

MCDOT TRANSIT INITIATIVES

WSTC BOARD MEETING
MARCH 18, 2025



Agenda

- General Updates
- Fare Policy
- Automated Enforcement



General Updates

- Ride On Reimagined released Dec. 2025
 - Preparing for Year 1 changes for June 2025
- Flash BRT
 - Veirs Mill Road BRT nearing end of design and awaiting project rating and funding decisions from FTA
 - MD 355 BRT wrapping up Progressive Design-Build procurement to advance design and finalizing NEPA
 - Planning studies (New Hampshire & North Bethesda) wrapping up this spring/summer
- Georgia Avenue Bus Lane new operating hours coming this spring



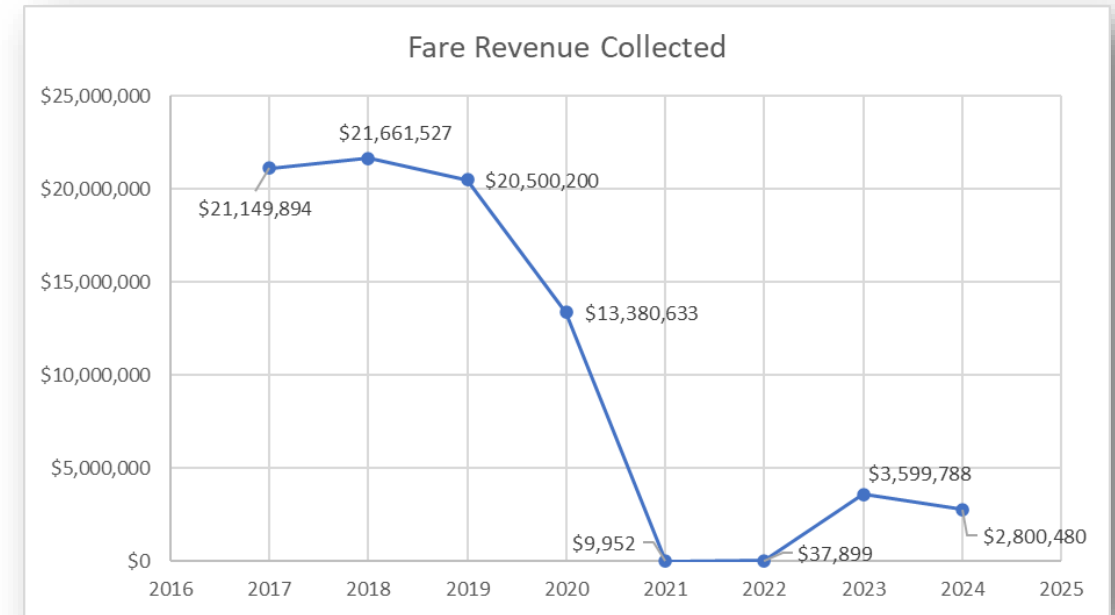
Fare Policy

- County Executive is proposing a zero-fare policy for FY26 budget
- Background
 - Prior to COVID, Ride On mirrored regional fare policy
 - 30-35% fare evasion rate
 - “Inform not Enforce” policy for operator safety
 - Like many systems, Ride On discontinued fare collection during COVID
 - Conducted a Fare Equity Study in 2021
 - Inform a long-term fare policy following COVID
 - Results of continuing fare free were inconclusive at the time
 - In 2022, Ride On reinstated a \$1 fare



Fare Policy

- Fare revenue has not returned at the same levels as ridership (fare evasion $\approx 75\%$)
- Cost to collect fares $\approx \$563,000$
- Major capital outlay needed to upgrade fareboxes (\$19.4M)
- Enforcement = cost considerations, unclear efficacy



Fare Policy Goals and Considerations

- Policy Goals
 - Equity: Minimize financial burden and increase access/opportunity for low-income riders
 - Ridership: Zero fares have shown increases in travel by existing riders, improving utilization of transit resources with capacity
 - Operations and Experience: Reduction in dwell time with no fare collection activities, fewer customer/driver incidents regarding fare payment
 - Climate and Sustainability: Greater utilization of Ride On resources improves efficiency of bus operations; some systems saw some mode shift from less sustainable modes
- Considerations
 - Safety and security
 - Ridership increases
 - Paratransit



Automated Enforcement

- FY26 Proposed Operating Budget includes funding to implement automated enforcement of bus lanes
- Considering implementation along Georgia Avenue following State's decision to make the lanes permanent with operational changes
- Working with WMATA and MCPD on logistics



QUESTIONS?



MCDOT