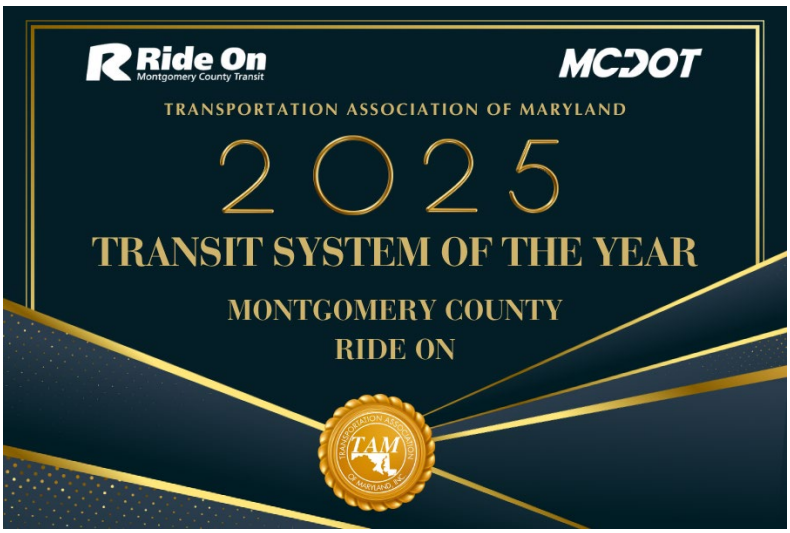
Ride On News & Information

MCDOT Ride On

Ride On Newsletter October 2025

Ride On Wins Outstanding Transit System and Driver of the Year from the Transportation Association of Maryland (TAM)



We're excited to share great news from the Transportation Association of Maryland (TAM) Annual Conference on October 8:

- **Ride On was named Outstanding Transit System**
- **Operator Luis Reyes Flores was honored as Driver of the Year.**

How Ride On earned "Outstanding Transit System"

Over the past year, Ride On balanced a steadfast commitment to safety and customer care with the realities of ridership recovery and a tight budget—continuing to serve as a vital community connector for jobs, schools, healthcare, and daily life. Highlights include:

- **Safety first:** Streamlined reporting procedures and coordination with county law enforcement and emergency services strengthened system-wide preparedness and rider confidence.

- **Reliable, sustainable operations:** Expanded use of hybrid and electric buses and refined maintenance practices reduced downtime, extended vehicle life, and lowered environmental impact.
- **Fiscal responsibility:** Stronger financial controls and cost containment, alongside growth in non-fare revenue (advertising up 10%), helped balance the budget while maintaining service.
- **Investing in people:** Targeted wellness initiatives, flexible scheduling, and attendance incentives reduced absenteeism. Expanded training covering ADA compliance, customer care, and enhanced safety procedures equipped employees to serve the community while supporting healthy work–life balance.

Driver of the Year: Operator Luis Reyes Flores

Operator Flores maintains a stellar safety record with zero infractions and is known by riders as “very polite and kind” and deeply aware of the responsibility of operating a large bus. On August 8, 2024, he went above and beyond when a passenger experienced a drug overdose. He contacted Central Communications and called 911, provided critical information, followed emergency instructions, and administered life-saving CPR until paramedics arrived. His calm professionalism and swift action saved a life, exemplifying the highest standards of public service.

Please join us in congratulating **Operator Luis Reyes Flores** and the entire Ride On team for these well-deserved honors. If you see your operator today, feel free to share a thank-you—and if you have a positive Ride On story, we’d love to hear it.

For routes, schedules, and service updates, visit RideOnBus.com or follow our official communication channels.

Ride On Celebrates Anniversaries of Flash and ext*R*a Service in October

Montgomery County's original Ride On ext*R*a limited-stop service celebrated eight years of helping riders get around MD Route 355 quickly and efficiently on October 2, 2025. The simple and convenient bus service is hailed for its speed and reliability.

Using ext*R*a 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 ext*R*a 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 ext*R*a connects to half of the County's transit services, including Metrobus, Metrorail, MARC train, MTA Commuter buses and 44 Ride On routes.

In 2024 Ride On ext*R*a expanded service to include the Great Seneca Science Corridor with the launch of the Pink and Lime Routes on September 8. 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 five-year anniversary of the County's first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service—the Flash—on Tuesday, 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 Blue Route does not operate on weekends.

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 service stops at the Food and Drug Administration headquarters in White Oak during peak hours 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, information 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.

Montgomery County Department of Transportation Announces the Return of the Monster Flash Decorated Bus for Three Free Events in October

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) announces the return of Monster Flash, a decorated haunted house-themed bus, for three free Halloween events on Saturday, Oct. 25 and Sunday, Oct. 26.

MCDOT is once again partnering with Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) to host the Monster Flash Halloween Bash, a multilingual, family-friendly event featuring storytime, a dance party, themed crafts and games, and a tour of Monster Flash, MCDOT's not-so-spooky "haunted" bus.

“I’ve been talking about Bus Rapid Transit in Montgomery County for over a decade, and it’s exciting to see this vision moving from plans into reality,” said County Executive Marc Elrich. “The Monster Flash bus draws attention to the Flash network in a creative way that reaches families and neighbors where they are. Events like these help residents learn about the investments we’re making to provide faster, more reliable transit. I appreciate MCDOT’s work to make these projects real and to build enthusiasm for the future of transit in our County.”

Residents can view the Monster Flash bus and learn more about the planned Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network coming to Montgomery County at the following events:

- Saturday, Oct. 25, 10 a.m.–noon. Monster Flash at Twinbrook Library's Multilingual Story Hour, Twinbrook Library, 202 Meadow Hall Drive, Rockville.
- Saturday, Oct. 25, 2–4 p.m. Monster Flash at Germantown Library’s Bilingual Story Hour, Germantown Library, 19840 Century Blvd., Germantown.
- Sunday, Oct. 26, noon–4 p.m. Monster Flash at HalloWheaton, Marian Fryer Town Plaza, 2424 Reedie Drive, Wheaton.

A multilingual children's story time will be held in English, Spanish, and Chinese at the Twinbrook Library and in English and Spanish at the Germantown Library.

"We created these events as a way to build relationships with local communities and introduce the Flash BRT service in a fun and engaging way," said MCDOT Director Chris Conklin. "The Veirs Mill Road Flash project has just begun utility relocations and so outreach to the Twinbrook Library's surrounding community is timely. We are working to connect with residents as much as we can to answer questions and highlight the investments the County is making on these corridors to make them safer and allow for better public transit service."

Flash buses are currently running along Colesville Road/Columbia Pike (US 29) between the Silver Spring Transit Center, Briggs Chaney, and Burtonsville, with stops along the way. The County-operated bus line began in 2020 and offers fast, convenient service running every seven to 15 minutes on weekdays and every 30 minutes on weekends.

MCDOT is working to implement Flash bus rapid transit service across the County to implement faster, high-frequency bus service and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety on the corridor. Construction and utility work for the Flash BRT has begun on the Veirs Mill Road corridor with service expected to begin in 2028.

Limited Series: A Closer Look at Ride On's New Ride On Reminders Campaign

MCDOT Ride On has launched a new campaign focused on reminding riders of appropriate and inappropriate behavior when aboard a public transit system. Dubbed "Ride On Reminders" this campaign includes messaging that encourages riders to keep the peace, refrain from tobacco, cannabis, and alcohol

consumption, and respect others' space in a public location. Messages depicting this campaign have been featured on our Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Bluesky accounts and can be seen on bus cards and shelter ads across the county.

This campaign is based on the Transit Passenger Bill of Rights, a code of conduct that is posted on all Ride On buses. The Transit Passenger Bill of Rights is a crucial document that outlines the rights and responsibilities of passengers using public transportation. This bill ensures that all passengers receive fair and equitable treatment while traveling, promoting a safe, reliable, and comfortable transit experience. It serves as a guideline for transit agencies to maintain high standards of service and for passengers to understand what they can expect, and what is expected of them, during their journey.

"It's a Bus - Not A House Party!"

The second message in our series is "It's a Bus - Not a House Party!" Ride On would like to remind riders that smoking and vaping of tobacco and cannabis products in the bus and at bus stops is strictly prohibited. Alcohol consumption in these spaces is also not allowed. Public consumption of these products is not only disruptive to other riders, but it is against the law. Those caught using these products will be asked to leave the bus and law enforcement will be involved if necessary. Let's keep the ride fresh for everyone!

Missing Woman Reunited with Family, Thanks to Ride On Bus Operator

On September 22, 2025, Montgomery County’s Emergency Communications Center (ECC) requested assistance from Ride On in locating a missing senior citizen living with dementia. The individual was last seen near Holy Cross Hospital in Germantown.

After Ride On Central Communications issued a community-wide alert to Ride On buses in the Germantown area, Bus Operator Tillwanna Gollman Stevenson, operating on Route 55, recognized a passenger matching the description of the missing person.

Demonstrating remarkable initiative and compassion, Operator Gollman Stevenson:

- Safely pulled her bus to the side of the road.
- Engaged the passenger with care and kept them comfortable.
- Reassured the other riders on her bus.
- Immediately alerted Central and waited calmly for law enforcement to arrive.

Thanks to her quick thinking and calm presence, what began as a frightening situation ended in the safe recovery and reunion of the individual with their family.

We proudly commend Operator Tillwanna Gollman Stevenson for going above and beyond her duties. Her swift action and compassion reflect the very best of public service and underscore the critical role our operators play in ensuring the safety and well-being of our entire community, while accomplishing the daily requirements of their duties.

Please join us in celebrating and thanking Operator Gollman Stevenson for her outstanding service.

Help Keep Bus Stops Clean! Trash Dumping is Illegal at Ride On Bus Stops

Dumping trash from residences at bus stops is against the law in Montgomery County and is considered illegal dumping. Illegal dumping is a serious offense that

can result in criminal prosecution. Every case of illegal dumping is investigated. Illegal dumpers are subject to a minimum $500 civil fine and possible criminal prosecution.

Illegal dumping can be costly, but the costs of legal disposal are minimal (if incurred at all). Montgomery County provides one of the most extensive solid waste disposal and recycling programs in the nation. Take advantage of the many facilities the County offers to properly dispose of, or recycle, your unwanted materials.

What is illegal dumping? By definition, illegal dumping is depositing solid waste at a location other than a legally accepted facility. Some common examples include:

- Disposing of your trash in dumpsters or containers that you don't own
- Disposing of your trash along public roadways or in vacant lots
- Disposing of your trash in fields, wooded areas, stream valleys, parklands, or any other unacceptable location

If you see an act of illegal dumping, you can do something to help!

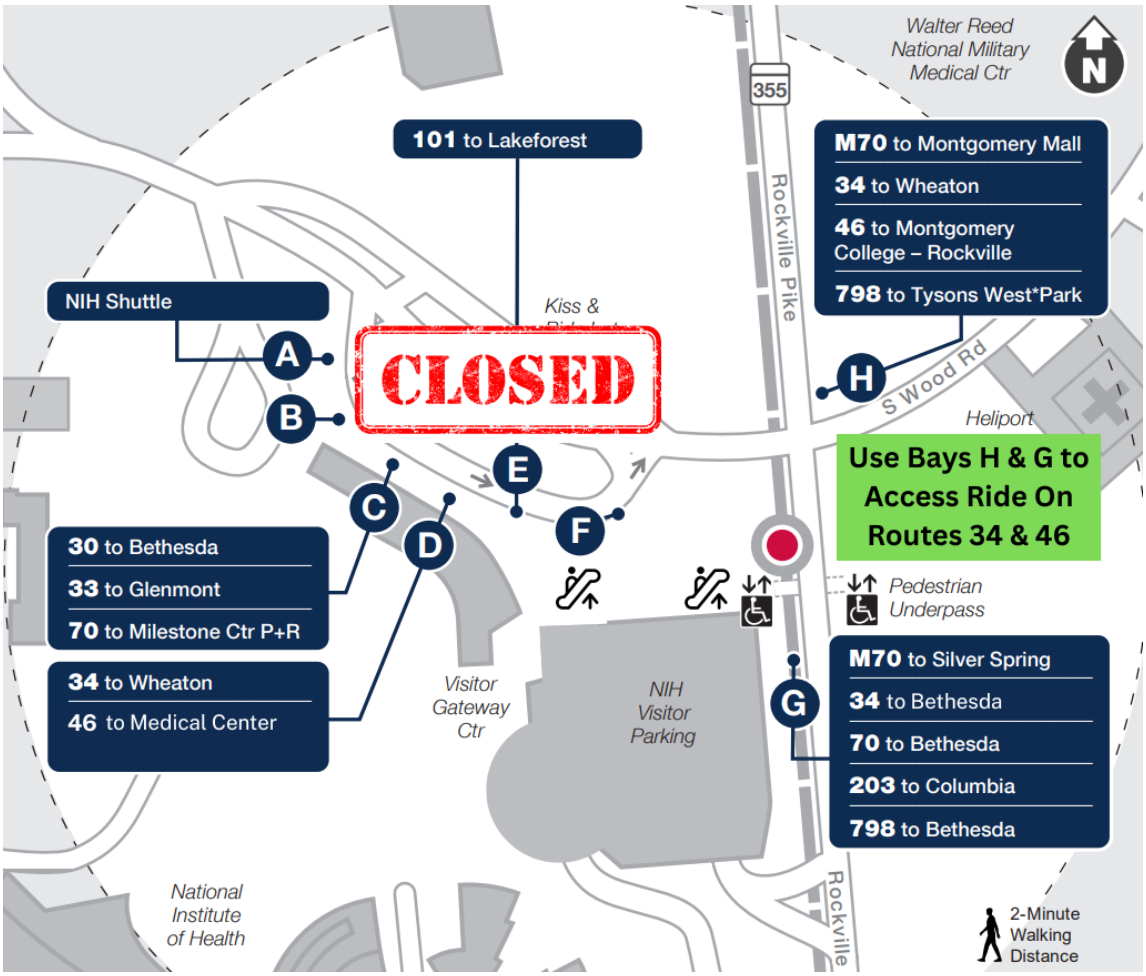
Step 1: Write down information about the illegal dumping. Please record:

- The exact location where the dumping occurred (Most important)
- The license plate number of the vehicle
- A description of the vehicle and person(s) involved
- The date and time of the incident
- Take photos of the dumped material(s).

Step 2: Contact the Montgomery County Customer Service line at MC311. Call 311 (240-777-0311 from outside of the County; 7-1-1 for Maryland T-T-Y Relay).
A Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) investigator will return your call and follow up on your complaint. The information you report can help end illegal dumping and environmental abuse.

To learn more, visit https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/topics/illegal-dumping/index.html.

Closure of Medical Center Bus Loop in Bethesda to Impact Ride On Routes 34 and 46 on Select Sundays Through Spring 2026



Due to Metrorail construction, the bus loop at the Medical Center Metro Station will be closed on select Sundays through Spring 2026. As depicted in the map above, Ride On Routes 34 to Wheaton and 46 to Montgomery College Rockville will use Bus Bay H (stop #25504) and Routes 34 to Bethesda and 46 to Medical Center will use Bus Bay G (stop #25646) on Rockville Pike during the closures. Ride On Routes 30, 33, 70, and 101, which use the loop during weekday service, will not be impacted as they do not operate on Sundays.

Construction work will take place from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on the following dates:

- Sunday, October 26, 2025
- Sunday, December 28, 2025
- Sunday, March 1, 2026
- Sunday, March 15, 2026

Montgomery County to Host Public Meetings on the Veirs Mill Road Flash Bus Rapid Transit Project in October

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is hosting a public meeting for the Veirs Mill Road Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. An in-person meeting will be held from 6:30–8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 21 at Albert Einstein High School in Kensington.

For those who cannot attend the public meeting, the presentation will be posted to the project website on Monday, Oct. 20 in both English and Spanish. In addition, members of the public will have an opportunity to sign up for virtual one-on-one discussions with the project team on the project web site beginning on Wednesday, Oct. 22.

The public meeting will provide an opportunity to review the design of the project and ask questions of the project team. In addition, the project team will provide a timeline for future project activities. Presentations will begin at 7 p.m. and will be offered in both English and Spanish through simultaneous translation. All materials will be translated and posted on the project website.

The Veirs Mill Road Flash BRT is a new rapid transit service connecting Wheaton and Rockville with twelve stations along Veirs Mill Road and MD 355. This service will offer faster, more reliable and frequent connections to housing, jobs, the MARC train and the Metrorail Red Line. In addition, the project will deliver bicycle and pedestrian improvements, including paths, sidewalks and safer street crossings.

In-Person Public Meeting:

Date: Tuesday, October 21 **Time**: 6:30-8:30 p.m. (7 p.m. presentation)

Location: Albert Einstein High School **Address**: 11135 Newport Mill Road, Kensington

Attendees will have the opportunity to review informational display boards, explore detailed maps and speak directly with knowledgeable staff members.

To learn more about the Veirs Mill Road Flash BRT project and to stay updated on future developments, please visit https://montgomerycountymd.gov/VMRFlash.

A Spanish interpretation of the presentation will be available through headphones and Spanish interpreters will be on-site at the meeting. MCDOT is committed to ensuring that all community members can participate in public meetings. To request interpreter services in other languages, or if other accommodations are needed, please email VeirsMillRoadBRT@montgomerycountymd.gov by Wednesday, Oct. 7.

For project inquiries, please contact Pam Destino, project manager, VeirsMillRoadBRT@montgomerycountymd.gov.

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.

Montgomery County Celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month

Montgomery County participated in several special events from Sept. 15 through Oct. 15 as the County observed "National Hispanic Heritage Month." The events

honored Latino and Hispanic immigrants who are making significant contributions to their communities.

National Hispanic Heritage Month recognizes the history, culture and contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans in the United States. According to the 2020 Census, the Latino population in Montgomery County increased by 31.4% since 2010, making Hispanics or Latinos 20.5% (217,409) of the County's total population.

"Hispanic Heritage Month is normally a joyous time to celebrate the many contributions of our Hispanic community through events across public spaces. This year, however, that celebration is clouded by fear and concern over federal immigration policies," said County Executive Elrich. "Despite these challenges, I want our Hispanic and Latino residents to know how deeply we value them. They are vital to our economy, our culture, and our identity as the most diverse county in the United States. Don't lose hope, don't let fear win; we are in this together."

Events celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month included:

- **Monday, Sept. 15-Wednesday, Oct. 15**: A social media campaign recognizing several Hispanic County employees.
- **Monday, Sept. 15**: Graduation Ceremony, Montgomery County Business Center Latino Small Business Accelerator Program.
- **Tuesday, Sept. 16**: The County Executive's Latin American Advisory Group (LAAG) hosts an event recognizing 'Rays of Hope' community members.
- **Friday, Oct. 10**: County Executive Elrich visited Latino-owned businesses to highlight the Latino small business community.
- **Tuesday, Oct. 14**: County Executive Elrich was the featured guest on 'Montgomery al Día', the County's Spanish-language radio show. The show airs from 2 to 2:30 p.m. every Tuesday on Radio America 900. To listen live, visit radioamerica.net or the County's Spanish Facebook page, Montgomery County En Español.

Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) hosted a series of events throughout the month, including story time in Spanish, performances and dances to traditional Cuban music and Latin Jazz. Visit the MCPL calendar of events here.

To learn more about countywide Hispanic Heritage Month events, visit the Visit Montgomery website.

To view County Executive Elrich issuing the National Hispanic Heritage Month Proclamation video, click here.

Of Note

Ride Metrobus Free with the Youth Cruiser SmarTrip, Senior SmarTrip, and Disabled Rider Reduced Fare Cards

Montgomery County works in partnership with WMATA to ensure that students, seniors, and those with disabilities are able to ride for free within the County with a Youth Cruiser SmarTrip, Senior SmarTrip, and reduced fare card for those with disabilities. The Youth Cruiser cards are available all MCPS middle and high schools, some MCPS elementary schools, and many private schools in Montgomery County, as well as at County libraries, Montgomery County Division of Treasury - Rockville. the Silver Spring TRiPS store, and the Mobile Commuter Store. Residents must bring proof of age and residency to register for their card.

For more information about Youth Cruiser SmarTrip cards, visit Youth Cruiser SmarTrip Card - Montgomery County Division of Transit Services. For information about transit options for seniors and those with disabilities, visit Older adults and Persons with Disabilities - Transit Services - Montgomery County, Maryland.

Remember, Metro will begin enforcement of tapping discounted fare cards on Metrobuses starting **February 1, 2026.**

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.

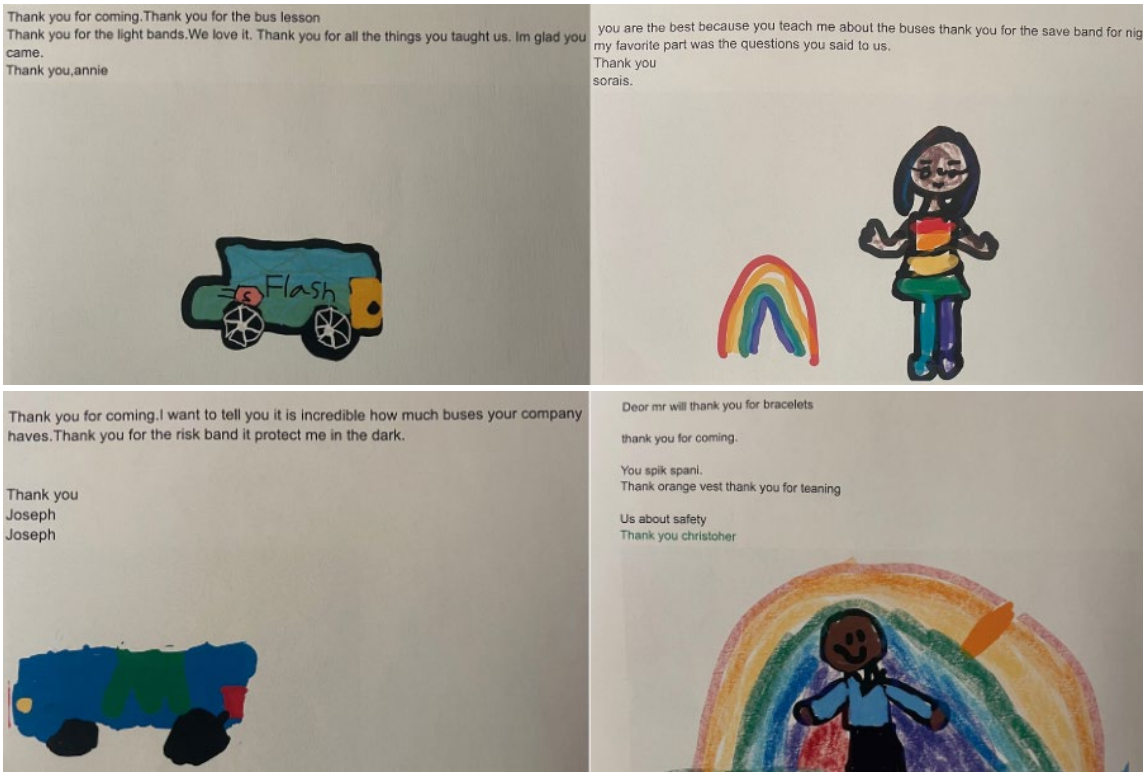
Connect With Ride On

Are you following Ride On's social media accounts yet? Ride On communicates and connects to our riders using Instagram, X, Facebook, Threads, Bluesky 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. Find us at @RideOnMCT on your favorite social media platform.

Ride On Gratitude Corner

In light of the coming season of thankfulness, Ride On is launching the "Gratitude Corner", a monthly of-note feature that highlights displays of gratitude shown to Ride On, its operators, and employees.

This month's gratitude comes from students at a local Montgomery County elementary school that was visited by a representative from Ride On's marketing team who shared giveaways and a lesson on Ride On. As a thank-you for the visit, students sent in notes and drawings. See some of those notes below.



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:

Which Flash Bus goes to Burtonsville?

1. Orange
2. Blue
3. Green
4. Red

Last month's question:

When did the Great Seneca Transit Network (Ride On extRa Pink & Lime routes) service began?

1. August 8, 2023
2. September 8, 2024
3. October 2, 2021
4. February 8, 2024

Answer: (2) September 8, 2024

For the most up-to-date service information, riders should follow @RideOnMCT on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. In addition, information is available at RideOnBus.com, by subscribing to receive email alerts at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govdelivery, or texting MONTGOMERY RIDEON to **62463 (previously 468311)** to receive text alerts. *Message and Data rates may apply. Message frequency varies. Reply HELP for help or contact support@granicus.com, reply STOP to cancel. Visit Montgomery County's Wireless Terms and Conditions and Privacy Policy for more information*.

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

If you need an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) reasonable accommodation to access Ride On bus service, contact MC311 by voice at 240-777-0311, by email RideOn.CustomerService@montgomerycountymd.gov or TTY 711.

Title VI: Montgomery County assures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Act of 1987, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity.