

**Sayers, Margery**

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**From:** Colette Jackson <peace4all515@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 16, 2018 2:05 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** Graham, Clive  
**Subject:** Challenges with Current RTA Services for Howard County Disabled Residents

Dear Howard County Council Members,

I see that RTA matter-***Council Resolution 48-2018 - A RESOLUTION endorsing the Central Maryland Transit Development Plan as a guide for future transit development in Howard County and in the Central Maryland region*** is on the Agenda for tonight's Legislative public hearing and I am writing to express the issues I am seeing with the RTA transportation system for Howard County residents with a disability.

My daughter is transitioning out of the Howard County school system this year and I am appalled at the lack of transportation services to assist her after transition. There is great concern regarding transportation obstacles faced by Howard County residents with a disability. The 2 current programs that exist, ADA and General Paratransit (GPT) services, do not adequately meet the transportation needs of all Howard County residents with a disability. ADA rules dictate trips must occur within 3/4 of a mile of a current fixed route service. Those outside of this distance must either go to the nearest bus stop to participate in ADA services or utilize the GPT services established by Howard County. GPT services are severely restrictive in that it services to only medical appointments, senior centers, social service agencies, employment sites, and colleges.

As Maryland has made several changes in services provided for the disability community to comply with the Community Settings rule, transportation is a key factor in implementing community integration policies. Maryland is an Employment First State, and has initiatives in place to move away from traditional Provider based services and more community based/Self-Directed services and activities to enhance the chances of meaningful employment for the disabled. Here are the challenges with the current Howard County transportation services that impede executing these community based services and activities.

1. GPT services restricts trips to medical appointments, senior centers, social service agencies, employment, and colleges. This does not allow individuals the opportunity to integrate at other activity based County facilities such as the Robinson Nature Center or the Howard County Community Centers. If Seniors are allowed to participate at Senior Centers, those with a disability (regardless of age, but this mostly affects the younger disability population) should be allowed to be transported under GPT to any Howard County Center where community activities and integration occur. Currently this is not the case.

2. GPT policy requires the Personal Care Attendant pay a fare. Due to the 3/4 mile ADA requirement, those living outside of this distance must use GPT. ADA does not charge for Personal Care Attendants (PCAs), but GPT does. This is unfair (as well as borders on the inhumane) as most individuals needing GPT services are on a fixed income. Those individuals who are total care for health and safety purposes are mandated to cover their PCA's fare so they can tend to their medical, educational, employment, or social service needs. An income based waiver needs to be in place for Howard County residents to cover PCA fares under GPT.

3. With the Maryland State movement towards Self-Directed services, Person-Centered planning, and meaningful day services, 1 round trip service per day provided by GPT severely limits full community access. At least 2 round trip services per day should be offered in order to reduce partial or full seclusion of Howard County residents with a disability.

I have had discussions with RTA supervisor Victor Jimenez and Howard County Office of Transportation staff John regarding this matter.

Thank you for your time and attention to this very important email.

***Colette Jackson***

*Proud Mother of Regina Maria Jackson  
Registered Voter and Howard County Resident*