



Ride On Newsletter September 2025

Great Seneca Transit Network Sees Significant Increase in Ridership After One Year of Service



The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is experiencing a significant increase in ridership as it celebrates the one-year anniversary of the [Great Seneca Transit Network \(GSTN\)](#). The GSTN is an upgraded, express bus service operating along the Life Sciences Corridor in Gaithersburg.

The GSTN operates two [Ride On extRa bus lines](#), designated as “Pink” and “Lime,” offering faster, more frequent service between the Shady Grove Metro Station and Traville Transit Center. The GSTN launched in September 2024, serving around 500 riders each weekday, a number that has since doubled to more than 1,000.

While some riders have shifted from local bus routes to the new express service, the GSTN is attracting new riders as well. MCDOT ridership numbers show a more than 70% increase in total bus ridership on a key bus route along Shady Grove Road, formerly served by local bus route 43 alone. That route is now serviced by the

express Pink route in addition to the local route 43 which travels a slightly different route and has additional stops.

“The Great Seneca Transit Network supports our growing Life Sciences Corridor, creating crucial links between universities, healthcare centers and private sector companies that foster collaboration and support innovation,” said County Executive Marc Elrich. “The Life Sciences Corridor has become a global hub for biotech research and development institutions and continues to attract investment. The Great Seneca Transit Network is a result of our commitment to building smart infrastructure that is accessible, sustainable and scalable for future growth.”

The bus routes offer express service to major shopping, education, and employment destinations along the corridor. The Pink route links Shady Grove Metro and the Life Sciences Center traveling down Shady Grove Road and Medical Center Drive. The Lime route connects Shady Grove Metro to RIO, Crown Farm, and the Life Sciences Center, along I-370.

Both bus routes offer more frequent service than the typical Ride On service, every fifteen minutes during weekdays, and every 30 minutes during weekends. The routes operate with sections of dedicated bus lanes and traffic signal priority, which gives a longer green light to the buses for faster service.

“The Pink and Lime routes strengthen critical east-west transit connections in the northern part of the county,” said MCDOT Director Chris Conklin. “Great Seneca has experienced a 20% population increase since 2010—more than 40% since 2000. These *extRa* bus routes provide faster, more frequent service, helping move people efficiently and supporting economic growth along these rapidly developing corridors.”

The Pink and Lime routes are the first in a planned two-phase development plan for the network. Phase Two, which is included [Ride On Reimagined](#) five-year plan, includes two additional routes and an extension of the Lime route. The Phase Two expansion will provide connections between the Kentlands, Crown Farm, King Farm, the Universities at Shady Grove, Adventist Shady Grove Hospital, Shady Grove Metro, Rockville and other key destinations.

The County has also implemented a zero-fare policy, that went into effect over the summer, on June 29 for all [Ride On](#), Ride On *extRa*, Ride On [Flex](#) and [Flash](#) buses.

Ride On Trip Planner App: A Back to School Essential and Your Go-To-Tool for Getting Around



As students and families in Montgomery County gear up for another school year, transportation remains a key part of ensuring everything runs smoothly. Whether you're a student heading back to school or a parent coordinating transportation, the Ride On Trip Planner app is your ultimate travel companion! Use it to navigate the Ride On system, which is now **zero fare**.

Plus, the Youth Cruiser SmarTrip card is a must-have for students using Metrobus to commute to school, offering free transportation for those under 19 in Montgomery County.

Why Use the Ride On Trip Planner App?

The Ride On Trip Planner app is designed to make your commuting experience easier and more efficient. Whether you're heading to school, work, or anywhere else, this app helps you plan your bus routes, giving you real-time information on:

- **Bus Schedules:** Quickly find schedules for Ride On buses, including up-to-date departure and arrival times.
- **Bus Stop Locations:** Use the map to locate nearby bus stops.
- **Route Planning:** Input your starting location and destination to get the best routes and transfer points, including regional transportation partners like MARC, Metro, bikeshare, scooters, and walking. Utilize the notification feature to get reminders that your stop is approaching.
- **Real-Time Updates:** Stay in the know with real-time service alerts, including delays and schedule changes.

- **Trip Estimation:** Get an estimated arrival time for your bus at any given stop, so you're never left guessing when it'll arrive.

The app is available for both iOS and Android and in a desktop version, and it's easy to [download](#) and set up. With user-friendly features, you can customize the app based on your preferences, making your Ride On experience even more personalized.

Back-to-School Tip: Get Your Youth Cruiser SmarTrip® Card

As part of back-to-school prep, the Youth Cruiser SmarTrip® card is a fantastic resource for students ages 5 to 18. This card allows students to ride Metrobuses within the county for free and can also be used on Metrorail by adding value to the card.

Why Get the Youth Cruiser SmarTrip® Card?

- **Ride Free: Kids ride regular Metrobuses free all day every day within Montgomery County.** Remember: starting February 1, 2026, Metro will enforce tapping of Youth Cruiser SmarTrip, Senior SmartTrip, and disabled cards for discounted rides.
- **Perfect for School Commutes:** The card makes getting to and from school, after-school activities, or weekend outings affordable and easy.

To get a Youth Cruiser SmarTrip® card, bring ID and visit one of the Montgomery County libraries, TRiPS Silver Spring or Mobile Commuter store or your school.

Start the School Year Off Right with Ride On!

Whether you're planning your commute using the Ride On Trip Planner app or taking advantage of the Youth Cruiser SmarTrip® card, Ride On is here to make the school year smoother. With easy-to-use technology and affordable travel solutions, students and families can focus on what matters most — getting to class on time and enjoying the new school year.

Stay safe and happy commuting!

Interview with Ride On Safety and Training Instructor Anthony Myers

What inspired you to work in Transition Safety and Training, and how long have you been with Ride On?

I have always enjoyed training others to operate buses with care and commitment, while sharing the knowledge I've gained throughout my career. I've been proud to serve with Ride On for over 10 years, and this experience continues to inspire me every day.

What does a typical day in your role look like?

Each day begins with a focus on safety culture. I ensure operator trainees conduct a proper pre-trip inspection and are fully prepared for revenue service. From there, I provide instruction on navigating buses through challenging areas, offering techniques and guidance to build skill and confidence.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

The most rewarding part of my role is seeing trainees take pride in their progress and apply the training to become the best version of themselves. Watching their growth and commitment to safety is truly fulfilling.

What is one of the biggest challenges in training new operators, and how do you address it?

Building confidence and overcoming fear are common challenges for new operators. With patience, experience, and encouragement, I help them gain the confidence they need to operate safely and successfully.

What safety initiatives are you most proud of?

I am proud of drafting a new pre-trip inspection script to support trainees preparing for their CDL exam, developing a Lead Driver training program, and contributing to the improvement of the training curriculum.

What is one safety tip you would share with Ride On riders?

Always wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching, and remain aware of surrounding traffic.

What advice would you give to someone interested in a career in transportation safety and training?

This career requires knowledge, patience, empathy, and strong communication skills. With dedication and the right mindset, it can be incredibly rewarding and impactful.

Montgomery County Department of Transportation Hosts Bicycle Drive for Community Service Month



In honor of Community Service Month, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is proud to announce an exciting Bicycle Drive on Friday, October 3, 2025. This impactful event will run from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM and will be held outside the Council Office Building Garage, accessible via the East Jefferson Street entrance. This drive is a wonderful opportunity for residents to contribute to a meaningful cause while supporting sustainable transportation solutions within our community.

The Bicycle Drive is organized in partnership with the Rockville Bike Hub, a local organization dedicated to providing access to reliable transportation for those in need. By participating in this event, you will help ensure that repaired bicycles are distributed to low-income Montgomery County residents. These bicycles will serve as a vital resource, offering enhanced mobility and independence to individuals and families who might otherwise struggle with transportation barriers.

We encourage all residents to participate by donating any unused or gently used bicycles they may have. The Rockville Bike Hub team will be on hand to accept and repair these bikes, ensuring they are in excellent condition before they are given to those who need them. This initiative not only helps improve transportation access

but also supports the broader goals of environmental sustainability and community engagement.

Bikes are welcome on all Ride On buses! Buses are equipped with racks either on the front or inside the bus. Flash buses also feature near-level boarding, making bringing bikes, wheelchairs, and strollers onboard that much easier.

For more information or if you have any questions about the Bicycle Drive, contact MCDOT Commuter Services at commuter.services@montgomerycountymd.gov. Your support and participation in this event are greatly appreciated and will contribute significantly to making a positive impact in our community. We look forward to seeing you there and working together to support those in need through this meaningful effort.

Ride On Celebrates National Drive Electric Month: Embracing a Greener Future



As our ongoing commitment to sustainability and eco-friendly transportation Ride On is excited to support National Drive Electric Month, from September 12 to October 12, 2025. The annual fall campaign, National Drive Electric Week, is shifting to [National Drive Electric Month](#) in 2025. This nationwide initiative will be extended from its usual 10-day run to an entire month in response to ongoing success and growing demand from event organizers to expand the timeframe to allow for greater participation, more extensive city representation and more opportunities for the public to engage and experience these events.

Drive Electric Month is a nationwide celebration to raise awareness of the many benefits of all-electric and plug-in hybrid cars, trucks, motorcycles, and more. It

highlights the importance of electric vehicles and their potential to reduce emissions, improve air quality, and create a cleaner, healthier, environment for all. Through both [in person and online community events](#), volunteer opportunities, and educational awareness, National Drive Electric Month encourages people to consider making the switch to electric, whether it's for personal vehicles, public transit or commercial vehicles.

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation is proud to lead by example in adopting green transportation solutions. The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and the County Department of General Services (DGS) have released a Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) Transition Plan to convert the County's transit fleet of nearly 400 Ride On buses to zero-emission vehicles by 2035. The ZEB plan is purposely flexible to accommodate for emerging technology and relies heavily on State and Federal grants that MCDOT has so far been successful in receiving. Recent grant awards have totaled more than \$30 million for environmentally friendly transportation solutions over the last two years. For more information and to view the Zero Emissions Bus Transition Plan, visit [MCDOT - ZEB Transition Plan \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/MCDOT-ZEB-Transition-Plan). Stay tuned for more updates as we continue to expand our electric bus fleet and support sustainable transportation!

Ride On Prepares for the Fall Season



As fall approaches, Ride On is ready to connect residents to seasonal activities, cultural events, and everyday destinations across Montgomery County. Our buses provide safe, reliable, and convenient service to help riders enjoy all that the season has to offer.

Connecting Riders to Fall Activities

Ride On provides access to many locations where fall events will take place, including:

- **Downtown Silver Spring** – A hub for community festivals, live performances, and dining.
- **Bethesda Row and Pike District** – Popular areas for art walks, shopping, and seasonal events.
- **Gaithersburg and Rockville Town Centers** – Hosting family-friendly festivals, markets, and cultural celebrations.
- **County Parks and Trails** – Routes provide connections to Wheaton Regional Park, Cabin John, and other outdoor spaces ideal for fall recreation.

Supporting Rider Convenience

To make travel easier this season, Ride On continues to offer:

- **Zero-Fare Service** on all Ride On, Ride On extRa, Ride On Flex, and Flash buses.
- **Ride On Trip Planner App** to help riders plan trips and track buses.

Plan Ahead

Whether attending a local festival, shopping, or enjoying the outdoors, Ride On is here to ensure a smooth trip. For schedules, routes, and service updates, visit rideonbus.com.

Did You Know?

- Ride On **Flex** is available in Rockville and Wheaton/Glenmont neighborhoods, offering curb-to-curb service (if disabled) for quick trips.
- The **Ride On Trip Planner app** provides step-by-step directions and real-time bus arrival information, making fall travel simple and efficient.

Senior Corner: What is Connect-A-Ride?

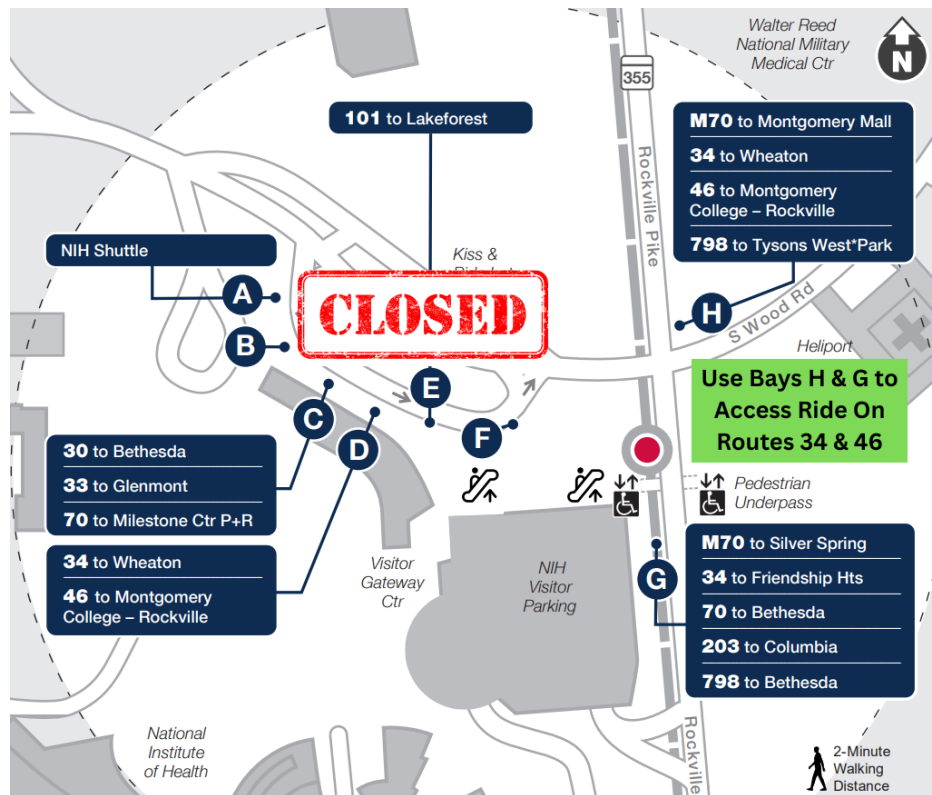


Have you heard of Connect-A-Ride? Montgomery County contracted Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA) to provide this free referral service to adults over 50 and adults with disabilities. They provide information about transportation options for medical services, errands, social activities and more. Connect-A-Ride links callers with public, private, and volunteer transportation services, including escorted transportation. In addition, the program assists callers with their applications for transportation programs like Call-n-Ride and Metro Access.

They also offer Ride Smart Travel Training, a free half-day workshop that helps Montgomery County residents aged 50+ get confident and comfortable taking public transportation. Participants learn how to read the Metro map, understand digital schedule signs, load a fare card, and where to find a station's emergency and accessibility features. The workshop includes classroom training, a trip on a Ride On bus, a visit to a Metro station, and a one-station round-trip train ride. The workshop takes about three hours. Advanced registration is required.

To contact Connect-A-Ride, call 301 738-3525 or email them at connectaride@AccessJCA.org.

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 5, 2025
- Sunday, October 26, 2025
- Sunday, December 28, 2025
- Sunday, March 1, 2026
- Sunday, March 15, 2026

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 Your Couch!"

The first message in our series is "It's a Bus - Not Your Couch!" We ask that riders please keep their feet on the floor and the aisle clear for the safety and ease of motion of all riders. For many residents and visitors, Ride On buses serve as a vital link to work, school, medical appointments, and more. This means that buses frequently crowd and reach capacity. When the bus begins to fill, we ask that you ensure that your belongings are kept close and do not occupy a seat that can be used by a passenger.

Ride On Bus Service Change to Route 41 Began Sunday, September 7, 2025



The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) adjusted the Ride On [Route 41](#) service schedule on Sunday, September 7, to improve on-time performance and service. The new schedule is available at rideonbus.com and in print. This service change came just over two months after the June 29 large-scale service changes to numerous routes. This smaller change was necessary to improve service reliability on [Route 41](#).

The County has also implemented a zero-fare policy, that went into effect on Sunday, June 29 for all [Ride On](#), Ride On [extRa](#), Ride On [Flex](#) and [Flash](#) buses. The zero-fare policy reduces barriers to public transportation access for many residents.

For more information on Ride On routes and services, visit [RideOnBus.com](https://rideonbus.com) or download the free [Ride On Trip Planner app](#).

Of Note

Thank You for Visiting Ride On at the 2025 Montgomery County Agricultural Fair

Ride On would like to thank visitors to the 2025 Montgomery County Agricultural Fair for stopping by the MCDOT tent and Ride On table this August. Because of your participation, the MCDOT tent was the most-visited non-food vendor at the fair for another consecutive year. We look forward to seeing you again in 2026!

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 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**.

Transit Advisory Group is Recruiting!

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

VanGo & Bethesda Free Circulators and Free Shuttles

Did you know that Montgomery County has two free circulators? The VanGo Circulator, or Ride On Route 28, makes traveling through Downtown Silver Spring easy and convenient. Buses run every 30 minutes and serve Silver Spring's art district as well as community and health centers, lodging, shopping, and transportation connections. Visit [here](#) for more details.

The Bethesda Circulator connects riders to 8 public parking garages, the Bethesda Metro Station and 20 convenient stops along the way that get you to and from your favorite Bethesda destination - all for free! Three circulators on route arrive at each stop every 10-15 minutes. Visit [here](#) for more details.

MCDOT also provides free shuttles to recreation centers, shopping, and medical appointments for some senior populations. Shuttles provide point to point service while circulators travel a specific route with multiple bus stops.

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:

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

The US 29 Flash BRT Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) September 25, 2025

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is hosting a supplemental Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting for the US 29 Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Phase 2 Project. The CAC will discuss the 35% design plans prior to the early October public meeting and will be asked to provide feedback. This project will improve the existing US 29 Flash BRT service by building a dedicated bus lane between Sligo Creek Parkway to Tech Road. This meeting is open to the public. Details for the meeting can be found below.

Thursday, September 25, 2025

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. EDT

[Four Corners Ethiopian Evangelical Church](#)

33 University Boulevard East

Silver Spring, MD 20901

For more information visit:

[US 29 Flash Bus Rapid Transit Phase 2 Project Website.](#)

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 [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and [subscribe](#) to MCDOT's "Go Montgomery!" newsletter.

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