



**FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS
TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

AGENDA

**Friendship Heights Transportation Management District
Advisory Committee Meeting – Teams Format
January 11, 2022**

8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Chair: Barbara Condos Vice Chair: John Mertens
Staff Contact: Jim Carlson / (301) 318-0328
james.carlson@montgomerycountymd.gov

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- | | | |
|--------------|---|--|
| 8:30 | 1. Introductions/Agenda Review | Barbara Condos |
| | 2. Review of Meeting Minutes
November (©2) | All |
| | 3. Ride On Zero Emissions Transition
DGS support, bus procurement, EV microgrid | Calvin Jones
Christopher Brown
Dept. of General Services |
| | 4. Metro Update | Gary Erenrich
MCDOT- Special Assistant to the Director |
| | 5. Marketing Outreach Update | Julia Vaughn
David Proctor
TMD Outreach Staff |
| | 6. TMD/DOT/Other County Updates | Pete Fosselman
Iftin Thompson
Jim Carlson |
| 10:00 | 7. Adjourn
<i>Next meeting: TBA</i> | |

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Information Items

*Montgomery County Launches 2021 Biennial Online Resident Survey*

*Metro takes measures to combat omicron variant; Announces service adjustments and protections for customers and employees*

*Montgomery County Will Reduce Ride On Bus Service Starting on Sunday, Jan. 16, Due to Bus Operator Shortage*

*County to Provide Rapid At-home Test Kits at Libraries Beginning Monday, Jan. 10*

**Friendship Heights  
Transportation Management District  
Advisory Committee  
November 9, 2021**

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**Voting Members**

|                          |                                                       |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Robert Banach            | Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights |
| Barbara Condos (Chair)   | Town of Somerset                                      |
| Afua Ofori               | Polinger Co./Large Employer                           |
| Ahkeeia Payne            | GEICO                                                 |
| Elizabeth Demetra Harris | Friendship Heights Village                            |

**Non-Voting Members**

|                   |                                               |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Sandra L. Brecher | MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services |
| Peter Fosselman   | B-CC Services Center                          |
| Iftin Thompson    | M-NCPPC                                       |

**TMD Staff**

|              |                                               |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Jim Carlson  | MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services |
| Nakengi Byrd | MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services |

**Absent**

|                           |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Chief John Fitzgerald     | Chevy Chase Village Police |
| John Mertens (Vice Chair) | Friendship Heights Village |

**Guests**

|                  |                            |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Deanna Archey    | MCDOT Ride On              |
| Gary Erenrich    | MCDOT                      |
| Bob Joiner       | The Agenda News            |
| Julia Vaughn     | TMD Outreach               |
| Julian Mansfield | Friendship Heights Village |
| David Proctor    | TMD Outreach               |
| Jason Wynans     | Chevy Chase Land Company   |

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**Item 1 & 2 – Introductions/ Minutes:** Chair **Barbra Condos** called meeting to order. Members and guest introduced themselves and minutes were reviewed from July’s meeting and the Joint TMD meeting on September 20th.

**Vote: The Committee approved July and September’s meeting minutes.**

**Item 3 – Ride On Reimagined Study:** **Deanna Archey** reported on the Ride On Reimagined Study that will look at Ride On bus routes to make service more efficient. An implementation plan will be established after a review of 200 public comments received from the study. **Ms. Archey** described Ride On bus service history, stating that the system of 40+ years started as local neighborhood feeder service and has grown to include the Ride On Extra express service along the 355 corridor, the Flex bus on demand service which uses an app to request a trip, and the Flash articulated buses that operate along the

Route 29 corridor and features level boarding. All are equipped with USB ports and other amenities. **Ms. Archey** also reported that the plan will cover:

- Using previous studies to determine the Bus Reimagined Plan's Market Analysis & Land Use Development. Market Analysis looks at origin and destination patterns to strategically place transit.
- Infrastructure is the backbone of Ride On service as the plan will give direction on housing vehicles such as garages & charging stations.
- The Plan will cover technology such as vehicle locators, functionality of Real Time system and the transfer of the bus fleet to zero emissions and studying autonomous vehicles.
- Fleet & Operations will cover safety & training and best practices in solving issues such as recruitment and maintaining staff to combat the bus operator shortage.
- Public engagement includes meetings and other outreach activities seeking community comment on wayfinding signs, branding, maps & timetables.

**Ms. Archey** discussed the next steps of the study, which included posting the scope of the plan online for comment through November 1<sup>st</sup>. In the next 18-24 months, the 200 public comments received from the draft scope will be incorporated into the plan for a FY24 implementation. Also discussed:

- The draft study was conducted by an outside agency chosen from a pre-qualified list of experienced planners.
- Metro is also conducting a similar study and deferring the portion of its service in Montgomery County to be spearheaded by MCDOT – Metro is part of Ride On's study as well.
- Remarks on the good coordination and timing of MCDOT & Metro's studies – Metro has not yet selected a consultant.
- Covid pandemic will be included in the plan's analysis as the 'new normal'.

**Ms. Archey** provided the presentation slides to **Mr. Carlson** to distribute to the Committee.

**Item 4 – Metro Update:** **Gary Erenrich** reported on Metro operations. The Blue Line derailment resulted in removal of two thirds of its fleet of the 7000 series cars, meaning a loss of 740-750 cars. This deficit required the 2000, 3000 & 6000 series to be pulled from cold storage at the Shady Grove station, which is currently closed due to the Rockville canopy replacement project construction. The removal of cars from Shady Grove has delayed construction to mid-January due to removing the tracks protective covering. Also reported:

- A service plan was developed to move trains from Shady Grove storage to increase runtimes to 12-15 minutes – trains are 90% on time and running until 1AM on Fri. & Sat.
- Shuttle buses to replace trains traveling between Twinbrook & Shady Grove stations - 5,000 trips a day.
- FY23 budget will not have fare increases; however, there will be no reduction of the \$2 bus fare to \$1- rail to bus \$2 transfer will be free.
- Ride On is free until January. MCDOT will decide to extend at later date - may implement a half-fare policy.
- Discussion regarding the demand for more Metro bus operators and the issues with substituting rail operators to fill in the gap as bus driver recertification is difficult.
- Metro received union approval to hire rail operators without promotion from bus drivers.
- Metro Rail operators are needed for Silver Line.

- Three Federal funding bills have benefited the transit system, which have maintained service and employment.
- Bus ridership is good at 70% pre-Covid status; midday & weekend ridership has also increased.
- Discussion regarding the rail inspections of the wheel & axels from the Washington Suburban Transit Commission, as they decide what kind of inspections to conduct and the frequency- WSTC is Federally mandated to oversee Metro's safety.
- The FY23 budget projections are based on 55%-60% of ridership returning, relying on the infrastructure bill for transit funding.
- Discussion regarding the White Flint name change to be decided at the December Board meeting.

**Item 5 – Marketing Outreach: Sharp & Co. reported:**

- 3 pop ups for Car Free Day
- Walk & Ride participation -same participation maintained as last year
- E-blast on Commuter news, contacting Employers urging them to participate in events also share their transportation concerns
- CID's – visits at Marriott
- Employer outreach and Commuter Information Days held at Roti, Amazon Fresh and Courtyard Marriott

**Item 6 – Around the Room: Julian Mansfield** reported that the tree boxes on Willard Avenue are full of weeds and have received complaints from residents in the Community. A 311 call was placed; however, there has been no movement on the issue. **Jim Carlson** will contact the County Arborist to resolve.

**Bob Banach** reported that scooters from the District have been making their way into Bookdale and, in some cases, are being parked in a way that blocks pedestrian access. Scooter companies are supposed to have GPS tracking to locate errant scooters, but scooters have been in the neighborhood for days in many cases. **Jim Carlson** will follow up with the County's vendor contact to rectify.

**Adjourn: Next meeting: January 11, 2022**

# Montgomery County Launches 2021 Biennial Online Resident Survey, With Response Deadline of Jan. 17

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**For Immediate Release: Monday, December 27, 2021**

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich today announced that the County has started conducting its biennial online survey of County residents. The survey is available on the County website and is designed to get residents' assessment of the local government, its services and their quality of life. The survey will be open until 11:59 p.m. on Jan. 17.

The survey is available [here](#).

"I encourage all residents of Montgomery County to take this survey," said County Executive Elrich. "We want to ensure that the feedback we get is inclusive and reflects the County's diversity and we want everyone to have an opportunity to share their opinions with County Government on the services we provide. The pandemic required us to make some significant changes to the way we deliver some services. This survey is one way for us to assess how we are doing, what people think of the changes we made, and identify areas for improvement."

The 39-question survey asks residents age 18 or older to rate how they feel about the quality of life, County services, use of existing amenities and facilities, whether they take advantage of County programs, their impression of County employees, how well the County communicates with its residents, and various household practices such as recycling. It is recommended that respondents use a browser other than Internet Explorer to minimize problems accessing the survey.

To generate a more equitable sample, the survey was mailed to 5,000 randomly selected households with instructions in English, Spanish, Chinese, French, Korean, Vietnamese, Persian/Farsi and Amharic. However, the survey is open to all residents. Households that received the mailed survey should use the link and access code contained in the mailer.

This biennial survey was last conducted by the County in 2019. This survey is an important tool to create better customer service, more transparency, and provide ideas and feedback to help the government make better budget and policy decisions to create a more effective and efficient service.

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## Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

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Metrobus operating a Severe snow service level, today, January 4. Routes on major roads only.

[Read More \(https://wmata.com/rider-guide/weather/bus/severe.cfm\)](https://wmata.com/rider-guide/weather/bus/severe.cfm)

For immediate release: January 4, 2022

# Metro takes measures to combat omicron variant; Announces service adjustments and protections for customers and employees

Metro's Pandemic Taskforce is taking swift actions to protect the health and safety of its customers and employees against the recent surge in COVID-19 variants. Due to growing absenteeism rates across service areas related to COVID illness and exposures, Metro is reducing service schedules and implementing new workforce actions **effective Monday, January 10**.

"Scaling back service will ensure customers who rely on Metrobus, Metrorail and MetroAccess for transportation have a more reliable schedule," said CEO/GM Paul Wiedefeld. "Metro employees live in some of the neighborhoods hardest hit by the pandemic and are exposed to the surge in the region and throughout the nation. It's important that the taskforce take steps to make Metro operationally sound to meet the needs of our customers."

Metro service levels will operate as follows:

- **Metrorail** will continue to operate on all lines as scheduled, with customers experiencing more frequent service at stations served by multiple lines.
- **Metrobus** will reduce service on weekdays to a Saturday schedule with additional trips on some routes, which is roughly 75 percent of regular Metrobus service and protects key routes that serve hospitals, grocery stores, and other essential destinations.
  - Bus operators will be permitted to bypass customers not wearing masks for their health and safety.
  - Metrobus customers are advised to consider alternative sources of transportation like Metrorail to travel throughout the region.
- **MetroAccess** will reduce shared rides and increase accessibility rides. For more information about MetroAccess, please visit [wmata.com/metroaccess](https://wmata.com/metroaccess).

Metro's customer service call center operators will work remotely due to the recent increase in COVID cases, but there will be no changes in hours of operation. As Metro continues to monitor

COVID conditions throughout the region, employees will be held to vaccine or testing policy compliance to help combat serious illness and the spread of COVID-19 variants.

The following protocols have been communicated with all employees and will apply beginning **Monday, January 10**:

- Weekly testing requirements will remain in place for unvaccinated employees as more frequent testing requirements are evaluated and test availability improves.
- Beginning **Sunday, January 16**, employees who have failed to comply with Metro's testing and vaccination policies will be placed on unpaid suspension until compliant. Employees will have 30 days to comply or be subject to termination of employment.

On **Monday, January 31**, employees subject to eligibility will be required to enter booster shot information into Metro's portal as part of their fully vaccinated status. All efforts and precautions are being taken to reduce serious illness and transmission of the Omicron variant to vaccinated employees and riders.

Metro will update customers through [MetroAlerts text and email messages](#), on the Status and Alerts page at [wmata.com](http://wmata.com), and through Twitter [@MetrobusInfo](#) [@MetrorailInfo](#). Customers are encouraged to sign up for [MetroAlerts](#) to receive the latest service information.

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# Montgomery County Will Reduce Ride On Bus Service Starting on Sunday, Jan. 16, Due to Bus Operator Shortage

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**For Immediate Release: Friday, January 7, 2022**

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) will temporarily reduce Ride On bus service beginning Sunday, Jan. 16, due to a growing number of employees sick from, or exposed to, COVID-19.

The schedule changes offer considerably more service than the previous pandemic-related cuts, but the system will have fewer trips on about half of its routes while maintaining the same span of service. Overall, service will be reduced by about 9 percent from the current schedule.

The service changes will be revisited in six to eight weeks or once bus operator availability begins to return to normal levels.

“We have not yet fully returned to pre-pandemic bus service levels and hate to pull back,” said Dan Hibbert, MCDOT chief of transit. “These temporary changes will be fairly minimal from where we currently are, but riders need to be able to plan. With these changes, we will be operating at about 80 percent of pre-pandemic levels. We just don’t have the drivers available to maintain our current schedule and be dependable.”

The temporary service change schedule will be released early next week. It will maintain capacity for students and continue the Senior Program Transportation service. The change will suspend the Ride On Flex and extra bus services. The Flash weekday service will operate on a Saturday schedule and will continue to include service to the Food and Drug Administration campus in White Oak.

“We are doing all we can to ensure consistency within our transit system for our community members who depend on it,” said MCDOT Director Chris Conklin. “It is imperative that riders know what to expect. This service change will provide a more reliable service.”



The surge in COVID-19 caseloads arrived as transit agencies around the region have been struggling to attract operators. Montgomery County is actively recruiting bus operators.

Montgomery County requires that bus operators are 21-and-over. It offers paid CDL license training, a competitive benefits package and a fun, supportive atmosphere, with ongoing professional development opportunities. Potential applicants can get more information and apply at [bit.ly/3C2fIRl](https://bit.ly/3C2fIRl). Search “Bus” or “operator” under the job search tab.

Ride On will operate under the new reduced schedule for the MLK holiday on Monday, Jan. 17, instead of the typical holiday schedule. Trip planning and real time bus arrival information is available by specific routes at <https://rideon.app/directions>. Passengers can view the bus map to see in real-time if a bus is approaching their bus stop.

Ride On bus service remains free for all riders until at least July 2. Protective barriers are still in place for drivers. Bus operators have mandated COVID-19 vaccinations or a weekly test process—as do all County employees.

Bus interiors will continue to be cleaned by the County’s Department of General Services on a nightly basis with hospital-grade disinfectant. Bus filter and ventilation systems are also treated each night with a disinfectant.

All passengers are required to wear face coverings when traveling by public transportation. Riders must continue wearing the covering for the entire time of their trip. All MCDOT buses have a supply of face coverings for those who cannot provide their own.

For the most up-to-date service information, riders should follow [@RideOnMCT](https://twitter.com/RideOnMCT) on Twitter, visit [Ride On MCT](https://www.facebook.com/RideOnMCT) on Facebook, go to [RideOnBus.com](https://www.rideonbus.com) or [subscribe](#) to MCDOT news releases.

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*Media Contact: Emily DeTitta, 240-372-2282*

*Categories: Transportation*



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# County to Provide Rapid At-home Test Kits at Libraries Beginning Monday, Jan. 10

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**For Immediate Release: Friday, January 7, 2022**

To make COVID-19 testing more available, Montgomery County residents can pick up free, rapid at-home test kits at any one of 19 Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) beginning Monday, Jan. 10. The iHealth COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test kits will be available on a first come, first served basis until supplies run out. Residents can receive a maximum of two test kits per person (each containing two tests) per visit.

The tests are recommended for asymptomatic people. People showing symptoms of COVID-19 should NOT go to a library distribution site and should contact their health care provider or make an appointment for a PCR test at one of the many locations providing testing throughout the community.

Library branches distributing kits from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Saturday are:

- Aspen Hill
- Chevy Chase
- Damascus
- Davis
- Gaithersburg
- Little Falls
- Potomac
- Silver Spring
- White Oak

Library branches distributing kits from 4 to 7 p.m. Monday – Thursday and 2 to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday are:

- Connie Morella (Bethesda)
- Germantown
- Kensington Park
- Long Branch

- Marilyn Praisner (Burtonsville)
- Olney
- Quince Orchard
- Rockville
- Twinbrook
- Wheaton

“Securing these tests, that are currently in great demand, will help our County mitigate community transmission from the Omicron variant surge,” said County Executive Marc Elrich. “We appreciate the District of Columbia assisting us and thank our procurement team for their diligence to track down and acquire these tests. We are going to make sure these tests will be given out equitably and fairly throughout the community.”

The kits being distributed at County libraries were purchased directly by the County and deliveries will be ongoing for as long as supplies last and the Omicron surge continues. So far, the County has ordered nearly two million kits and 500,000 kits have been received so far.

“Rapid home tests for COVID-19 are important public health tools to help control the transmission of the virus and are more important than ever given the current spike in cases we are experiencing in our community,” said Council President Gabe Albornoz, who also serves as chair of the Council’s Health and Human Services Committee. “We encourage our residents to get tested and get boosted, while Councilmembers continue working with County Executive Elrich and our public health and emergency management teams to provide the resources needed to get our community through this latest phase of the pandemic.”

The iHealth Rapid Antigen test is an at-home test that enables a person to collect a specimen which shows whether the person has the nucleocapsid protein antigen from the virus which causes COVID-19. Test results are available in 15 minutes. Rapid test specimens are collected using a nasal swab. A swab is inserted into each nostril, one side at a time, the swab is then rotated around the inside of each nostril, to gather mucous. Detailed instructions on how to perform the self-test are included with each test kit.

In late November 2021, the County received 10,000 rapid test kits from the Maryland Department of Health and those kits were distributed to specific community-based organizations to be used for individuals identified as having an increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 or decreased access to available test sites because of their occupation, such as food service workers; their vaccination status or who live in areas of the community with lower vaccination rates; limited access to other testing resources due to access to health care, transportation or work hours; or due to a physical or developmental disability.

More information is available on the County’s COVID-19 testing page at [www.MoCoCOVIDtesting.org](http://www.MoCoCOVIDtesting.org).

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