Ride On Newsletter   February 2026

Introducing Ride On Flex Zone 918: New On-Demand Transit from Sandy Spring to White Oak

Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is launching a new transit option to help residents get around more easily. On February 2, Ride On Flex Zone 918 began serving the Sandy Spring to White Oak areas.

This new service offers peak-period, on-demand transit for the Ednor, Sandy Spring, Norwood, and Cloverly communities, as well as along New Hampshire Avenue between Maryland Route 108 and the White Oak Transit Center. It provides riders with convenient connections to the broader Ride On network, as well as Metrobus and Metrorail, making it easier than ever to link local neighborhoods with regional transit options.

What is Ride On Flex Zone 918?

- Ride On Flex Zone 918 is a zero-fare, on-demand neighborhood transit service designed to improve access to transit, shopping, schools, jobs, and community destinations. There are no fixed schedules, riders request a trip when they are ready and are picked up by a Ride On Flex vehicle.

- Ride On Flex Zone 918 also restores transit access for most neighborhoods previously served by Metrobus Z2, offering a more flexible and accessible option for local travel.

- The service connects to Flash BRT at the White Oak Transit Center, which serves the Silver Spring Transit Center and Metro Station.

All riders must reserve trips using the Flex mobile app or the call center at 240-301-3842. Riders starting trips in the areas between Norwood Road, Sandy Spring Road (Route 108), and New Hampshire Avenue will be directed to a nearby intersection for

pickups and dropped off at the closest intersection to their destination. Disabled riders will be picked up at their location and delivered in front of their destination.

Riders starting trips from the Cloverly Shopping Center to the White Oak Transit Center, in either direction, will only be picked up or dropped off at the designated bus stops, unless disabled. Flex vehicles do not stop automatically like traditional buses and will only stop at "designated" bus stops on New Hampshire Avenue if a rider has reserved a trip and was directed to that bus stop.
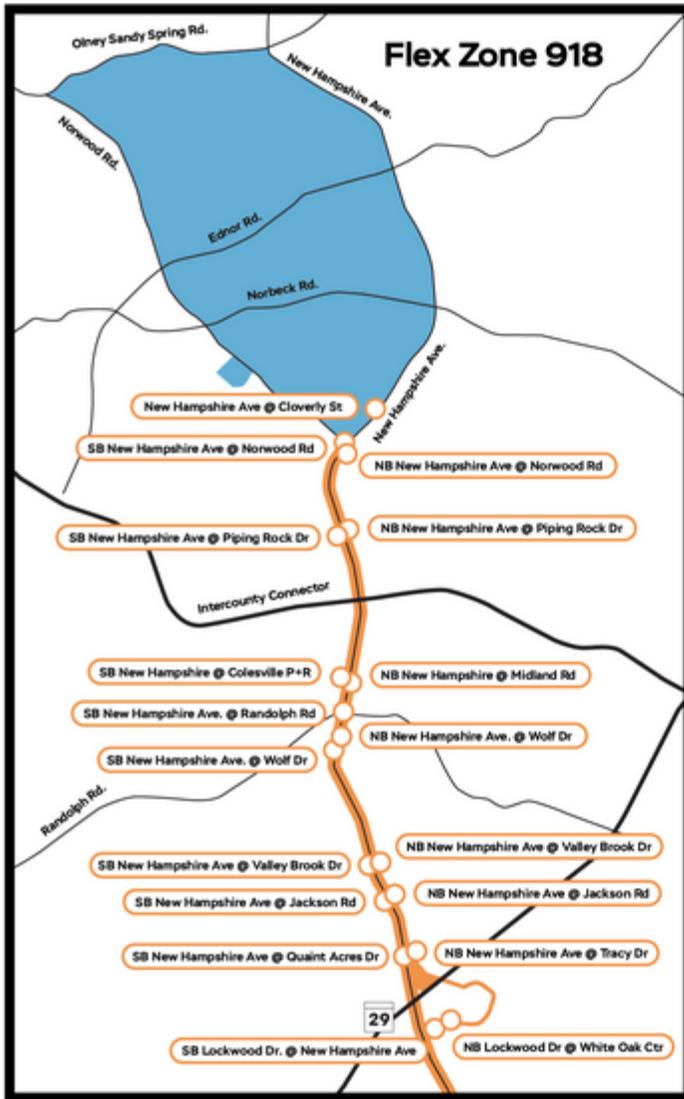
Service Hours:

- Weekdays only

- 6 - 10:00 a.m.

- 2:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Check back frequently for more updates. More information about the Flex service model is available at https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-transit/flex/.

Ride On Flex Zone 918 Sandy Spring to White Oak reflects Montgomery County's commitment to safe, equitable, and innovative transportation options.

New Flex Zone 918 - Sandy Spring to White Oak Map

Flex Zone 918

NORTH AREA:
The Blue area is an on-demand service where you select your pick up and drop off location.

SOUTH AREA:
The orange is an on-demand service area where you are picked up and dropped off at designated stops.

Ride On Senior Corner: Getting Around Made Simple with Ride On Flex

Montgomery County Department of Transportation's Ride On Flex is an on-demand transit service designed to make local travel easier. Flex has no fixed stops or schedules—it comes when you book a ride during regular service hours. Seniors (65+) and persons with disabilities ride free at all times, and curb-to-curb service is available for riders with disabilities.

Flex operates in three zones: Rockville, Wheaton-Glenmont, and the new Sandy Spring–White Oak Zone 918. These zones were created to provide convenient transportation for errands, appointments, and local trips, as well as connections to major transit hubs like Metro stations. Trips are provided within zones only, so you cannot travel between zones. If you are outside a zone, you can still book as long as your pickup location is inside the zone.

To request a trip, download the Ride On Flex app or call 240-301-3842. Enter your pickup and drop-off locations within the zone. Once booked, Flex will pick you up at the nearest intersection—or curbside if you've selected accessibility options—and drop you at the closest corner to your destination. Dedicated stops are available at Rockville, Wheaton, and Glenmont Metro Stations.

Service Hours:

- Rockville: 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

- Wheaton-Glenmont: 6:00 – 9:00 a.m. & 3:30 – 7:00 p.m.

- Sandy Spring–White Oak (Zone 918): 6:00 – 10:00 a.m. & 2:30 – 7:30 p.m.

The new Sandy Spring–White Oak zone serves the Ednor, Sandy Spring, Norwood, and Cloverly communities, as well as New Hampshire Avenue between Maryland Route 108 and the White Oak Transit Center. This zone restores transit access for neighborhoods previously served by Metrobus Z2.

Ride On Flex is a great option for seniors who want reliable, flexible transportation without worrying about bus schedules or long waits. For more information and maps, visit: montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-transit/flex

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). 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, March 1, 2026
- Sunday, March 8, 2026
- Sunday, May 3, 2026

Lakeforest Transit Center Redevelopment Underway

Montgomery County started the first phase of relocating and redeveloping the Lakeforest Transit Center at the former Lakeforest Mall site in Gaithersburg. The new center will serve eight Ride On bus routes currently using the existing facility and accommodate the planned MD 355 Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor.

The redevelopment ensures safe, convenient access for nearly 2,000 daily riders and is designed with scalability for future growth. Phase one includes preparing two acres of land for construction, with grading and site work expected to take about a year.

This project is part of a larger plan to transform the Lakeforest Mall property into a mixed-use development featuring housing, retail, entertainment, and public spaces— all supported by improved transit connections.

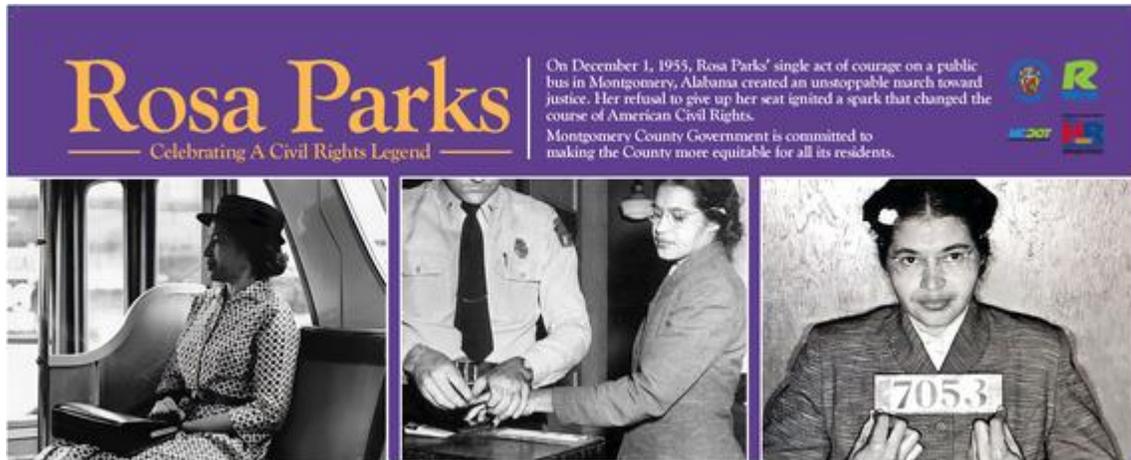**Ride On Leads the Charge Toward a Zero-Emission Future**

Montgomery County's Ride On bus system is proud to be at the forefront of sustainable transit in the Washington region. Our commitment to cleaner, greener transportation is driving major investments in electric and hydrogen fueled buses and cutting-edge infrastructure that will transform how we move people across the county, lowering greenhouse gas emissions and addressing the County's climate and environmental goals.

Ride On introduced its first battery-electric buses in 2020, and since then, we've steadily expanded our zero-emission fleet. Today, we're ramping up efforts with two state-of-the-art projects: the Brookville Smart Energy Bus Depot in Silver Spring and the ongoing construction at our Gaithersburg bus depot. The Brookville bus depot, powered by solar energy and battery storage, is designed to support up to 70 electric buses—making it one of the largest renewable-powered transit facilities in the nation. Meanwhile, Gaithersburg bus depot will soon become the largest renewable-energy transit depot in the U.S., featuring solar arrays, battery storage, and green hydrogen production to power longer-range fuel cell buses.

These innovations aren't just about technology—they're about impact. Electric buses mean cleaner air, quieter streets, and a better experience for riders and communities alike. By pairing vehicle electrification with resilient, renewable energy systems, Ride On is helping Montgomery County meet its ambitious climate goals while ensuring reliable service for decades to come.

With Brookville depot powering buses from the sun and Gaithersburg depot poised to produce green hydrogen on site, Ride On is building a stronger, smarter transit system—one that leads by example and sets the standard for sustainable transportation in our region.

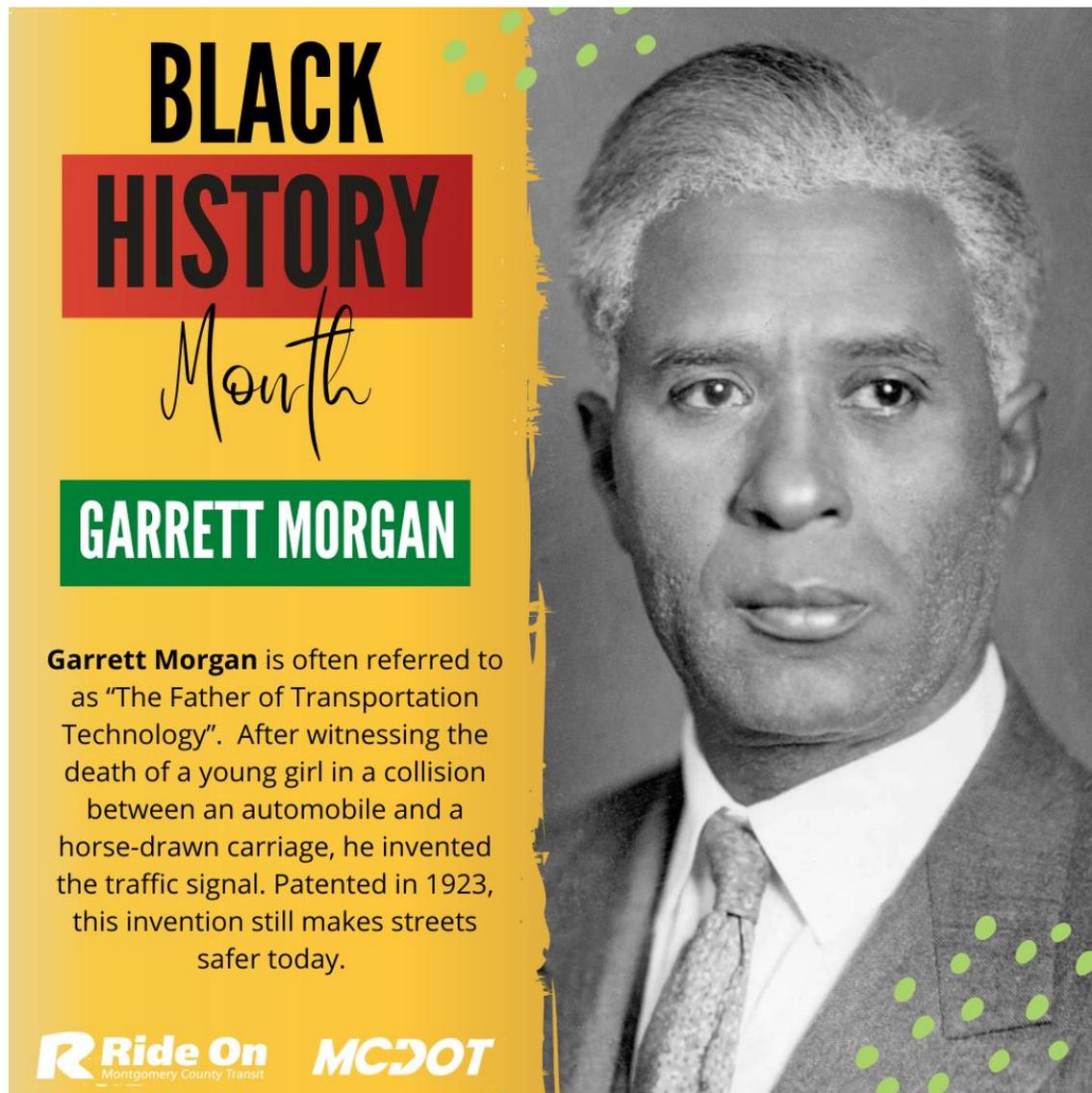**Montgomery County Honors Rosa Parks on Transit Equity Day**

On February 4, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) joined transit agencies nationwide in celebrating Transit Equity Day, commemorating the birthday of civil rights icon Rosa Parks. Her courageous act in 1955—refusing to give up her seat on a segregated bus—sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott and became a defining moment in the fight for racial justice and equal access to public transportation.

To honor her legacy, Ride On placed commemorative placards on every bus, sharing Parks' story and the significance of transit equity. In addition, a seat was reserved on a Ride On bus as a symbolic tribute to the role she played in shaping a more just and inclusive transit system. These gestures remind riders that public transportation is more than a convenience—it is a civil right that connects people to jobs, education, and opportunity.

MCDOT also hosted a Transit Equity Day ceremony, reflecting on the progress made since Parks' historic stand and reaffirming the County's commitment to fairness and inclusion in transit. From reducing fares to expanding programs that provide free rides for seniors, youth, and people with disabilities, Ride On continues to prioritize accessibility and equity for all residents.

Transit Equity Day is not just about honoring history—it's about shaping the future. Guided by equity and inclusion, MCDOT is working to ensure that every community in Montgomery County has access to safe, reliable, and sustainable transportation.

Ride On Celebrates Black History Month by Honoring Notable African Americans in Transportation

BLACK HISTORY Month

JO ANN GIBSON ROBINSON

Jo Ann Gibson Robinson led the Women's Political Council (WPC) and orchestrated the mass leaflet campaign that launched the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Within hours of Rosa Parks's arrest, she organized the rapid printing and distribution of over 50,000 flyers that informed Black riders to stay off city buses, converting outrage into organized, strategic protest.

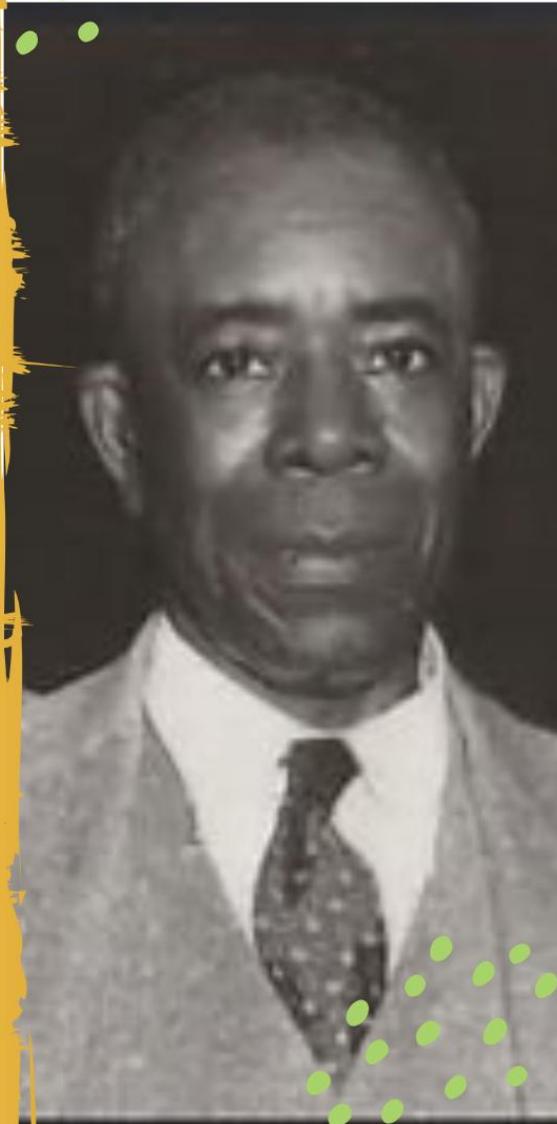**Ride On** Montgomery County Transit **MCDOT**

BLACK HISTORY Month

EDGAR DANIEL "E.D." NIXON

E.D. Nixon coordinated leadership, logistics, and strategy behind the scenes of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. His deep understanding of transportation labor and rider power helped turn everyday bus use into a tool for systemic change, ultimately reshaping bus policy and desegregation nationwide.

Ride On
Montgomery County Transit

MCDOT

BLACK
HISTORY
Month

CARMEN E. TURNER

Carmen E. Turner skyrocketed from working as a GS-2 clerk typist to becoming the general manager of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA); the first African American woman to head a major urban transit system.

R Ride On Montgomery County Transit   **MCDOT**

BLACK HISTORY
Month

RICHARD SPIKES

In 1932 **Richard Spikes** patented the automatic gear shift for automobile transmissions. In addition to the gear shift, Spikes also invented the directional signal for cars and the automatic safety brake system.

Ride On Montgomery County Transit   **MCDOT**

BLACK
HISTORY
Month

CLAUDETTE COLVIN

At just 15, **Claudette Colvin** took a courageous stand by refusing to give up her seat on Montgomery's segregated buses nine months before Rosa Parks. More importantly, she became a plaintiff in Browder v. Gayle, the pivotal Supreme Court case that legally ended bus segregation.

Ride On
Montgomery County Transit

MCDOT

BLACK HISTORY

Month

FRED GRAY

Fred Gray challenged bus segregation by arguing Browder v. Gayle, the landmark case that ended segregation in Montgomery and across Alabama. He represented Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., and others, turning protest into lasting legal change. Gray became the first Black state legislator in Alabama, served as president of the National Bar Association, and was the first African-American president of the Alabama State Bar.

Ride On Montgomery County Transit   **MCDOT**

BLACK HISTORY Month

SHIRLEY A. DELIBERIO

Shirley A. DeLiberio became the First African-American woman Chair of American Public Transportation Association (APTA) in 1998. She was a leader in the transit industry for over 30 years, with roles including President and CEO of Houston METRO, Deputy Executive Director of Dallas Area Rapid Transit, Executive Director of New Jersey Transit, and even Director of Bus Services and Assistant General Manager at Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

R Ride On Montgomery County Transit   **MCDOT**

Ride On Expands Access to Science and Technology Careers

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation's (MCDOT) Ride On buses are helping a local nonprofit expand opportunities for underrepresented students by providing reliable access to its life sciences career training program.

Learning Undefeated's Emerging Leaders program, funded by the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation's High-Impact Grants Program, provides advanced scientific coursework, hands-on lab experience, and career counseling to high school and college students interested in science careers. Since 2021, the program has received more than $250,000 in grant funding.

With a focus on STEM education and workforce training for underserved communities, Learning Undefeated has been a valuable partner in the County's mission to grow its life sciences industry and expand its workforce.

"For too many students, especially those from lower-income families, the biggest barrier to education and career training is access," said County Executive Elrich.

"Fare-free Ride On service and strong transit connections mean students can get to labs, classrooms, and job sites without worrying about cost or logistics."

In June 2025, the County eliminated fare payments for all riders on its Ride On bus system. Students ages 5–18 can also ride Metrobus for free with a Montgomery County Youth Cruiser SmarTrip Card, available at County libraries and public school main offices.

The program has served more than 200 Montgomery County students since 2021, connecting them to labs at Montgomery College and employers in the biotechnology industry. Grace Chi, a sophomore at Poolesville High School, shared: "I used Ride On every day to go to the lab facility at Montgomery College. The timing was convenient because the buses come so frequently."

Ride On and the Great Seneca Transit Network (GSTN) also provide fast, frequent service to the Life Sciences Corridor, home to major employers like AstraZeneca and Regenexbio. GSTN's express routes link students to more than 9,000 private-sector life sciences jobs and educational institutions such as the Universities at Shady Grove.

"By eliminating bus fare and expanding our transit network, we're connecting students to education and employment opportunities they need to embark on STEM careers," said MCDOT Director Chris Conklin.

Ride On Supports High School Attendance

Montgomery County's zero-fare policy is making a big difference for students by ensuring transportation is never a barrier to education. By eliminating bus fares, Ride On provides affordable and accessible daily commutes, helping students arrive on time and ready to learn. Ride On buses offer dependable transportation for high school students, making it easier to get to class and participate in after-school activities. Several Montgomery County high schools are conveniently served by Ride On routes:

- Springbrook High School: Ride On Route 21 on New Hampshire Avenue

- Northwest High School: Ride On Route 78 on Richter Farm Road

- Montgomery Blair High School: Ride On Routes 9, 21, or 22 on Colesville Road

- Seneca Valley High School: Ride On Route 74 on Middlebrook Road

- Gaithersburg High School: Ride On Route 55 or extRa (101) on Route 355/Frederick Avenue

Zero-fare service is more than a convenience—it's a tool for student success. By removing transportation costs, Ride On helps ensure students can attend class consistently and take part in after-school programs, sports, and other opportunities that enrich their education.

Students need a Youth Cruiser SmarTrip Card to ride Metrobus fare-free in Montgomery County!

Fare payment remains mandatory on Metrobus. Students can continue to ride Metrobus fare-free within Montgomery County, but only with a valid Youth Cruiser SmarTrip Card. As of Feb. 1, student IDs and flashing cards at the operator are no longer accepted on Metrobus—no exceptions. Students must tap the farebox when boarding. Youth Cruiser SmarTrip cards are available at many elementary, middle, and high schools, all Montgomery County public libraries, the Silver Spring TRiPS Commuter Store, the Mobile Commuter Store, and the Montgomery County Division of Treasury in Rockville.

Ride On Reminders

Ride On Reminders / Recordatorios de Ride On

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING SAY SOMETHING

We're all in this together. Please alert your bus operator if you see unattended belongings when riding the bus.

SI VE ALGO, DÍGALO.

Estamos todos juntos en esto. Por favor, alerte al operador del autobús si ve pertenencias desatendidas al viajar en el autobús.

MCDOT   Call 311 for information.   **R Ride On** Montgomery County Transit

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.

"If You See Something, Say Something"

Remember that Ride On buses are public places that we all share. If you see any unattended belongings or suspicious activities while riding the bus, please alert your

bus operator. Your vigilance can make the difference in protecting yourself and other riders.

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 with a Youth Cruiser SmarTrip, Senior SmarTrip, and reduced fare card for those with disabilities. The Youth Cruiser cards are available at all MCPS high schools, most MCPS middle schools, some MCPS elementary schools, and many private schools in Montgomery County. Youth Cruiser SmarTrip Cards and Senior SmarTrip Cards are available for free at all 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.

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.

New Taxicab Meter Rates Now in Effect

Montgomery County taxicabs, including wheelchair-accessible vehicles, began implementing a rate change on Feb. 1 from $2 per mile to $2.50 per mile. Additionally, a nighttime surcharge of $1 is now in effect for trips between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.

The County's Call-n-Ride program continues to provide subsidies to help offset on-demand taxi transportation costs for qualifying residents. To learn more about Call-n-Ride, visit the Call-n-Ride website or call 301-948-5409 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For more information about taxicab operations in Montgomery County, visit the Montgomery County Taxicab Regulation Office website at montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dir/taxi_reg/taxi_user.html.

Ride On Gratitude Corner

This month's piece of gratitude comes from a passenger who regularly rides Route 46 through Rockville. Here's what she shared:

"I want to compliment the bus operator for being very professional, kind, and having such a positive attitude toward passengers. Whenever I ask a question, she responds kindly and respectfully. It's hard to find a Ride On bus driver like her."

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 year did Ride On begin accepting SmarTrip® cards for fare payment?

A) 1999
B) 2003
C) 2006
D) 2008

Last month's question:

Which combination best reflects how Ride On has evolved since its launch?

1. Expanded from 20 buses to nearly 400 ADA-accessible buses while adding services like Bus Rapid Transit, on-demand Flex zones, and zero-fare rides.

2. Maintained a small fleet focused only on fixed-route service within Silver Spring.

3. Transitioned solely into a commuter rail system serving Washington, DC.

4. Reduced service areas to focus exclusively on peak-hour routes.

Answer: (1) Expanded from 20 buses to nearly 400 ADA-accessible buses while adding services like Bus Rapid Transit, on-demand Flex zones, and zero-fare rides.

March Is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

In 1987, President Reagan recognized March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month to increase "public awareness of the needs and the potential of Americans with developmental disabilities (ADA)" and to provide the "encouragement and opportunities they need to lead productive lives and to achieve their full potential."

Montgomery County Disability Network Directory is a directory of providers, agencies, businesses and advocacy organizations.

As a service to its website visitors, Montgomery County, Maryland has provided hyperlinks to informational resources developed by other agencies or organizations that provide services or programs for people with disabilities on the link below.

[Montgomery County - Department of Health and Human Services - Disability Network Directory](#)

A paper copy of the directory can be obtained by emailing **[MCCPWD@montgomerycountymd.gov](#)** .

Ride On's fleet of buses are ADA-compliant.

For the most up-to-date bus service information, riders should follow @RideOnMCT on [X](#), [Bluesky](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Threads](#) and [YouTube](#). In addition, information is available at [rideonbus.com](#), by subscribing to receive email alerts or by texting MONTGOMERY RIDEON to 62463 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 [Twitter](http://twitter.com), [Facebook](http://facebook.com) and [Instagram](http://instagram.com) and [subscribe](http://subscribe.com) 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.