

Advisory Committee on Transportation Choices (ACTC)

September 4, 2019
Approved minutes

In Attendance:

Nancy Van Doren, School Board; Erik Gutshall, County Board

APS Appointees

John Armstrong, Chair
CC Clark, Parent
Josh Folb- Sp.Ed. Parent
Catherine Frum, Teacher
Paine Gronemeyer, Student
Elizabeth Kiker, Parent
Dave McBride, Principal
John Mickevics, APS
Commuter
Janeth Valenzuela, Parent

County Appointees

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

Staff

John Chadwick, APS – F&O
Kristin Haldeman, APS-MMTP
Lauren Hassel, APS - SRTS
Dennis Leach, DOT- Director
Elizabeth Denton, ACCS -ATP
Lynn Rivers, DOT-Transit
Christine Sherman, DOT-TE&O

Public: Kimberly Turner – Discovery parent, Chenda Lee – ATS parent, Jennie Guttery – Tuckahoe parent

1. **Erik Gutshall**, Arlington County Board Member, spoke to the Committee about his experiences and vision for Arlington County transportation, specifically focusing on transit accessibility. He recalled trips to Denmark where bike and transit trips to school are the norm and safety is built into the infrastructure. He praised APS and the County for working together to address transportation needs for new schools, plan for school boundary changes and offer transportation options for the APS community. Committee members asked questions about: expanding student transit funding to include Metro as well as ART; ideas for improving processes to make transportation changes happen faster; implementation of Vision Zero. He noted strong support from the County board to subsidize school transit use for all ages. Regarding Vision Zero, Mr. Gutshall noted that prioritizing pedestrians has changed Arlington and we must consider how we make what we have here better, safer. We all need to be responsible for safety, and creating a culture of safety.
2. The Committee next approved the June minutes.
3. **Public Comment**
No members of the public came to speak but several committee members relayed messages from on-line communities and their own experiences about difficulties APS families experienced with start of school transportation. The Committee discussed several of the issues that came up – such as *very* late buses, lack of communication, inability to reach the help center, and inaccurate or incomplete information. Specific comments included:
 - Need to improve transportation communications
 - Incorrect or incomplete info was mailed out / discrepancies between ParentVue and print letters
 - Families need to know about improvements in infrastructure to support walking, biking if we want them to try it

- Staff need to be more rigorous about entering IEP info to ensure proper transportation resources and identify special education transportation needs farther in advance
- Bus stop location does not indicate which corner
- Special education transportation specified as *not needed* was still provided
- Calls to transportation call center not returned
- Long bus rides
- Is a 311 call system possible? An App?
- If it's a budget issue, then investment in improvements is needed.
- Praise for ParentVue communications and streamlining form completion and efforts to make things better.

4. Project/Program Updates

a. [Carlin Springs improvements](#) (AC-TE&O, Christine Sherman)

- Ms. Sherman reported that the new sidewalk in front of Campbell ES is completed. The County also has repaired/replaced various sections of sidewalk and pedestrian ramps in August prior to the upcoming repaving effort. The ART/Wmata bus stop location at 1st is under review. Code enforcement continues to work with individual home owners and VA Hospital Center to address overgrowth. She also explained why some projects can take longer due to unanticipated challenges (utilities, required surveys, etc.).
- Ms. Valenzuela asked about the status of bike infrastructure, and whether another ART bus could be made available to help Kenmore students. Ms. Rivers noted that there are two buses serving that area that get students to Kenmore before the bell and explained the process for adding ART buses.
- Ms. Burgess asked about the longer -term phase of the project and requested a speaker come to an upcoming ACTC meeting to address scope of project.

b. *Safe Routes to School* (APS/SRTS, Lauren Hassel)

Ms. Hassel provided the following updates:

- Summer work on new schools – assisted with transportation communiques at all new schools; worked closely with DHMS staff to develop crossing support plans.
- SRTS grant opened 8/23 - purchased ‘See Me Flags’ for DHMS and Drew ES and safety vests to be ready for start of school.
- Back to School education – Worked with SCR to send safety info at start of school via Peachjar
- WBR2SD Plans – October 2 /week long, kickoff to year-round effort
- Tallies coming up in October – going digital rather than paper
- Bike Unit – sustainability / creating video to pass on to teachers for ‘easy training.’

c. *Staff TDM* - (ATP, Elizabeth Denton)

- Ms. Denton and Ms. Hassel presented at the late August APS Admin Conference on “Equity through the Lens of Transportation”
- Staff noted that APS website needs more commuter info.
- Commuter Services field trip to The Heights being planned
- Ms. Denton may hold a Transportation Fair at Syphax on WBR2SD

5. SY 19-20 Updates (APS, Kristin Haldeman)

a. *New Schools*

Ms. Haldeman summarized the transportation changes for each of the new schools and program moves and discussed the various methods through which that information was communicated to the school community as well as the community at large. Staff worked closely with school staff and PTAs to communicate how the sites would operate across

all modes to familiarize the school communities with the procedures before start of school.

She noted too that APS and County transportation staff have been meeting regularly since March to address outstanding transportation issues – from the signal and major road crossings at DHMS, to pick-up and drop-off at Fleet and bus operations at The Heights. The collaboration has been critical to getting transportation safety projects completed as students started back to school. County staff also provided swift assistance at the Career Center when APS requested a review of on-street parking to assist with parent drop-off space due to the addition of four relocatable classrooms placed on the site to accommodate growth in the Arlington Tech program from adding the last of the four HS grades.

b. Hub Stops

- i. Implemented for both HB & MPSA. 37 stops for each school. Walk distance for some is farther. Can be up to one mile for ES & 1.5 miles for MS/HS. Start of school was not smooth; late buses to MPSA in particular. Hope to smooth out this week. Tracking all MPSA buses.

c. Transit Pilot

- i. Invitation sent to HB, Career Center & New Directions students
- ii. About 50 signed up so far; have funds to cover about 275 students @ 2 trips/day for 10 mos.
- iii. Ms. Haldeman will provide an on-line log for students to track their trips. Will be used in Board report.

6. Administrative/Announcements

- a. ACTC rep to Career Center BLPC - Gillian Burgess
- b. Crossing Guard vacancies persist, ACPD may need to re-assign some to higher volume locations
- c. APS has applied for a Dominion electric school bus grant

Next Meeting Nov. 6, 2019 – Syphax, room 356