



# Ride On Newsletter

## May 2026

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### Ride On Hosts 33rd Annual Food Drive



The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), Manna Food Center, and Montgomery County Public Libraries are hosting the 33rd Annual Food Drive from Friday, May 22, to Sunday, May 31. Non-perishable food items can be dropped off on all Ride On, extRa, Flex and Flash buses or at the ten participating Montgomery County Public Libraries, the Leggett Executive Office Building and the Council Office Building.

Participating drop off locations, aside from all County Ride On buses, include:

- **Aspen Hill Library:** 4407 Aspen Hill Road, Rockville.
- **Connie Morella Library:** 7400 Arlington Road, Bethesda.
- **Davis Library:** 6400 Democracy Boulevard, Bethesda.
- **Gaithersburg Library:** 18330 Montgomery Village Avenue, Gaithersburg.
- **Kensington Park Library:** 4201 Knowles Avenue, Kensington.
- **Long Branch Library:** 8800 Garland Avenue, Silver Spring.
- **Leggett Executive Office Building:** 101 Monroe Street, Rockville.

- **Olney Library:** 3500 Olney-Laytonsville Road, Olney.
- **Potomac Library:** 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac.
- **Rockville Memorial Library:** 21 Maryland Avenue, Rockville.
- **Stella Werner Council Office Building:** 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville.
- **White Oak Library:** 11701 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring.

[Manna Food Center](#) is a leader in the fight against hunger and food waste in Montgomery County. Through innovative partnerships and solutions, Manna collects food and delivers it to families in need through pop-up pantries, school-based programs, education and community food rescue and a Farm to Food Bank program.

Manna Food's [website](#) lists the following items as high need: instant oatmeal, brown rice, whole grain pasta, canned tuna, beans, shelf-stable milk boxes, cooking oils and spices.

Please use this [link](#) to view an informational video by Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Department of Transportation Director Chris Conklin and Manna Food Center CEO Craig Rice.

[Learn more about the food drive and find a drop off location near you!](#)

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## **Public Transit Available to Take Residents to Montgomery County's 14 Early Voting Centers During Gubernatorial Primary Election**



Early voting for the 2026 Gubernatorial Primary Election will be held from 7 a.m.- 8 p.m. from June 11 through June 18, including Saturday and Sunday. Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Ride On bus service has several routes available to transport voters to the [early voting centers](#).

Ride On and Metrobus routes that will serve early voting centers:

- Activity Center at Bohrer: Ride On Routes [55](#), [59](#)
- Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center: Ride On Route [48](#)
- Damascus Community Recreation Center: Ride On Route [90](#)
- Executive Office Building: Ride On Routes [44](#), [46](#), [47](#), [54](#), [56](#), [63](#)
- Germantown Community Recreation Center: Ride On Routes [71](#), [78](#), [98](#)
- Jane E. Lawton Community Recreation Center: Metrobus Routes [M22](#), [M70](#), [D96](#).
  - The Bethesda Metro Station is also nearby.
- Marilyn J. Praisner Community Recreation Center: Metrobus Route [M52](#)
- Mid-County Community Recreation Center: Ride On Routes [26](#), [39](#) and [49](#)
- Nancy H. Dacek North Potomac Community Rec. Center: Ride On Route [301](#)
- Potomac Community Recreation Center: Ride On Route [37](#)
- Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Station: Ride On Routes [52](#), [53](#), [Flash](#)
- Silver Spring Civic Building:  
Ride On Routes [8](#), [9](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [19](#), [20](#), [21](#), [22](#), [28](#), [Flash](#)
- Wheaton Library & Community Recreation Center: Ride On Routes [9](#), [31](#), [Flash](#)
- White Oak Community Recreation Center: Ride On [Flash](#)

Several of these early voting centers are served by Metrobus. For detailed information on Metrobus routes serving specific locations, please visit <https://www.wmata.com/ridertools/lines?linesTransitMode=bus>.

The [Ride On Trip Planner](#) app is a free regional public transportation planner that will find your fastest route.

For information on the approved early voting centers and hours of operation, go to the [early voting information page](#).

All Ride On buses are zero fare. Metrobus offers various [reduced fare programs](#) for seniors 65 or older, persons with disabilities and youth 18 and under.

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## Celebrating Allan Watts and His 38 Years of Service at Ride On



For National Transportation Week, we are celebrating the people who keep our community moving. One of them is Allan Watts, the Chief of Ride On's Nicholson Court depot. Allan joined Ride On almost 38 years ago after moving to Gaithersburg to be near his brother. He started as a bus operator in 1988 and quickly discovered that driving through a new city was both exciting and rewarding. His early years were filled with memorable moments, including winning first place in the 1992 Regional Roadeo and traveling to San Diego to compete nationally. He also remembers the yearly company picnics where employees from different depots came together to relax, share stories, and enjoy great food.

Over the years, Allan has seen the transit industry change in many ways. When he first started, buses had only one door that swung open, passengers needed exact change, and destination signs were operated manually by the driver. Allan adapted by staying curious and committed to learning. He read manuals, attended seminars, took classes, and shared his knowledge with coworkers. His dedication earned him Employee of the Year in 1996, a recognition that encouraged him to aim even higher. He continued to grow and even helped create the Front

Desk Supervisor position, which supported daily operations and evolved as new technology like Trapeze and CleverCAD was introduced.

Today, Allan leads the Nicholson Court depot, a group he describes as experienced, skilled, and committed. He enjoys their teamwork and their ability to support operators while keeping operations running smoothly. Allan believes Ride On plays an important role for Montgomery County residents by connecting people to grocery stores, hospitals, schools, and more. With service running seven days a week for most of the day and offered at no cost to riders, he sees Ride On as a lifeline for the community. His advice for new employees is simple. Be dependable, follow safety and service practices, stay friendly, and follow all policies. For Allan, a career in transit is not just a job, but a chance to serve others and grow along the way.

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## **Bike to Work Day 2026 Brings a Joyful and Eco-Friendly Morning to Montgomery County**



Bike to Work Day 2026 brought a cheerful start to the morning as riders filled Montgomery County's trails and streets with smiles, conversation, and colorful t-shirts from many different years. Some arrived in full cycling gear, while others proudly wore shirts from past events. This year's new t-shirt was handed out at check-in, and many riders slipped it on right away to mark the occasion.

Pit stops across the county each offered their own unique vibe. Local vendors provided giveaways and snacks, restaurants surprised riders with meal vouchers, and music kept the atmosphere lively. MCDOT staff and volunteers greeted participants, shared biking and transportation resources, and made every stop feel welcoming.

A favorite highlight came at the Veterans Plaza pit stop, where a family of six arrived wearing t-shirts from different years of the event. Their colorful shirts drew smiles and sparked a fresh round of photos, capturing how Bike to Work Day brings together people of all ages and backgrounds.

Raffle prizes added excitement throughout the morning, with drawings for biking gear, accessories, and even a brand new- bike. Many riders also appreciated the environmental benefits of choosing to bike, noting that their commute helped reduce congestion and support cleaner air.

Bike to Work Day 2026 wrapped up with happy stories, tired legs, and renewed enthusiasm for cycling. Montgomery County thanks everyone who participated, volunteered, and supported the event, and looks forward to keeping the momentum going throughout the year.

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## **Strong, Active, Connected: Honoring Older Americans**



Each May, we celebrate Older Americans Month by recognizing the strength and resilience of older adults. This year's theme encourages everyone to "Champion Your Health" through prevention and activity, while also "Flipping the Script on Aging" by challenging outdated assumptions and highlighting the vitality of older adults in our community.

### **Senior Spotlight: African American Health Program**

The African American Health Program (AAHP) supports the long-term wellness of older adults by focusing on six key health areas: diabetes, cancer prevention, cardiovascular disease, oral health, mental health, and HIV/AIDS. AAHP provides culturally responsive outreach, health education, support groups, and nurse case management to help seniors stay healthy and informed. Learn more at [www.aahpmontgomerycounty.org](http://www.aahpmontgomerycounty.org).

### **Transportation Options for Seniors**

Montgomery County offers several free and reduced-cost transportation options to help seniors stay mobile and independent.

- Ride On & Metrobus: Seniors (65+) and individuals with disabilities can ride all Ride On services and Metrobus within Montgomery County at no cost by tapping a Senior, Reduced Fare, or MetroAccess SmarTrip card. Beginning February 1, 2026, tapping a valid card will be required for free Metrobus travel.
- Connect-A-Ride: Transportation information and referrals for seniors and people with disabilities. Voice: 301-738-3252 | TTY: 301-881-5263
- Call-n-Ride: Discounted taxi trips for low-income seniors (63+) and adults with disabilities (18+). Phone: 301-948-5400 (Please confirm before publication.)
- Medicaid Transportation: Taxicab, wheelchair van, and non-emergency ambulance transportation for Medicaid recipients traveling to medical appointments.
- MetroAccess: Shared-ride, door-to-door paratransit for individuals unable to use fixed-route transit. Voice: 301-562-5360 | TTY: 301-588-7535

### **Travel Support and Training**

- Senior Connection – Volunteer-escorted rides for adults 60+. 301-962-0820
  - Connect-A-Ride – Personalized transit planning for adults 50+. 301-738-3252
  - JCA Travel Training – Hands-on seminars to help seniors navigate local transit systems.
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## Transit Advisory Group: New Member Spotlight



We are pleased to introduce one of the newest members of the Transit Advisory Group (TAG), Gad Krosner. He brings a thoughtful and experienced perspective as a longtime transit rider, and his insights into navigating the system offer meaningful context for understanding rider needs. His interest in contributing to improvements that benefit the broader community makes him a welcome addition to TAG.

To help readers learn more about him, here are some of Gad's thoughts in response to our interview questions.

**How long have you been riding with Ride On, and what year did you begin?**

*Not quite 40 years - my first ride was in early 1987.*

**Why did you start riding Ride On?**

*Back in the day, we had just one car. My destinations were reasonably served by public transit, so we avoided getting a second car for a while.*

**What routes do you ride the most and for what reasons?**

*I'm legally blind, so whenever I need to venture out on my own, I ride the buses. I use these routes:*

*Weekly: 42, 47*

*Monthly: M82*

*Occasionally: 37, 38, 40, 46, 49, 54, 55, 59, 101, Flex*

**What do you like the most about riding with Ride On?**

*That I can view real-time information and plan to meet the bus when it'll arrive.*

**How do you view your role as a Ride On Transit Advisory Group (TAG) member?**

*I'd like to advocate for public transit's users. Back in the day, there was a phone number to call to report problems with Ride On buses. Now you call 311, and as far as I can tell, they don't do anything with that.*

**How likely are you to recommend Ride On to someone else?**

*I typically do.*

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## Ride On Bus Service Changes Started on May 3



The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) adjusted 18 Ride On bus route schedules starting Sunday, May 3, 2026, to improve efficiency and on-time performance. The changes reflect a shift of resources to allow for more reliable service where demand is higher. The new schedules are available at [rideonbus.com](https://rideonbus.com) and in print.

Route changes include:

- Ten (10) routes have new trip times: 12, 15, 16, 17, 20, 26, 29, 34, 40, 47

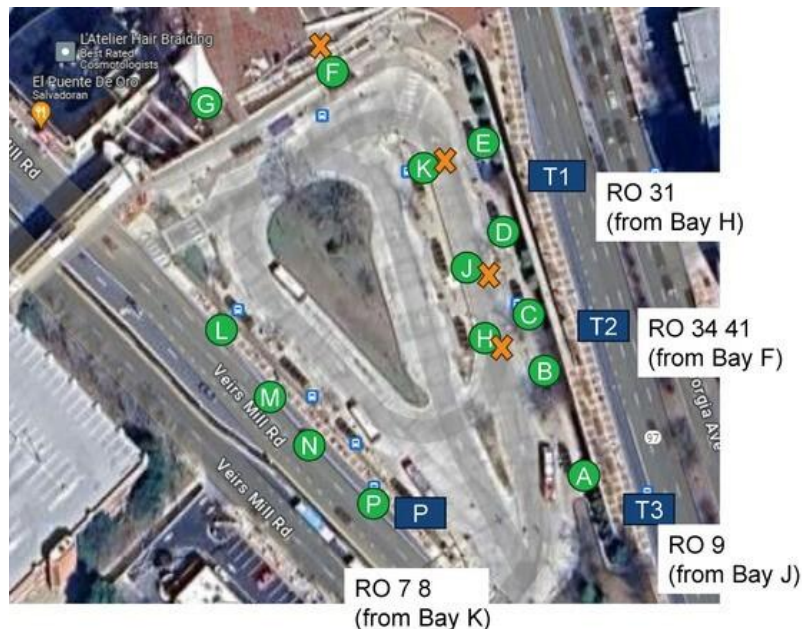
- Eight (8) routes have adjustments to improve on-time performance: 33, 48, 49, 57, 97, 98, Flash Orange, and Flash Blue

Here are details of each route affected:

Routes	Service Notes	Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays
12	New trip times		X	X
15	New trip times		X	X
16	New trip times		X	X
17	New trip times		X	
20	New trip times		X	X
26	New trip times		X	X
29	New trip times		X	
33	Running Time Adjustments	X		
34	New trip times		X	X
40	New trip times / Running time adjustments	X	X	X
47	New trip times		X	X
48	Running Time Adjustments	X	X	X
49	Running Time Adjustments	X	X	X
57	Running Time Adjustments / Trips	X	X	X
97	Running Time Adjustments	X	X	X
98	New Trip Times / Running Time Adjustments	X	X	
Flash Blue	Running Time Adjustments	X		
Flash Orange	Running Time Adjustments	X	X	X

Explore more details on our [Ride On Service Changes page](#).

## Temporary Bus Bay Changes at Wheaton Metro Station Continue Through June



Bus shelter replacement work is ongoing at the Wheaton Metro Station, and temporary bus bay assignments will continue into June. Riders should allow extra time when traveling through the station and follow posted signs to the correct temporary bus bays.

Beginning June 1, the next phase of construction will shift several routes to new temporary locations:

- **Routes 34 & 41** will operate from **Bay T2** (normally Bay F)
- **Route 31** will operate from **Bay T1** (normally Bay H)
- **Route 9** will operate from **Bay T3** (normally Bay J)
- **Routes 7 & 8** will operate from **Bay P** (normally Bay K)

Signage throughout the station will guide riders during this phase of the project. Additional phases may follow as shelter replacement work progresses, and updates will be provided as they become available.

For real-time arrival information and trip planning, riders can use the Ride On Trip Planner app on the Apple Store or Google Play, or access the online trip planner from any desktop or laptop.

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## Of Note

### **Planning for Flash BRT Expansion to Howard County Underway**



Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich and Howard County Executive Calvin Ball joined transportation leaders on May 21 to break ground on the expansion of the Montgomery County Flash Bus Rapid Transit line into Howard County along US Route 29/Colesville Road. MCDOT Transit Services General Manager Phil McLaughlin delivered a standout speech highlighting the major improvements riders can expect when the extension launches in fall 2026.

The project will add four new Howard County stops at Downtown Columbia, Merriweather Drive, Maple Lawn, and the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. These stops will be served by Flash BRT during weekday rush hours. Howard County is constructing the new stations, and Montgomery County has purchased four electric buses to power this next phase of sustainable regional transit.

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## County Celebrates EMTOC Microgrid Launch



The ribbon cutting for the David F. Bone Equipment Maintenance and Transit Operation Center (EMTOC) microgrid marked a major milestone for Montgomery County and the future of sustainable transit. Leaders from across the state and county gathered to celebrate the launch of the nation's largest transit depot microgrid. Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller, County Executive Marc Elrich, MCDOT Director Chris Conklin, and other officials spoke about the

importance of cleaner, more resilient transportation, emphasizing how this investment strengthens local infrastructure while advancing long-term environmental goals.

The new microgrid combines on-site solar generation with advanced battery energy storage to keep Ride On's growing electric bus fleet charged and ready to serve the community. This technology-driven and resilient system enhances reliability, reduces emissions, and helps prepare Montgomery County for the next generation of transit. The ceremony marked an exciting step forward in Ride On's continued commitment to cleaner operations and a more sustainable transportation network for all riders.

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## Fare Enforcement Increasing on Metrobus and Metrorail

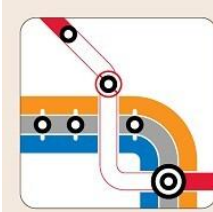


As you travel around the region, you may notice a few updates when connecting between Ride On and Metro services. While Ride On remains zero fare, Metrobus and Metrorail still require payment, and WMATA is increasing fare checks across the system. Riders may see more Metro Transit Police on buses, hear more frequent reminders from bus operators to tap and pay the \$2.25 fare, and experience quicker, more reliable taps thanks to updated fare reader software.


If you use a Senior SmarTrip or Youth Cruiser SmarTrip card, remember to tap when boarding Metrobus so your zero fare benefit carries over. WMATA leadership will also be present at major bus hubs supporting frontline staff and helping ensure consistency across the system. Together, these updates are intended to make transfers between Ride On and Metro feel smoother and reduce surprises as you continue your trip.

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## Metrorail Service Updates For Spring and Summer

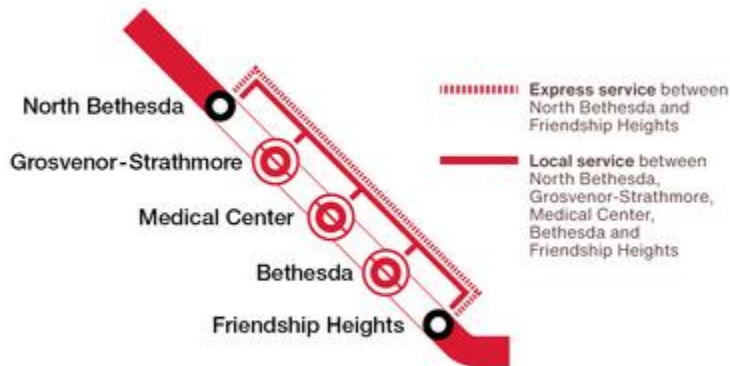


planned metrorail track work advisory for our community



### Free Shuttle Service

Effective July 6 - Sept. 7 | Shuttles available during Metro Rail operating hours



  closed |  Station closed



WMATA continues systemwide track and infrastructure upgrades this season to improve reliability, reduce unexpected delays, and support smoother, quieter rides. Below is a streamlined look at the upcoming work that may affect riders in the coming weeks and months.

#### Grosvenor–Strathmore Platform Work (Through September 7)

- Partial platform closure in place
- Full station closure: July 6 – September 7
- No Red Line service between North Bethesda and Friendship Heights during the closure

#### Crystal City Weekend Closures

- Ongoing weekend shutdowns for new entrance construction

#### Major Red Line Shutdown (July 6 – September 7, 2026)

- No Red Line service: North Bethesda ↔ Friendship Heights
- Closed stations: Grosvenor–Strathmore, Medical Center, Bethesda
- Shuttle options: Local Shuttle (all stations in zone) and Express Shuttle (North Bethesda ↔ Friendship Heights)
- Rail segments operating: Shady Grove → North Bethesda and Friendship Heights → Glenmont

## Stay Informed

For the latest planned track work and service adjustments:

<https://www.wmata.com/service/track-work.cfm>

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## Ride On Gratitude Corner

This month's appreciation comes from a passenger on Route 6, recognizing an operator who makes the morning commute a positive experience:

"I'd like to commend the regular driver of Ride On Route 6. Every morning she is consistently on time and always greet passengers with a positive attitude and a warm smile. Her professionalism and friendliness make each ride pleasant and appreciated. Thank you for helping create such a welcoming experience on the bus. I enjoy riding it in the mornings."

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## Transit Trivia!

Test your familiarity with Ride On's routes, services, and more with our transit trivia! The answer will be in next month's edition of our newsletter so make sure you tune in next month to see if you answered correctly!

### Question:

Which type of Ride On bus is the only one in the fleet that features the blue and silver "Flex" branding?

- A) 30-foot diesel
- B) 40-foot hybrid
- C) Microtransit van
- D) 60-foot articulated

### Last month's question:

Which Ride On route is the only one that serves both Glenmont Metro and the ICC Park & Ride (lot 4)?

- A) Route 10
- B) Route 49
- C) Route 51
- D) Route 90

Answer: (C)

Route 51 is the only Ride On route that serves both Glenmont Metro and the ICC Park & Ride (Lot 4), creating a direct link between the station and the commuter lot. Running along the ICC corridor, it connects these two key locations on a single, continuous route without the need to transfer.

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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](https://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](mailto: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](https://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](mailto: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.