Paratransit Policy Review & Implementation – Work Plan

1. Purpose and Background

Purpose

Conduct a review of paratransit policies and services in Howard County and make recommendations for changes to begin to be implemented in mid-2019.

This policy review is focused on paratransit services provided by the Regional Transportation Agency of Central Maryland (RTA), but also considers paratransit services provided by other agencies/organizations.

Paratransit services refer to:

i) service to persons with disabilities that complements RTA fixed-route bus service (also referred to as complementary ADA service, or just ADA paratransit).

ii) service to seniors and persons with disabilities to parts of Howard County not served by RTA fixed-route bus service (also referred to as “general paratransit”).

iii) specialized transit services provided by a variety of non-profit and for-profit agencies/organizations, such as the Arc of Howard County, Columbia Association, Humanim and Neighbor ride.

Background

Howard County adopted a Transit Development Plan (TDP) in May 2018. The TDP explored paratransit service in some detail and made preliminary recommendations but recommended further review and a community engagement process prior to implementing policy and service changes.

Howard County implemented changes to the RTA’s paratransit fare structure in July 2018.

Howard County completed a Non-Profit Organizations Transit Funding Study in January 2018

2. Paratransit Policy Implementation Objectives

- Expand, extend, direct and improve paratransit services to benefit the largest number of and most needy riders.

- Direct paratransit services to where they are most needed.

- Use paratransit budgets to benefit the largest number of and most needy riders.

- Minimize impacts on riders that would be negatively impacted by policy changes.
3. Data/information needs

RTA Mobility Services

General Paratransit (GPT)

- GPT service is provided only in Howard County, serving residents that are ages 60 and older and disabled adults ages 18 to 59.
- Reservations must be made between two and seven business days in advance.
- 1 roundtrip per day
- Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- $3.00 for a one-way trip.
- GPT riders ride free on fixed routes
- Medical appointments, senior centers, social service agencies, employment and education. Medical trips to select hospitals in Baltimore are provided Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.
- 253 square mile service area (not including medical trips to Baltimore)

ADA Complementary Paratransit

- Required under ADA
- ¾ mile transit shed
- Must be certified ADA
- Same service span as fixed routes
- $3.00 one-way trip, Howard County; $4.00 one-way trip, other counties
- ADA riders ride free on fixed routes
- 128 square mile service area (includes parts of Anne Arundel County, Howard County, Northern Prince George’s County, and the City of Laurel)
Top 5 Destinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ellicott/Miller Senior Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Davita Dialysis – Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>North Laurel Community/Senior Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bain Senior Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Howard Community College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Registered Riders
- 2,500 – 3,000
- 800 – 850
- 527 Riders June 2018 (45% ADA; 55% GPT)

June 2018 Trips
- 7,565 One-way Trips
- Median distance: 6 miles
- Max distance: 34 miles
General Paratransit: $2,361,057 (19%)
ADA Paratransit: $1,476,387 (12%)

Fixed Route: $8,698,849 (69%)

Average Cost per Trip

Ridership by Mode

Fixed Route: 704,705 (90%)
Paratransit: 81,311 (10%)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services Provided</th>
<th>Howard County</th>
<th>Allegany County</th>
<th>Anne Arundel County</th>
<th>Calvert County</th>
<th>Carroll County</th>
<th>Cecil County</th>
<th>Charles County</th>
<th>Dorchester County</th>
<th>Frederick County</th>
<th>Harford County</th>
<th>Lower Shore Tri County Council</th>
<th>Queen Anne’s County</th>
<th>St. Mary’s County</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Route</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<td>NO</td>
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<td>YES</td>
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<td>Deviated Fixed Route</td>
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<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADA Complementary</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paratransit</td>
<td>SENIORS &amp; DISABLED</td>
<td>SENIORS &amp; DISABLED</td>
<td>SENIORS &amp; DISABLED</td>
<td>GENERAL PUBLIC</td>
<td>GENERAL PUBLIC</td>
<td>SENIORS &amp; DISABLED</td>
<td>SENIORS &amp; DISABLED</td>
<td>SENIORS &amp; DISABLED</td>
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<td>GENERAL PUBLIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating Expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed Route</td>
<td>$ 8,698,849</td>
<td>$ 997,833</td>
<td>$1,980,723</td>
<td>$ 898,126</td>
<td>$ 356,163</td>
<td>$ 1,175,993</td>
<td>$ 4,923,024</td>
<td>$ 810,906</td>
<td>$ 4,123,780</td>
<td>$ 2,426,068</td>
<td>$ 3,563,275</td>
<td>$ 714,611</td>
<td>$ 1,758,424</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paratransit</td>
<td>$ 3,839,183</td>
<td>$ 881,697</td>
<td>$2,466,559</td>
<td>$ 390,522</td>
<td>$1,966,744</td>
<td>$ 334,562</td>
<td>$1,426,513</td>
<td>$ 283,436</td>
<td>$ 1,627,320</td>
<td>$ 1,077,937</td>
<td>$ 2,694,745</td>
<td>$ 253,115</td>
<td>$ 396,646</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of Expenses</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<td>Total Expenses</td>
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<td>$1,094,342</td>
<td>$5,751,100</td>
<td>$3,504,005</td>
<td>$6,258,020</td>
<td>$967,728</td>
<td>$2,155,070</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trips</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed Route</td>
<td>704,705</td>
<td>268,957</td>
<td>179,748</td>
<td>114,636</td>
<td>16,265</td>
<td>101,251</td>
<td>871,161</td>
<td>90,473</td>
<td>612,813</td>
<td>315,962</td>
<td>345,239</td>
<td>17,252</td>
<td>336,683</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paratransit</td>
<td>81,311</td>
<td>22,558</td>
<td>112,056</td>
<td>13,975</td>
<td>118,718</td>
<td>25,660</td>
<td>37,635</td>
<td>24,369</td>
<td>65,105</td>
<td>43,307</td>
<td>48,859</td>
<td>9,672</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Trips</td>
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<td>291,515</td>
<td>291,804</td>
<td>128,611</td>
<td>134,583</td>
<td>126,911</td>
<td>908,796</td>
<td>114,842</td>
<td>677,918</td>
<td>359,269</td>
<td>394,098</td>
<td>26,524</td>
<td>362,573</td>
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</table>
SENIOR TRANSPORTATION

Neighbor Ride (NR)

- Door-to-door service to seniors that are 60 years of age and older.
- Must be ambulatory and be able to get in and out of a vehicle independently.
- Schedule at least 3 business days in advance.
- Service provided daily depending on availability of volunteer drivers.
- Maximum of 12 rides per rider per month.
- Serves Howard County and up to 35 miles from pick-up location.
- Registration fee of $20.
- Fares:
  - < 3 miles - $8.00
  - 3 – 4.99 miles - $10.00
  - 5 – 6.99 miles - $12.00
  - 7 – 9.99 miles - $16.00
  - 10 – 14.99 miles - $22.00
  - 15 – 19.99 miles - $28.00
  - 20 – 35 miles - $36.00
- Trip Types:
  - Religious services
  - Classes
  - Volunteer Activities
  - Social outings
  - Medical appointments
  - Shopping
  - No trips to airports, cruise terminals, Amtrak stations, or gaming venues

468 Seniors

$283,000 Annually
SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION

- Individualized transportation that goes beyond what is available through RTA Mobility. Caters to the special needs of the riders that may have medical and behavioral needs.

- Howard County Non-Profit Organizations Transit Funding Study
  - ARC of Howard County – Transportation to day and employment programs
  - Athelas Institute - Transportation to day programs, employment, recreation, and medical.
  - Humanim – Transportation to employment sites and agency programs.
  - Winter Growth – Transportation to medical, shopping, and recreation.

- Client needs/challenges identified through the Non-Profit Organizations Transit Funding Study
  - Aides to ensure safe trips
  - Specific pickup and drop off times; Not 30-minute window
  - Specific training for drivers that can monitor and identify changes in passenger behavior
  - Drivers or aides that can go into homes or facilities to assist people to be transported
  - Unable to wait for a bus unattended, may wander off
  - Difficulty in scheduling and remember trip reservations
  - Difficulty making transfers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The Arc of Howard County</th>
<th>Athelas Institute, Inc.</th>
<th>Humanim</th>
<th>Winter Growth</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Riders</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>190-220</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>727</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passenger Trips</td>
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<td>173,394</td>
<td>95,077</td>
<td>8,274</td>
<td>338,445</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Vehicles</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Operating Costs</td>
<td>$534,831</td>
<td>$1,370,963</td>
<td>$903,567</td>
<td>$182,948</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating Cost per Trip</td>
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<td>$7.91</td>
<td>$9.50</td>
<td>$22.11</td>
<td>$8.84</td>
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</table>
4. **Policy Options**

The following options were identified in the TDP (see attached page 5-37 for more detail). Other options may emerge from this work effort.

1. Incentivize paratransit riders to use fixed route service:
2. Increase fares in Howard County, implement a fare in Anne Arundel County.
3. Raise senior age (from 60 to 65)
4. Rider education — provide travel training in how to use the fixed-route system.
5. Service adjustments.
6. Use taxi vouchers/subsidies in lieu of providing RTA trips. Use on-demand /taxis for ridesharing.
7. Improve service productivity (RTA operation).

5. **Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>July 5 2018</th>
<th>Review work plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 10</td>
<td>Present work plan to TPAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Outreach to other agencies/organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August to December/January 2019</td>
<td>Paratransit Workgroup meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 29 Accessible Transportation Forum*</td>
<td>Paratransit Workgroup recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January/February 2019</td>
<td>Recommendations review/public outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February to May 2019</td>
<td>Implement recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June/July 2019</td>
<td>Implement recommendations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Marian Vessels CMRT project