
Al Roshdieh, Director, and Samuel Oji, Chief, Medicaid and Senior Transportation,
Department of Transportation
Elinor Ginzler, Senior Director, Cahnmann Center for Supportive Services,
Jewish Council for the Aging
Steve Lahn, Board President, The Senior Connection
Vanessa Rippers, Program Administrator, Silver Spring Village



Ike Leggett
County Executive

Older Adults & Adults with Disabilities...

Explore Your Transportation Options

Montgomery County can help you get around.

**Call Connect-A-Ride (CAR)
for information, referral and more.**

301-738-3252

connectaride@AccessJCA.org

- CAR is a free information & referral service that helps adults over 50 and adults with disabilities find transportation 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** (see below). They also offer free workshops on how to use public transportation.
- Call Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. CAR is funded by Montgomery County Government and operated by Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA).

Check out the *Transportation Network Directory for People with Disabilities and Seniors.*

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/tnd

- To explore transportation options any time of day, go to this comprehensive online guide to public, private and non-profit transportation services.
- The Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities designed the guide and keeps it up-to-date. To request a hard copy, call 240-777-1246.

Ride Metrobus and Ride On. Sometimes they are free in Montgomery County!

311 for Ride On, 202-637-7000 for Metrobus

- Seniors and people with disabilities ride free on Ride On and Metrobus from 9:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (extending to Saturday, beginning September 2016.). They pay half fare all other times

- Buses are accessible to people with disabilities; they have wheelchair ramps and can lower to the curb to make it easier for people to get on and off the bus.
- Seniors must be 65 years or older and have a valid Metro Senior ID Card (Senior SmarTrip Card) or Medicare Card with photo ID. Those with disabilities must have a valid Metro Disabled ID Card.
- Present the card to Ride On and Metro drivers. Do **not** tap the Senior SmarTrip card on the fare box target because a fare will be deducted from the card.
- For Metrobus and Ride on Schedules, call 311.

Senior SmarTrip® Card makes travel easier and more affordable.

888-762-7874

- Riders 65 and older can use a Senior SmarTrip card to travel free or at a discount on Metrorail, Metrobus, and Ride On.
- To buy a Senior SmarTrip card, visit a Montgomery County Public Library or Commuter Store. Bring proof of age (State ID, birth certificate or passport). A Senior SmarTrip card costs \$2. There is no value on the card at time of purchase— fare value may be added at Metro stations or Commuter stores.

Call-n-Ride provides discounted taxis.

301-948-5409

mcdot.cnrorder@montgomerycountymd.gov

- Call-n-Ride (CNR) provides discounted taxi-cab service to eligible low-income seniors (65 years and older), and adults with disabilities.
- Travel can be for any purpose within Montgomery County, and certain other designated areas for medical reasons.
- Call Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. for information or to apply.

The Senior Connection provides volunteer transportation.

301-962-0820

info@seniorconnectionmc.org

The Senior Connection provides free escorted transportation services to seniors 60 and over through a growing network of volunteers. Rides subject to availability of drivers.

VillageRides helps local "villages" coordinate volunteer transportation.

301-255-4212

connectaride@AccessJCA.org

Some communities work together to help their neighbors age in place. To find out if you live in an area served by VillageRides, call 301-255-4212.

Discover the County's Escorted Transportation Pilot program.

301-738-3252

connectaride@AccessJCA.org

Escorted transportation is available for adults who qualify based on income and disability. Customers contribute to the cost of the service based on income. Montgomery County funds this program through Jewish Council for the Aging's Connect-a-Ride program.

MetroAccess is available seven days a week. 301-562-5360 (voice), 800-523-7009 (Toll Free) www.wmata.com/accessibility/metroaccess_service

- MetroAccess is a shared-ride, door-to-door service for people who generally cannot use public transportation due to a disability.
- Fares are two times the fastest comparable fixed-route fare, with a maximum fare of \$6.50 per one-way trip.
- Riders must schedule trips no later than 4:30 p.m. the day before the trip.
- Conditionally certified MetroAccess users can ride free on Metro-rail, Metrobus and Ride On.
- Applying for MetroAccess certification requires medical information and an in-person assessment. (A ride to the appointment is available if needed.) Call 202-962-2700 and press #5 for information about program eligibility.

MetroAccess riders can use the County's Same Day Access program.

301-948-5409

- When it is not possible to reserve a MetroAccess ride before 4:30 pm the day before it is needed, *Same Day Access* program can help.

- Part of the Call-n-Ride program, *Same Day Access* provides discounted taxi service to certified MetroAccess participants. For information or to apply, call Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Medicaid recipients may be able to access transportation to medical appointments.

240-777-5890

This service provides free transportation for Montgomery County Medicaid recipients who meet the screening requirements, that indicate there is no other means of transportation available— or whose medical needs prevent them from using available transportation—for Medicaid-covered, medically necessary appointments.

Montgomery County provides free transportation to Recreation!

240-777-4924

- Curb-to-curb transportation is available for County residents 55 and over to senior centers and some community centers.
- This free service is for those living within the service areas of one of the centers.
- Rockville and Gaithersburg also provide limited transportation to their senior centers. In Rockville, call 240-314-8810. In Gaithersburg, call 301-258-6380 and press 5.

Five Taxicab Companies Serve Montgomery County.

Ask about pre-paid taxicab accounts for seniors.

Action Taxi	301-840-1000
Barwood Taxi.....	301-984-1900
Orange Taxi.....	301-912-0000
Regency Cab.....	301-990-9000
Sun Cab.....	301-252-0575

Remember the Montgomery County Help Line!

311 or 240-777-0311, www.mc311.com Montgomery County government's number for information about County government services is available Monday- Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Staff answer questions about County transportation and can transfer callers directly to Connect-A-Ride.

Alternative formats of this document are available upon request. Call Aging and Disability Services at 240-777-3000.

People with difficulty using standard phones are encouraged to use Maryland Relay 711 when contacting organizations listed.



WORK SESSION: TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Key Challenges

- Transportation is vital for keeping older adults in their homes.
- Routes do not take seniors everywhere they want to go, especially Upcounty and in rural areas.
- Some seniors fear public transportation:
 - Inability to walk distance to bus stop;
 - Inability to stand;
 - Fear of falling on bus;
 - Difficulty of managing transfers; and
 - Undependable bus schedule.
- Affordability of transportation for those on fixed incomes can be difficult.
- There is a need to address older driver safety and needs of those transitioning from driving.
- Seniors could benefit from technology (like trip planning tools and RideOn apps) but may not be comfortable with it.
- People using wheelchairs often need to reserve transportation well ahead of time.
- Solutions may require a combination of approaches.

Solutions

- **Educate the public (the top priority identified by both breakout groups)**
 - Use both traditional methods of communicating and new electronic methods.
 - Give attention to needs of those not comfortable with English.
 - Be sensitive to cultural diversity regarding where/how people get their information.
 - Send transportation resource information to points of contact at senior housing facilities.
 - Place advertising about special programs on buses (including Metro Access vans) and bus shelters.
 - Reach out to doctors' offices, drugstores, and the faith community.
 - Mobilize consumers as transportation ambassadors who can share resource information with peers.
 - Standardize age of eligibility for programs to clear any confusion in messaging about options.



- **Ensure a safe travel environment for seniors (high priority for both groups).**
 - Improve safety for pedestrians by improving and expanding sidewalks, lighting, crosswalks, signal timing, and signage. Address issues like snow removal and overgrown vegetation.
 - Add benches to allow seniors to rest along their routes.
 - Add or improve signage to help those who may be disoriented or need reassurance.
 - Educate the public to “wear white at night.”
 - Consider prohibiting right-turn-on-red at more intersections where there are many pedestrians.
- **Make transportation more affordable**
 - Extend free hours for RideOn and Metrobus, ideally to 24/7.
 - Lower required age for free buses.
 - Expand Call-N-Ride program eligibility.
- **Consider safety of older drivers and those transitioning from driving.**
 - Increase the font size of road signs and include symbols/icons where possible.
 - Add more signs to provide directional support for drivers.
 - Educate families of older drivers about the availability of alternatives.
 - Support families as they help loved ones transition.
 - Encourage seniors to explore alternatives while still driving to decrease difficulty of giving up the keys
- **Promote and support ride sharing and volunteer transportation** and help volunteer programs with necessities such as criminal background checks of volunteer drivers, ride scheduling software, secondary insurance protection, and recruiting bilingual volunteer drivers.
- **Bring services to seniors’ homes.**
 - Some seniors may prefer to receive some services at home, such as health care and groceries.
 - Promote use of technology such as Skype for virtual visits, and help with paperwork.



Partnerships

- Public, private and non-profit providers working together, such as:
 - Existing transportation providers, taxicab companies, transportation network companies (such as Uber and Lyft);
 - Volunteer organizations (Aging in Place Villages; The Senior Connection: HELP organizations, etc.); and
 - Companies that develop scheduling software and medical information sharing technology (IT Curves, etc.)

Priorities

- Educate the public;
- Ensure a safe travel environment for seniors;
- Expand affordable options;
- Increase availability of accessible transportation;
- Consider safety of older drivers and those transitioning from driving; and
- Increase ride-sharing and other volunteer programs.

Summit Evaluation

Following the event, attendees provided feedback to Summit planners via an online evaluation form. Ninety-five of the more than 400 attendees completed the evaluation survey. Responses were highly positive about the event, with more than 90 percent rating the Summit as good, very good, or excellent and as meeting or exceeding their expectations. Nearly all rated the information presented as helpful.

Many attendees reported being impressed by the breadth and depth of services that the County provides for seniors and that the Summit helped them better understand the range of services available. Participants also reported appreciation for the opportunity the Summit offered for new contacts and partnerships. Many expressed willingness to help in many areas of services and programs for seniors, including partnerships, volunteer activities, housing, aging at home, transportation, caregiving, homelessness, dementia care, interfaith activities, communications, and more.

Attendees also offered a wide range of ideas about priorities and challenges facing County seniors, areas in which they would have liked more discussion during the event, and ideas for improving a future Summit. These insights will help the County and its partners define a “Common Operation Picture” and translate these findings into priorities and initiatives to make Montgomery County “A Community for a Lifetime.” For more details, see link to complete report in Appendix, Evaluation Report p.43.

