



# Howard County Government News Release

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## **County Executive Kittleman announces new fare policy for the RTA; seniors and disabled to ride for free**

ELLICOTT CITY, MD – Howard County Executive Allan H. Kittleman today announced a new uniform fare policy for the Regional Transportation Agency of Central Maryland (RTA) will take effect July 1, 2018. The RTA serves Howard County, Anne Arundel County, Prince George's County and the City of Laurel. Currently there are two different fare structures.

Additionally, Kittleman announced that under the new policy, seniors age 60 and older and persons with disabilities will be able to ride RTA buses on fixed routes for free.

“Having a uniform fare policy across all the partner jurisdictions will make travelling throughout the Central Maryland region easier for riders and for the drivers who collect the fares,” said Kittleman. “By providing free rides to seniors and those with disabilities on our fixed-route services, we are taking steps to make Howard County more inclusive and an even better place to age in place.”

In addition to free service for seniors and those with disabilities, the policy creates a day pass and reduces the cost of a monthly pass on the fixed-route. ADA paratransit and General Paratransit fares in Howard County will increase by 50 cents.

The fare schedule includes small increases annually for General Paratransit through 2020. Effective July 1, 2019, the General Paratransit fare will rise to \$4, with another increase to \$5 on July 1, 2020. These increases reflect the growing expense of providing Paratransit service, where the true cost of an individual trip can be more than \$40.

“I am very happy to see that the RTA will be free for Older Adults in Howard County,” said Paul Verchinski, a resident of Oakland Mills. “As I and others age, car driving becomes an issue. This will allow us to keep socially connected, use the library system, and exercise at County 50+ Centers.”

The new, uniform fare policy was a result of extensive public input and work done by RTA staff and the RTA Commission. This policy serves as another important step forward to improve RTA

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## **County Executive Kittleman announces new fare policy for the RTA; seniors to ride for free** *(continued)*

service to the community. Additional improvements and accomplishments include during the last three years include:

- Providing resources to replace more than half of the RTA's long-neglected, aging fleet in Howard County by the Fall of 2018.
- Unanimous passage of the County's first Transit Development Plan (TDP) in nearly a decade, following a two-year period for public input. The TDP includes recommendations to systematically overhaul the current antiquated route structure to improve efficiency and make the RTA more convenient and user-friendly.

"I would like to thank Howard County and RTA staff, my fellow Commission members, and County Executive Kittleman for moving this new policy forward," said Allen Cornell, Chair of the Central Maryland Transportation and Mobility Commission. "Establishing a uniform fare structure will have significant benefits for our customers and create an unprecedented ease of service."

"A unified fare policy will help to eliminate rider confusion and enable the RTA to provide even better customer service", said Cristin Tolen, General Manager of the RTA. "Operating with a unified fare structure simplifies the boarding process for drivers and riders, and the passes will give riders the opportunity to save money while traveling throughout the fixed route system."

More information on the RTA can be found at: <http://www.transitrta.com/>

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