



301.770.8108

# NEWS

for North Bethesda & Rockville Commuters

## Youth Passport to Summer Fun

Montgomery County residents 18 and younger can get unlimited rides on Ride On and Metrobus between June 1 and September 5, 2004. All they need is a Summer Youth Cruiser Pass—available for only \$15. (That's half off the regular \$10/month Youth Cruiser Pass.)

The pass is good on Ride On and Metro buses operating within the county. The pass isn't accepted on Metro buses that leave the county or serve other areas.

Purchase the Summer Youth Cruiser Pass online, by mail, or in person at any County Regional Center or Commuter Store. (See details at [www.nbtc.org](http://www.nbtc.org).)

## Where to Go?

The County's "Getting There" brochure has info on how to use Ride On to go to area malls, swimming pools & recreational facilities, libraries and other popular summer haunts. Click on [www.nbtc.org](http://www.nbtc.org) for a link to the County's "Getting There" brochure.

May/June 2004  
[www.nbtc.org](http://www.nbtc.org)

## Metro Parking to Go Cashless, Require SmarTrip® Card

You will soon need a SmarTrip® card to pay for parking at a Metrorail station. All Metro stations will be converted to cashless, SmarTrip card-only systems by June 28, 2004. The change affects all Metrorail parking facilities.

Metro reports that nearly three-quarters of its parking lot users already paid via the SmarTrip card when Metro's board decided to eliminate cash payments. However, the change will have an impact on those who were used to paying cash.

### Payment Hours Change

The hours during which payment is required are changing, as well. Riders who park in Metro-owned lots currently pay if they exit the parking lots between 2:00pm and 10:00pm Monday through Friday.

Metro's new plan expands the payment hours from 9:00am until closing Monday through Friday. Parking on weekends and Federal holidays remains free.

### Getting Your SmarTrip® Card

Metro is installing SmarTrip dispensing machines in its stations with parking facilities. The machine sell the cards for \$5. After purchasing the card, customers next need to add fare value by taking it to a fare vending machine. It's a simple process that involves touching the card to the machine, inserting cash (up to \$200), then retouching the card to the machine to complete the transaction.

You can also purchase a SmarTrip card with cash, check or credit/debit card at any of three Metro sales offices; at any of 11 commuter stores; at special retail outlets; via U.S. mail; at any of six specific Metrobus divisions; or online at [www.wmata.com/riding/smartrip.cfm](http://www.wmata.com/riding/smartrip.cfm). Locations of SmarTrip sales locations are available online or by calling 202-637-7000.

Once loaded with value, SmarTrip can be used to pay for parking fees and for Metrorail (and some Metrobus) fares. Metro says all its buses will be outfitted with new SmarTrip-accepting fareboxes by August of this year. (See related story on page 2.)

### More Secure than Cash

If you lose a SmarTrip card, you don't lose the value. For a \$5 fee to replace the card itself, Metro will reissue a new card with the value on the card at the time the customer notified officials that it was lost. For this valuable replacement feature, customers must register their card, either at the point of purchase, via the mail or online.



## Area Buses Will Soon Accept SmarTrip® Card

### Metrobus First

Metro is outfitting all of its buses with a new farebox that will accept cash and electronic SmarTrip® card payments. Riders can also pay via passes and tokens. Installation of the new fareboxes began May 3, 2004.

Metro is the first—and largest—fleet in the region to adopt the electronic payment approach. Metro says the SmarTrip farebox has been in test service on 175 of its buses. The new box is being installed on the balance of the 1,500 Metrobus fleet between May and August 2004.



### Be Prepared...Just in Case

Riders who opt to pay with cash will still need exact change. Indeed, Metro cautions people to have exact change ready during the SmarTrip farebox installation period, in case a bus hasn't yet been converted to the new system. For the same reason, Metro advises getting a paper transfer—

even though buses that have the new farebox won't require one.

### Look for the Decal

Metrobuses will have a special SmarTrip decal visible next to the door once they've been converted to the new system. If you don't see the decal...you'll still need the exact fare in the form of cash, token or pass.

### Ride On Changing, Too

Montgomery County plans to install the SmarTrip® farebox on all of its 350 Ride On buses by February 2005. The move means a big change—and a lot more convenience—for the 22 million trips a year served by Ride On.

### More Seamless Service

Metro reports that a number of other transit systems in the region will start testing



Metro driver watches SmarTrip demo.

SmarTrip fareboxes beginning in 2005.

"The move to electronic farebox payment is a big step in the right direction," says NBTC Director Peggy Schwartz. "We may need to be patient as bugs get worked out of the system and as jurisdictions continue the challenging process of getting all the pieces of the puzzle to communicate properly. The good news is that commuters will be able to enjoy increasingly seamless public transportation service between home and work."

Photo and SmarTrip® graphics courtesy of Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

## North Bethesda Transportation Center

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