

## Advisory Committee on Transportation Choices (ACTC)

March 4, 2020  
Approved

In Attendance: Nancy Van Doren, School Board liaison; Matt de Ferranti, County Board Liaison

### **APS Appointees**

John Armstrong, Chair  
Jeff Elkner, Teacher  
Josh Folb- Sp.Ed. Parent  
Catherine Frum, Teacher  
Paine Gronemeyer, Student  
Elizabeth Kiker, ES parent  
Chenda Lee, ES Parent  
Dave McBride, Principal  
John Mickevice, APS Staff  
Adam Rasmussen, APS-FAC  
Liaison

### **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, Dir.  
Elizabeth Denton, DOT-ACCS (ATP)  
William Jones, DOT-Transit  
Lynn Rivers, DOT-Transit  
Hui Wang, DOT-TE&O

Other: Charles Smith, APS-Transportation; ASF Lego/Robotics Club Team & Stephanie Lin, ASF Teacher & Lego/Robotics Club Coordinator; ASF Parents

The ACTC approved minutes from the January 2020 meeting.

### **1. Public Comment**

Lauren Hassel read an email from a parent during public comment re: safety concerns for Kenmore and other neighborhood students crossing the intersection of Manchester and Route 50. She referenced concerns about the speed / volume of traffic on Manchester, the multiple lanes on Manchester turning onto 50 making it dangerous to cross, and the result – students crossing Manchester mid-block where there is no crosswalk.

Ms. Wang noted that this stretch of road has come up before and TE&O may have some tools to narrow the road. She recommended that the parent send her comments to the C3 Customer Care system and via the Vision Zero feedback form. She also said she will have TE&O staff look at possible interventions – such as narrowing lanes to slow traffic on Manchester and looking at possible locations for adding a crosswalk. She cautioned that a crosswalk would require ramps so is not as quick a fix as it might seem. Mr. de Ferranti recalled his visit with the community a few months back and indicated that he had followed up with staff but hadn't circled back to see if any action had been taken. Ms. Burgess asked about the fence that blocks access to a path that would allow students a back way to walk to Kenmore without having to walk to Route 50. Ms. Wang said that they have tried to find the fence owner at 2<sup>nd</sup>, but have not yet found them. They will continue to pursue to explore whether the fence can be removed, although students would still have to cross Manchester Street.

### **2. ASF Lego/Robotics Club Pedestrian Safety Project**

The Arlington Science Focus Lego/Robotics club presented to the Committee the research project they developed for their LEGO League annual competition. This year their task was to identify a problem with a building or public space within their community and to develop a solution for it. Pedestrian safety was the problem the team identified, and their project designed a solution to

help increase pedestrian safety and decrease the amount of people that are struck by cars. Every year more and more pedestrians are killed or injured because of cars going too fast or cars not stopping. The team thought they could come up with a solution to help pedestrians be seen because their research showed that 72% percent of all pedestrian accidents happen at night because it's hard for drivers to see pedestrians at night.

The solution they developed is a reflective and retractable belt. The belt has a rechargeable LED light that flashes. The lightweight belt has a magnetic buckle so both younger and older people and people wearing gloves to take it on/off easily. When you cross the street, you can attach the magnetic ends together and when you have crossed the street you can detach the end while it slowly retracts. Because it retracts, it is compact and able to fit on your keychain, so you can easily take it with you everywhere. The students presented a short skit they submitted to the competition to illustrate the concept.

After the skit, Committee members asked them some questions about their views/perspectives on pedestrian safety. When asked 'what do you think makes a street safe?' they responded:

- Slow cars
- Cars know that they have to stop and yield
- Pedestrians do not jaywalk
- Clearly identified crosswalks – they all look different
- People who are careful walking dogs and with small kids playing

When asked what pedestrian safety issues they see in their neighborhoods, they gave the following examples:

- Missing sidewalks – especially in places where there are curves in the road;
- Crossing Lorcom Lane– bus stop is on one side house on other and have to wait a while for a car to stop;
- Difficulty crossing Lee Highway (Five Points) for older sibling who attends DHMS.
- Pedestrians and drivers on their phones
- Pedestrians wearing headphones
- Changes to regular routes due to construction

When asked about biking, one student noted that they don't ride a bike because they cannot ride very well. Others recalled learning in 3rd grade as part of APS' Elementary Physical Education Bike Unit.

Committee members applauded and thanked the students for sharing their ideas and perspectives on pedestrian safety.

### **3. APS Budget Update**

John Chadwick reviewed the transportation elements in the Interim Superintendent's proposed budget. The budget is proposed with a \$27M gap to reflect all APS needs. Transportation included the following items in the budget:

- 9 replacement buses (for buses at end of useful life)
- 9 additional buses (5 are Specialized)
- 9 floater drivers (168.5 regular drivers currently)
- 10 additional attendants (currently 82 attendants)
- 2 additional route planners (for a total of 5 who can be cross-trained)
- 1 additional dispatcher and 2 customer service coordinators

Permanent funding was requested for student transit. Customer service software is being worked through the IS department. They have an internal customer service tracking system that could work with the Transportation Call Center. APS met with TripSpark (routing vendor) on their bus tracking module.

In reply to questions about having time to plan bus routes earlier, Mr. Chadwick noted that the reduced summer school program will help with that. Transportation will use the additional time for driver training, including practicing their routes.

On bus purchases, while we have extended the life of our buses in past years, there are limits imposed by the state as to how long that can be.

At this time, Matt de Ferranti, who had joined the meeting, introduced himself as the new County Board liaison and gave some remarks.

#### **4. Arlington County's Transit Development Long Range Plan**

William Jones with the County's Transit Bureau provided an overview of the County's Transit Development Plan (TDP), which sets the stage for looking at future transit.

The TDP is a 10-year plan mandated by the state and is required for the system to be eligible for state funding. Its next major update will be in FY2022.

The Plan's stated goals are to:

- Maximize accessibility to regional and local activity centers.
- Maximize options to reduce single-occupant travel.
- Be fiscally responsible, meaning "service is productive" with both ridership and revenue.
- Meet the needs of underserved populations.

To develop the vision for the plan, staff analyzed gaps in service and evaluated performance standards, such as vehicle loads, service reliability and service productivity. These standards are also reviewed annually, with results informing changes to schedules, routes or service (e.g., increasing, decreasing or eliminating) on existing routes. Mr. Jones presented a series of maps detailing service availability versus density and ridership. He also mentioned that Customer feedback on ART can be provided by phone at (703) 228-RIDE

Mr. Leach noted that this is not a 'growth' year in terms of adding service; this year is about grounding the service and getting new contractor up to speed. Mr. Leach explained that ART service is delivered through a 3<sup>rd</sup> party contract, which is managed through the County Transit Bureau. Mr. Carten, ACTC's Transit Advisory Committee rep., added that he feels the ART team does a great job at planning but often gets a lot thrown at it (e.g. Metrobus cuts) to which it must react.

Ms. Haldeman has been the APS contact for County transit on the planning side. Staff have worked together to address challenges on the ART 75 and to deliver the APS Student Transit Pilot. She noted that APS' comprehensive high schools should be included as activity centers in future updates of the TDP.

Committee members commented on benefits of transit, low density in the north, importance of maximizing access to the transit we currently have near schools, as well as thinking about more transit access and integration for the long-term. County staff noted that one-seat rides is a goal of the plan and that facilities are also part of the plan. Mr. Leach added that 40% of all Virginia transit trips take place in Arlington. Ms. Burgess asked County staff if they could review transit access to the McKinley ES site in light of the ATS countywide program move to that site in 2021.

Next steps for student transit program: maximize what we have (open up to comprehensive HS) and market to students.

## 5. Updates:

- *APSGo! 2020 Survey Update* – launched family and staff versions on Monday; Student survey will begin next Monday, March 9.
- *APS Calendar Change* - Reminder that the next school year will start the week before Labor Day.
- *APS School Moves* – recap of program move decisions: immersion program at Key location will move to current ATS location; ATS program will move to site of McKinley ES; Bulk of McKinley ES students will be assigned to the new school at the Reed site.
  - Transportation concerns – ATS @ McKinley: transit access is poor; Key @ ATS: sidewalk issues and bike connections along Custis.
  - Ms. Burgess asked if there had been any discussions around modifying the immersion lottery to allow students who live near the new site (current ATS location) to attend Key for the year with a bus so they could walk the following year. APS staff did not have any information about that proposal.

**Next Meeting:** May 6, Syphax



