

# Montgomery County Department of Transportation Sustainability Policy



## **MCDOT is Leading by Example for a Sustainable Future**

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) recognizes that the County's expanding transportation system has far-reaching impacts. The way our streets are planned, the range of available transportation options, and the way in which projects are constructed and maintained all influence our environment, physical health, economic well-being, social cohesion and the resiliency of neighborhoods over time. These broader issues are at the heart of MCDOT's sustainability goals that guide our programs, designs and policies.

  
Department of Transportation  
Director Al Roshdiah

MCDOT's Sustainability Policy provides a framework for decision-making to help us create an even more sustainable transportation system. Joining communities throughout the world, MCDOT has adopted the Brundtland Commission definition for sustainability that states: Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is a blueprint that holistically balances consideration of the pillars of sustainability: environmental, economical and social -- to which we have added educational.

As MCDOT makes progress towards meeting the goal of creating a sustainable transportation network, we are committed to ensuring that these four pillars of sustainability are fully reflected in our strategic approach as outlined below:

- **Environmental:** Plan and implement a transportation system that broadly considers ecosystem and climate impacts, reduces and prevents waste and pollution, uses renewable resources, uses sustainable sources of energy and reduces energy consumption.
- **Economical:** Support a public transportation infrastructure that stimulates economic prosperity, promotes economic development, and is cost effective and efficient.
- **Social:** Provide a transportation network that is accessible, affordable, safe, secure, equitable and one that improves the health and quality of life for people who use it and live near it. Consider the basic needs of diverse residents and businesses and provide access and mobility for all. Give back to communities by volunteering and donating resources.
- **Educational:** Ensure that residents, businesses and visitors are well informed about their sustainable travel options, help them make more sustainable decisions in their daily lives and support them in their choices.

MCDOT's core values are expressed in our mission, vision and guiding principles and they provide the framework for our Sustainability Policy:

**MCDOT's VISION:**

A seamless transportation system for people of all ages, incomes and abilities that supports a vibrant and sustainable community.

**MCDOT's MISSION:**

To move people and connect places with the best transportation choices and services.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

- Provide an effective and efficient transportation system
- Keep our system reliable, safe and secure
- Engage and support our diverse community
- Enhance quality of life
- Be innovative and forward-thinking

This Sustainability Policy outlines strategic objectives for each of our five mission-oriented guiding principles. The table on page 3 provides a summary. MCDOT's actions to achieve these objectives are outlined in detail in the remainder of the document.

As Montgomery County plans for a future with more jobs, more people and more options, MCDOT's Sustainability Policy supports a stronger and more vibrant community that is making even greater strides towards conserving natural resources, protecting the environment, promoting social equity, stimulating economic growth and educating our residents. Through innovative approaches, we are creating a 21<sup>st</sup> century system that moves more people in fewer vehicles. A sustainable future means a higher quality of life for everyone in Montgomery County -- now and for generations to come.



**MCDOT GUIDING PRINCIPLES, SUSTAINABILITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

| SUSTAINABILITY GOALS | MCDOT GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES                         |  |   |  |   |
|----------------------|---|--|---|--|---|
|                      | <i>Provide an Effective and Efficient Transportation System</i> | <i>Keep Our System Reliable, Safe and Secure</i>           | <i>Engage and Support Our Diverse Community</i> | <i>Enhance Quality of Life</i>                                   | <i>Be Innovative and Forward-Thinking</i>                                       |
| Environmental        | Reduce traffic congestion                                       | Provide safe options to encourage non-auto travel          | Develop sustainable travel options              | Reduce pollutants and environmental impacts                      | Adopt innovative technologies and best practices                                |
| Economic             | Keep infrastructure in good repair                              | Enhance system consistency and dependability               | Provide affordable transportation options       | Promote energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions    | Support smart growth  |
| Social               | Improve multimodal connectivity                                 | Reduce traffic collisions                                  | Provide an equitable and fair multimodal system | Enhance access and mobility                                      | Use innovation to make transportation choices easier and more convenient to use |
| Educational          | Promote transportation choices                                  | Educate all system users to keep the traveling public safe | Encourage use of sustainable travel options     | Support programs that promote environmentally preferable choices | Foster dynamic partnerships with businesses and the community                   |

## Guiding Principle:

### 1 PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Providing an effective and efficient transportation system means using our valuable County resources – including public spaces and funds – to yield the greatest results in terms of access, mobility, safety and quality of life. The result is a balanced approach that accommodates vehicle demand, manages congestion and provides transit, ridesharing, bicycling and walking opportunities that serve all County residents, visitors and workers. As MCDOT fine tunes our programs and policies to support expanding transportation choices, we continue to look for opportunities to serve more people in a variety of ways.

## Goal: Environmental Sustainability

### Objective: Reduce traffic congestion

#### Actions:

1. ***Provide new pedestrian connections*** in areas where there are none or where there are gaps.
2. ***Build bicycle facilities to bridge transportation gaps***, such as bike paths and trails, striped or buffered bicycle lanes, cycle tracks, parallel off-street paths and/or other dedicated biking facilities that provide better access to Metrorail stations, transit centers, activity centers and urban centers along major commuting routes.
3. ***Reduce gridlock during power outages*** by installing uninterruptible power supplies/battery back-ups for all County-owned traffic signals. Reducing the time vehicles spend on the roads means less air pollution.
4. ***Enhance traffic flow and cut idling delays*** by making intersection improvements, such as adding turn lanes or extending them.

# Goal: Economic Sustainability

## Objective: Keep infrastructure in good repair

### Actions:

#### *Preserve investments in infrastructure for:*

- **Roads:** Monitor the condition of County roads and use this information to target limited resources to preserve, rehabilitate and maintain roads and road shoulders.
- **Bridges:** Keep bridges in good repair through a regular program of inspections, maintenance, repair and rehabilitation.
- **Sidewalks and Bike Paths:** Maintain and repair sidewalks and bike paths.
- **Storm Drains:** Conduct roadway ditch and channel repairs and repair enclosed storm drains and damaged pipes.
- **Right-of-Ways:** Mow grass, replace guardrails and maintain and/or replace curbs and gutters to promote adequate drainage.
- **Lighting:** Replace broken or burned out streetlights and fix downed poles.
- **Transit Facilities and Bus Stops:** Keep facilities in good repair through a regular program of inspections, maintenance, repair and rehabilitation.
- **Signs and Pavement Markings:** Repair and replace signs and markings in response to resident requests and through a regular maintenance schedule.
- **Traffic Signals:** Repair and replace signals and upgrade technology where appropriate.
- **Buses and Other Equipment:** Ensure buses receive daily cleanings and maintenance and regular inspections and repairs.
- **Parking Garages and Lots:** Keep facilities in good repair through a regular program of inspections, maintenance, repair and rehabilitation. Maintain and repair lighting in parking lots and garages.

## Goal: Social Sustainability

### Objective: Improve multimodal connectivity

#### Actions:

1. **Expand the reach of alternative transportation options.** Examples include providing bike racks on all Ride On buses, in County parking garages and throughout activity centers within central business districts.
2. **Expand first mile, last mile options for connecting with transit and other travel options.** Create a Bikeshare network within the County that is part of the regional Capital Bikeshare program.
3. **Construct sidewalks and ramps to meet ADA standards,** particularly on arterial or collector roads that connect people with destinations.
5. **Build transit centers** to enhance and expand bus passenger facilities.

## Goal: Sustainability Education

### Objective: Promote transportation choices

#### Actions:

1. **Widely promote transportation options to residents, employers and visitors of all ages, income levels and ethnicities through public education and engagement.** Make presentations and/or organize public meetings, fairs, festivals and events; send direct mail to residents; actively engage on social media and translate information into multiple languages.
2. **Use transportation demand management to encourage consideration of sustainable travel options.** Within Transportation Management Districts, provide concentrated services to encourage the use of transit and other commuting options in major business centers. Promote the benefits of these options, such as reducing traffic congestion, increasing transportation capacity, reducing air and noise pollution and promoting bicycle and pedestrian access.

## Guiding Principle:

### 2 KEEP OUR SYSTEM RELIABLE, SAFE AND SECURE

Safety is paramount to what we do. We are dedicated to making our streets safe for all users. Our projects take a “complete streets” approach, addressing the safety and comfort of pedestrians, transit-users, people on bikes, and people in cars. We prioritize safety and work closely with other departments and agencies on projects and programs that further this goal. MCDOT is an integral partner in coordinating responses to emergencies and severe weather events. Additionally, we continue to build trust amongst Montgomery County residents in the security and reliability of all of our services.

## Goal: Environmental Sustainability

### Objective: Provide safe options to encourage non-auto travel

#### Actions:

1. ***Continue to implement a countywide Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Initiative*** that outlines a strategic plan for improving safety by using engineering, enforcement and education measures to achieve its goals.
2. ***Conduct a Safe Routes to School program*** that makes engineering improvements to reduce collision rates. These include installing traffic calming measures, providing enhanced signage and crosswalk markings, upgrading sidewalks or installing sidewalk connections, and improving traffic flow during arrival and dismissal times around County public and private schools.
3. ***Modify road right-of-ways to expand opportunities for other users.*** Restripe roads, to include shared bike lanes and add sidewalks, where appropriate.

# Goal: Economic Sustainability

## Objective: Enhance system consistency and dependability

### Actions:

1. **Respond to emergencies to keep roads open** by removing downed trees and addressing flooding.
2. **Operate a state-of-the-art transportation management center** that monitors traffic, adjusts signal timing to help keep traffic and transit vehicles moving, improves system efficiency and decreases delays.
3. **Work to improve Ride On reliability** by adjusting routes impacted by collisions or road work. If disruptions do occur, use social and traditional media to inform the public.
4. **Protect economic hubs and tax revenues** by pretreating roads prior to winter storms to speed snow removal and minimize retail and business closures. Following snow storms, clear snow from roads, County-owned sidewalks and major bus stops as quickly as possible, prioritizing central business districts so economic activity can resume.
5. **Monitor transportation facilities to enhance security.** Use patrols and video cameras to monitor buses, parking lots and garages, and transit facilities.



# Goal: Social Sustainability

## Objective: Reduce traffic collisions

### Actions:

1. **Target resources to pedestrian and bicyclist safety efforts** that are most successful by using a CountyStat, data-driven approach.
2. **Give pedestrians adequate time to safely cross the street by** retiming traffic signals to increase walk times.
3. **Use engineering solutions to calm excessive traffic speed in neighborhoods,** enhancing pedestrian and bicycle safety. Install speed humps, small traffic circles, curb extensions and pedestrian refuge islands to help slow traffic.
4. **Upgrade or install new lighting** along roads, sidewalks, in parking lots and garages, and adjacent to transit stops to ensure safety and security while using the transportation system.
5. **Ensure access to all residents during major snowstorms.** Clear emergency routes first so that every County resident is within one-half mile of an accessible route should rescue crews or Police need to reach them.
6. **Enhance traffic safety** by installing traffic controls, such as new traffic signals, marking pavement, installing signs and trimming foliage to improve visibility.



## Goal: Sustainability Education

**Objective: Educate all system users to keep the traveling public safe**

### Actions:

1. **Promote safe driving, walking and biking** by participating in the regional Street Smart education campaign that encourages all road users to share the road. Use advertising to communicate safety messages and support distribution of safety tips to pedestrians and bicyclists by street teams.
2. **Sponsor targeted safety campaigns** along corridors with the highest number of collisions and in parking lots to reduce collisions among the most vulnerable populations, including non-native English speakers, seniors and teens.
3. **Keep transit users safe in emergencies** by providing ongoing training for bus operators about how to respond in difficult situations. Provide drivers with emergency communications systems on all buses.



## Guiding Principle:



### ENGAGE AND SUPPORT OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Montgomery County is diverse in many ways. Our community is home to people of varying ages, incomes, races, backgrounds and abilities. We are proud of our bustling urban centers, suburban neighborhoods and our cherished rural/agricultural heritage. To truly support our community, the transportation system must respond to the needs of all groups, neighborhoods and contexts that make up our vibrant County. We actively involve people in our work through public engagement and a customer-oriented approach to everything we do.

## Goal: Environmental Sustainability

### Objective: Develop sustainable travel options

#### Actions:

1. ***Add more transit options in areas targeted for development.*** Work with the State to plan the Corridor Cities Transitway bus rapid transit system.
2. ***Increase the percent of the population with nearby access to transportation choices that have a smaller environmental footprint.*** Enhance Ride On service by planning for priority service along high demand corridors and adjust bus schedules and service levels to better meet needs.
3. ***Encourage ownership and use of electric powered vehicles*** by installing charging stations in County-owned parking garages. Electric vehicles emit significantly fewer pollutants compared to conventionally fueled vehicles.

## Goal: Economic Sustainability

### Objective: Provide affordable transportation options

#### Actions:

1. ***Provide free and reduced Ride On bus service*** for seniors, persons with disabilities, teens, County employees and college students.
2. ***Offer discounted taxicab service or door-to-door transport*** to eligible low-income seniors and adults with disabilities and their companions.
3. ***Assist programs that recruit volunteer drivers*** who escort passengers to medical appointments, grocery shopping and other needs.
4. ***Provide free curb-to-curb service to senior centers*** and some community centers for seniors living within certain service areas.

## Goal: Social Sustainability

### Objective: Provide an equitable and fair multimodal system

#### Actions:

1. ***Ensure that transportation options comply with Federal non-discrimination laws.*** Ride On meets all Federal Title VI requirements, which guarantee that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be excluded from using Ride On.
2. ***Make the transit system accessible.*** Ride On is ensuring that all of its bus stops are fully accessible to persons with disabilities and has been hailed as a national model. In addition, all Ride On buses are wheelchair accessible.
3. ***Provide a transit subsidy program*** to employees who agree to give up their parking space.
4. ***Design and construct pedestrian and bicyclist amenities*** with priority given to locations near schools, major activity centers, transit stations and bus stops.

## Goal: Sustainability Education

### Objective: Encourage use of sustainable travel options

#### Actions:

1. *Distribute information to businesses and organizations* that promote options for reducing single passenger vehicle travel.
2. *Organize activities to promote pedestrian and bicycle safety to school children* by holding Safe Kids days.
3. *Partner with high school students, PTAs and school administrators* to help develop pedestrian safety education programs and create a sense of ownership amongst teens in staying safe.
4. *Encourage more students to walk and bike to school* by celebrating Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day.
5. *Encourage employees to explore biking* and/or combining biking with transit as a way of commuting by sponsoring Bike to Work Day pit stops.
6. *Promote walking and transit use among employees* by sponsoring an annual Walk and Ride Challenge for businesses and other organizations.



## Guiding Principle:



### ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE

To meet the needs of an increasing population, MCDOT is creating an integrated transportation system that balances the impacts of our actions with the needs of the community. The design and range of transportation options empowers residents, businesses and commuters to make well informed choices that support their health, the health of the environment and the health of our community.

## Goal: Environmental Sustainability

### Objective: Reduce pollutants and environmental impacts

#### Actions:

##### 1. *Reduce Waste by:*

- *Collecting leaves for composting*, reusing this valuable organic material and keeping it out of the waste stream.
- *Using our own recycled asphalt* in MCDOT projects.
- *Ensuring MCDOT facilities* meet and exceed applicable environmental protection laws through regular inspections.
- *Purchasing environmentally preferable office supplies* that contain recycled content or can be recycled and, whenever possible materials, recycle materials from construction and maintenance operations.
- *Raise staff environmental awareness of best practices* by holding pollution prevention training classes and implementing staff innovations to improve systems and procedures.

**2. Reduce Air and Water Pollution by:**

- **Operating the Ride On bus system**, the largest regional transit system besides Metro, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions when compared to driving alone.
- **Sweeping streets** every year to remove debris from County-maintained roadways, keeping these pollutants out of storm drains, rivers and streams, and the Chesapeake Bay.
- **Caring for the County's 500,000 street trees** along County-maintained roadways and planting new ones. Trees help enhance the soil's capacity to absorb rainwater; decrease erosion, replenish groundwater, reduce stormwater runoff into local streams and filter pollutants. Studies have shown that trees can even enhance residents' sense of well-being and reduce stress.
- **Creating green streets** by partnering with the Department of Environmental Protection to construct on-site stormwater treatments such as rain gardens, permeable pavers and other methods that filter rainwater and improve water quality.
- **Cleaning storm drains** to ensure debris is removed before it washes into local streams.
- **Removing litter** from County roads and right-of-ways, targeting areas where trash accumulates and responding to resident requests.



## Goal: Economic Sustainability

### Objective: Promote energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions

#### Actions:

1. **Use LED lighting** for all traffic signals and garages and plan to transition streetlights. LEDs (Light Emitting Diode) produce light very efficiently, are more durable, versatile and long lasting than traditional compact fluorescent lamps, and reduce energy costs.
2. **Reduce use of more polluting fuels for Ride On buses** by expanding the percentage of the fleet that is hybrid electric or powered by compressed natural gas or clean diesel.
3. **Install solar powered** on-street parking meters.
4. **Establish an idling policy for Ride On buses** that limits the amount of time buses can run while parked to reduce air pollution and conserve fuel.

## Goal: Social Sustainability

### Objective: Enhance access and mobility

#### Actions:

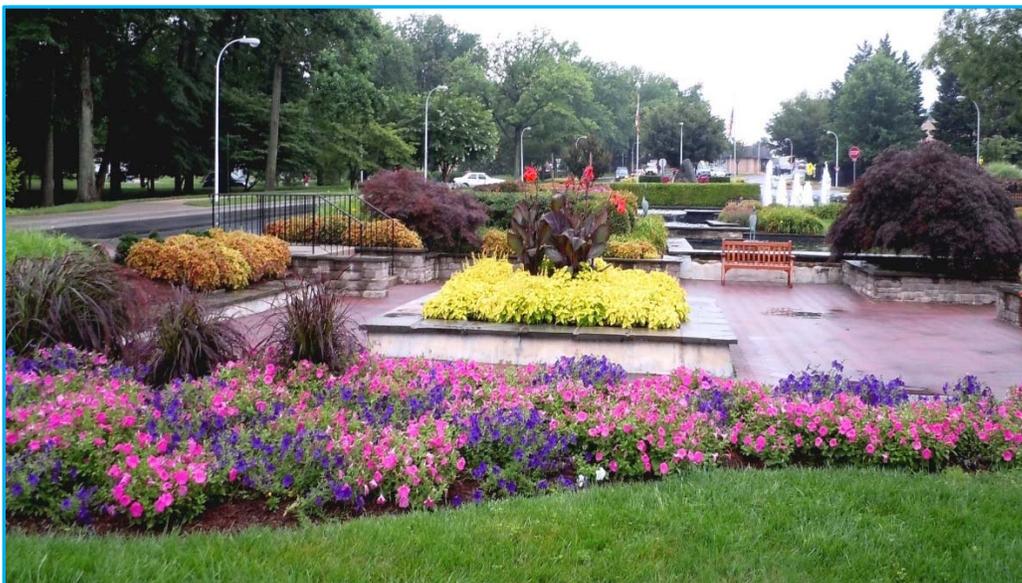
1. **Regulate the County's taxi system to ensure cabs are a viable travel option.** Cabs and drivers must meet the highest standards for safety. All taxi drivers must be licensed, have good driving records and pass criminal background checks. Vehicles must carry adequate insurance, pass mechanical inspections twice a year and be clean and in good cosmetic condition.
2. **Encourage car-free and car-lite lifestyles** by providing car sharing spaces in some County parking lots and garages.
3. **Offer online public transportation planning and usage tools**, such as real time applications and online information, to help travelers plan trips and make taking transit more predictable.

## Goal: Sustainability Education

**Objective: Support programs that promote environmentally preferable choices**

### Actions:

1. ***Encourage environmentally sensitive community landscape projects*** by sponsoring an annual competition for residents, businesses, non-profits and others. Reward landscaping done in an environmentally friendly way that incorporates rain gardens, encourages use of native species, and prohibits use of invasive species.
2. ***Sponsor the Adopt a Road program*** that recruits volunteers to adopt road segments and remove trash. The program helps educate residents about the benefits to our County's waterways of reducing litter.
3. ***Provide grants to community members*** to beautify common property through environmentally sensitive plantings and litter clean ups.



## Guiding Principle:



### BE INNOVATIVE AND FORWARD THINKING

As a forward-thinking transportation department, we are embracing technology and innovation. From public outreach to pavement management, almost every aspect of our transportation system and department can benefit from new and emerging technologies. We encourage our employees to be creative in their approach to addressing transportation challenges and to create a system that will continue to provide excellent choices and services to all users well into the 21st century.

### Goal: Environmental Sustainability

#### Objective: Adopt innovative technologies and best practices

#### Actions:

1. ***Encourage more people to consider using bikes for some of their transportation needs*** by providing greater protection for bicyclists. Add the first non-urban protected bike lane in the U.S. and continue planning for more.
2. ***Manage operations to minimize impacts to the environment.*** For example, protect trees during sidewalk and curb rehabilitations and prevent erosion and run off during construction projects.
3. ***Operate in new facilities that are LEED rated*** so MCDOT operations are kinder to the environment.
4. ***Remediate streams, wetlands and forests*** affected by transportation projects by reducing the impacts on these resources and/or creating new wetlands and planting trees in alternative locations.

# Goal: Economic Sustainability

## Objective: Support smart growth

### Actions:

1. ***Help transition designated areas identified in County master plans*** into walkable, bikeable communities by supporting construction of street grids and incorporating options for transit, sidewalks and bike paths into right-of-ways.
2. ***Support regional transportation planning*** to help implement projects such as the Purple Line and Metrobus and Metrorail improvements.
3. ***Provide transportation that supports growth and economic competitiveness.*** Plan for a Bus Rapid Transit system in the County's most densely developed areas to increase high-quality transit service. Continue planning for the full network outlined in the County's master plan.
4. ***Increase frequency and reliability of transit*** by adding priority Ride On bus service in high transit demand areas.
5. ***Look for opportunities to redevelop parking properties to better meet land use goals and transform them into mixed use developments.*** Transform parking garages and lots into high-quality, transit oriented projects such as the Woodmont Corner Garage in Bethesda and downtown Wheaton.
6. ***Promote retail activity***, particularly in the Central Business Districts, by improving streetscapes, supporting the urban districts that maintain and enhance downtowns, and targeting infrastructure improvements to strengthen employment districts.



## Goal: Social Sustainability

**Objective: Use innovation to make transportation choices easier and more convenient to use**

### Actions:

1. **Use technology to provide better service to transit users and encourage more people to try transit.** Install real time signs in bus stops that show when the next bus will arrive and install signs in County facilities that display all the transit options available from that location.
2. **Use innovations to better manage parking facilities and reduce environmental impacts.** Provide online, real time parking availability data, dynamic signs at parking facilities, and variable pricing for different parking options to reduce driving time spent searching for a space.

## Goal: Sustainability Education

**Objective: Foster dynamic partnerships with businesses and the community**

### Actions:

1. **Reduce travel by those driving alone** by entering into traffic mitigation agreements with developers of commercial and multifamily properties.
2. **Partner with environmental organizations** to educate the community about Bus Rapid Transit
3. **Reduce free parking and the incentive to drive alone** by offering developers in parking lot districts the ability to pay a fee in lieu of providing onsite parking.
4. **Promote social responsibility and community action.** Partner with the community to sponsor an annual Give and Ride program that provides free rides to passengers who donate food for needy families. Organize staff to participate in Community Service Day litter clean ups.
5. **Sponsor a volunteer organization,** Keep Montgomery County Clean and Green, that promotes waste reduction, recycling and sustainable landscapes.
6. **Reach out to employers and employees through Commuter Services** to help them consider alternatives to driving to work alone.