

Advisory Committee on Transportation Choices (ACTC)

September 5, 2018
Approved minutes

In Attendance:

Nancy Van Doren, School Board

APS Appointees

Janeth Valenzuela, V. Chair
Rose Breyault, Parent
CC Clark, Parent
Antelmo deLeon, Parent
Josh Folb, SPED Parent
Catherin Frum, Teacher
Erik Healy, AP Career Center
David McBride, MS Principal
John Mickevice, APS
Commuter

County Appointees

Gillian Burgess (BAC)
John Carten (TC)
Eric Goodman (PAC)

Staff

John Chadwick, APS – F&O
Angel Garcia-Ablanque, APS-Transp.
Kristin Haldeman, APS-MMTP
Lauren Hassel, APS - SRTS
Finlay McCracken, APS-F&O Intern
Dennis Leach, Dir., County DOT

Public: (See Public comment section)

Minutes from March and June were approved with discussion; May 'informal notes' approved.

I. Public comment –

- a. James Hartford – Comments re: X-day transportation letters. He sees this as a communication failure – families did not receive letters and when they called the call center, messages were not returned. That should not happen. No one (schools, X day staff) was aware of this practice not to send transportation letters to families whose students were in AM+PM x-day. When he called and got through to a Supervisor, he was told it was always the policy not to send transportation letters to AM+PM X-day. But that has not been their experience in past years. He also is concerned that their stop was moved from 19th Rd N & Van Buren to 19th St Rd & N Van Buren because the students were in x-day. He feels the current location is not safe due to construction on route to stop and aggressive cyclists. He would like to see the stop moved back and information about all stops along the route made available should they want to use a different stop.
- b. Hector Ramirez – Comments re: Carlin Springs Road safety interventions. His family lives 2 blocks from Campbell. They are seeing a lot of fender benders around the bollards outlining curb bump outs. It also is difficult to see on-coming traffic. Students are not being allowed to use the ramp in the back of Campbell, so students of all ages are bunching up at that intersection. School buses are having a hard time turning as well. (All intersections with bollards.) They also are still waiting for landscape maintenance along the sidewalks.
- c. Claudia Cueallar- Comments re: Carlin Springs Rd safety. There is still quite a bit of overgrowth on sidewalks in the neighborhood around Campbell where students are trying to walk. 'Stop for Pedestrian' signs are missing near crosswalks and drivers are not honoring x-walks.

Mr. Folb asked if Transportation staff could fan out in the community to help address issues early the week before school started. Check out stops; roads; sidewalks etc.

Mr. Chadwick confirmed that this year transportation letters did not go to AM+PM X-day only. If a student attended only one session, families did receive a letter.

Ms. Burgess asked if there was another big bus error that affected a large group? Mr. Garcia-Ablanque said we did have an issue with HB where instead of printing the letters one side English one side Spanish, the printer printed two sides English and two sides Spanish. These had to be re-printed.

On the first day, if someone shows up for a bus, will they ever be turned away? No.

Mr. Ramirez – some buses are not stopping at the correct stops, or they are coming at different times. (Happened on bus 505.)

II. Updates

a. Carlin Springs Study

Ms. Wang provided the update ([see slides](#)) and spoke to the concerns raised during Public Comments. She noted that the County tests out new interventions by using temporary markings/facilities to see how they work. At these intersections on Carlin Springs, the County is looking at bumping out the curbs, so is using the bollards to test. Staff taking this feedback and making adjustments.

Mr. Ramirez restated the earlier point that cars are not honoring the crosswalks and asked if we could we make something more visible.

Mr. Ramirez - Could we request speed traps? Cars – are not stopping for crossing guard. Maintenance issues – working with code enforcement to address this issue. Christine in touch with code enforcement so they know it is a priority.

b. TDM:

i. County

- During the first days of summer school, Ms. Denton and Ms. Haldeman gave brief presentations about iRide cards and the Mobile Commuter Store at the two summer school locations: Kenmore Middle School and Wakefield High School. Had a very good turn-out at Wakefield to purchase iRide cards.
- Four schools have enrolled in 2018-2019 Champions so far – Key Elementary School, Ashlawn Elementary School, Oakridge Elementary School, and Williamsburg Middle School. Schools previously in Champions need to re-enroll so they can review changes to the program.
- Discovery Elementary School and Yorktown High School were designated Bicycle Friendly Businesses by the League of American Bicyclists, a national designation. Brings the total number of APS schools that are BFBs to four.
- Sponsored a WABA (Washington Area Bicyclists' Association) Confident City Cycling class with BikeArlington for 50 teachers as part of the APS Day of Learning – surpassed expectations with a full class and a waiting list!
- Spoke with APS employees about their new commutes at New Hire Orientation.
- Co-hosted a teacher session on air quality and transportation with Elenor Hodges of EcoAction Arlington during APS Festival of the Minds.
- Hosted a video viewing party for APS teachers who starred in the new Champions video.

MCS Visits Scheduled to date:

- Sept 19 – Wakefield
- Sept. 26 – Washington Lee
- October 10 – Yorktown

ii. Staff

The Committee discussed the recent changes to the staff TDM program. Ms. Haldeman provided background on the budget overrun as well as the abrupt program administration hand-off to Facilities and Operations from HR.

Ms. Burgess said she is concerned that this change is short-sighted; dismissive for cyclists and walkers especially given the quotes in ArlNow. She believes trust is broken and that simply eliminating one side of the benefit is unfair and sends the wrong message.

Ms. Haldeman told the group that the recent program suspensions are essentially triage to stem the budget overrun and that APS' intention is to bring back incentives of some kind for all interested, but we need creative thinking.

Eric Goodman said to look to practices of other agencies.

John Mickevics asked if APS can we try to be more strategic in the use of our funds to get new people to try the program and stick with the program. Something like an 'introductory offer' for a certain time period, then move funding to new participants once others are established.

Catherine Frum said she likes the idea of 'paying it forward.' Felt like the elimination was so fast.

Ms. Burgess asked two questions: how much \$ went to walk/bike vs. others? What is status of Bike Friendly Business status of schools with that designation? Ms. Haldeman noted that about half of participants were bike/walk. Would have to check on BFB designations, but since they are for a term, as long as something comes back, there should be no short-term impact.

CC Clark noted that TDM is so important to economic development and likes the idea of being creative.

John Carten – sees TDM as recruitment and retention issue.

Ms. Haldeman said she plans to hold focus groups with staff in the near future to start the creative process.

Ms. Van Doren added that the Board did not want to cut/hold TDM budget; but sometimes money is not always the answer. We are in a position of not so great trade-offs these days.

c. ES Boundary Process

Ms. Haldeman gave a quick update on the Fall schedule and what schools would be involved. ACTC members should go to the APS Engage website for more information and updates. The first community meeting will be on Sept. 26 at Kenmore. With respect to Key and Science Focus, the Superintendent did say at last week's Board work session that the program location swap will occur – it's a matter of when. Engagement on that begins in Jan. 2019.

III. Bus Stops

- a. **Summer School Bus Stop Pilot Preliminary Analysis** – Ms. Haldeman gave a quick update on the Summer School pilot sharing some of the metrics that were already computed (# of routes per program; # of stops per route) as well as some feedback from the parent survey. She will pull together a report and share it with the Committee.
- b. **Option Schools – Centralizing stops (Group Discussion)** –Ms. Haldeman shared some of the challenges Transportation has been having with Countywide/option school routes, using maps to illustrate some of the problems.

APS has a couple of routes serving Countywide/option schools whose travel time either exceeds one hour, or simply cannot get to school on time. Challenges with fleet and

drivers, as well as bell times, traffic and the location of students attending Countywide/option schools is creating an unsustainable situation. To date, APS has been providing the same type of service for Countywide/option schools as it has for neighborhood schools where students live much closer together and buses can be filled easily. Countywide/option families are used to stops in their neighborhoods and near their homes and have an expectation that they can walk to a bus stop.

While APS is committed to providing transportation to these Countywide programs, it is time to consider how we do so in a different way. The summer school pilot has provided some good intel on system performance when stops are centralized and minimized. APS is considering using elementary schools as stop locations; students attending Countywide/option programs would use their home school as their assigned stop. However, this will require a full-scale communications plan and should be established before student applications for Countywide/option programs are due.

Ms. Haldeman has shared this with the Bus Stop Working Group as well and discussions have focused on what guidelines should be established for Countywide/option school transportation.

ACTC members discussed the following ideas:

- Using churches as stop locations too; the plus side of churches is that they have parking lots should parents need to drive their student to the stop. Could also think about pocket parks.
- Subsidizing transit for High Schoolers. This would need some joint analysis with County transit.
- Montgomery County's free transit helped kids adjust their lives; could we try an experiment to see if kids would switch?
- Could we look at how many HS students live in high transit corridors and calculate costs of subsidy vs. APS delivering service.

Mr. Leach noted that the location of Countywide/option programs in not very central locations also is a tough challenge to overcome.

IV. Safety/Infrastructure results from Spring Walk Zone meetings

Ms. Haldeman and Mr. McCracken updated the Committee on a summer project to consolidate and prioritize the input staff received about school walk environments during the Spring boundary discussions. ([See slides.](#))

In summary, there were 35 intersections with at least eight comments; these intersections affected walkability for 13 schools: Tuckahoe, Jamestown, Science Focus, Fleet, Henry, Reed, Taylor, Traditional, Discovery, Randolph, Barcroft, Barrett, and McKinley

In total, 751 total comments were submitted for these 35 intersections:

- 334 of these comments advocated for a new crossing guard
- 169 advocated for the installation of a traffic light
- 30-40 each advocated for a school zone sign, a pedestrian or hawk signal, or increased crossing time at an intersection

We used the following information to help prioritize the intersections: number of planning units impacted; number of students in impacted PUs that could benefit from the improvement; number of crashes at/near the location; whether a County infrastructure project is underway nearby. Ms. Haldeman will work with County DOT to identify which improvements could become part of the transportation program.

There was some discussion about younger drivers and the number of crashes in which they were involved related to APS student parking policy. Ms. Van Doren cautioned against making generalizations about younger drivers and why they may drive to school. Ms. Burgess suggested APS consider allowing them a parking permit if they have a job or internship for which they need a vehicle.

V. Administrative/Announcements

- c. 2018/2019 School Year Meeting Dates – Are now posted on the ACTC website.
 - November 7, Gunston Middle, 7-9 pm
 - January 9, TBD, 7-9 pm (*2nd Weds.*)
 - March 6, TBD, 7-9 pm
 - May 1, TBD, 7-9 pm
 - June 19, TBD, 7-9 pm (*3rd Weds.*)
- a. Recruiting – 1 ES and 1 MS vacancy. Have a recommendation? Please reach out to Kristin Haldeman and John Armstrong.
- b. International Carfree Days: Sept., 21 and 22 – sign up!
- c. Fall Walk/Bike to School date: Weds., October 10, 2018

Ms. Van Doren thanked the members for their participation and asked them to please stay engaged

Meeting adjourned at 9:02

Next Meeting: November 7, 2018 at Gunston Middle School library