

Advisory Committee on Transportation Choices (ACTC)

March 3, 2021
Approved Minutes

In Attendance:

Libby Garvey, County Board Liaison

APS Appointees

Josh Folb- Sp.Ed. Parent,
Chair

Elizabeth Kiker, ES parent,
Vice Chair

Catherine Frum, Teacher
Dave McBride, APS Principal

County Appointees

Gillian Burgess (BAC)

John Carten (Transit Cmtee)

Patrick Kenney (PAC)

Staff

Kristin Haldeman, APS-MMTP

Lauren Hassel, APS-SRTS

Dennis Leach, DOT, Dir.

Hui Wang, DOT-TE&O

Jim Larsen, DOT - ACCS

Zara Seastrunk, DOT- ACCS/ATP

Cathy Lin, APS F&O

Other attendees: Adam Rasmussen, APS FAC Liaison,

1. Welcome and Administrative Items:

The March 2021 ACTC meeting was held via MS Teams due to the COVID-19 emergency. The meeting was recorded.

Chair Folb opened the meeting with some housekeeping items related to meeting virtually.

Due to staff work on return to school, minutes from the 1/14/21 meeting were not yet ready so will be approved at the May 2021 meeting.

Recordings are available online; they are not currently accessible but will be accessible by next meeting -- APS is aware of the issue and correcting it.

June Meeting date will be June 16 while school is in session.

2. Return to school transportation update

Many thanks to County Staff for providing arrival and dismissal support, posting signage, park & walk locations, and special signage for screening for car riders.

Bus operations (Kristin Haldeman)

Hybrid back to school

About 4,200 students routed – split pretty evenly between the two cohorts. Afternoon early dismissal for elementary is changing order of afternoon routes and schools for drivers; adds confusion – as student have a different PM bus number than AM.

Hybrid started back yesterday (3/2). First route set is not perfect, but at 85 - 90%. Routes have been completely re-engineered. New patterns and drivers had a very short time (three days) to practice meant some bumps at the beginning. Drivers are doing tremendously! Routes set up based on student data at a certain point in time (2/5/21) to manage capacity and provide a roster in the event of contact

tracing. Now looking at how to re-optimize and update routes based on changes to student instructional choice since 2/5.

Special education: still being routed -- data coming back and forth, and on a good day under normal conditions it's an art + science. These days are very challenging. March will be a period of adjustment.

Testing Routes:

DTL also requested busing to bring distance learning students in for SOL & language testing. Staff is manually routing schools administering language tests on Mondays when no other students are in schools. 400 kids are currently being routed. Also will provide Monday routes for HS English SOL in March and April.

Crossing Guards (Lauren Hassel)

Maps with recommended routes to school in expanded walk zones have been posted and shared with the schools' communities.

Re: crossing guards, ACPD started with a deficit from last year because guards either retired or had to find new jobs in pandemic. Earlier dismissal times at ESes also made it hard to cover two schools – one early one later.

APS is working closely with police on a deployment plan to identify priority crossings and share with schools.

All told we are down about 12 positions-- not just money, but difficult work and it is a difficult shift (about 45 mins per school each morning and afternoon). Pay is hourly and seasonal, so that is a challenge as well. Luckily, while waiting for school to start, some crossing guards also have been helping at vaccination clinics.

Chair Folb suggested advertising in the County's 55+ activities catalogue to let them know ACPD is hiring. Also at National Older Worker Career Center (located in Ballston)

Job posting: <https://jobs.washingtonpost.com/job/41140985/school-crossing-guard-part-time/>

More bike racks will be needed at Key and possibly other schools

3. Temporary infrastructure installs (Hui Wang – County DOT)

LORCOM LANE - Missing sidewalk section: County temporary install - using bollards, bike lane and temporary reflective marking lines to do crosswalks. Indications to drivers. Neighbors moved cars and obeyed signage -- schools and transportation also pushed out the message. This will stay at least through summer. Four signs that will say: Vision Zero, Making Room for Our Students!

CARLIN SPRINGS – Pedestrian Buffer Lane: Lane reduction on Carlin Springs to make more room from South Harrison to 5th Road S -- a substantial change, to create a buffer and a safer walking path for kids going to Campbell, Kenmore, and Carlin Springs. In the southern portion, a lane will close with bollards and wheel stops -- frequent curb cuts from side streets, households, and more. Top part, where the old Virginia Hospital Center is, they are using large plastic barriers that link together with metal rods and form a wall (they are filled with water for stability!). Try to finish this weekend while the weather is good, but there is gas utility work along the same route may require some scheduling to flowing weekend.

NELLY CUSTIS & MILITARY ROAD – Temporary Round-About Install: This is a very difficult intersection -- very wide, high speeds down a hill. County has a window of 6 mos. to see if it will help before official work starts. This will not be built -- will use bollards, wheel stops, and try to lessen the curve and slow down the turn. County needs school support for this -- some in the community are still not convinced, but Vision Zero is helping pilot these creative methods.

Discussion: We need signage (Hui said it is in place!) and we need to put the message out: This is the heart of ACTC! Hui said it is being pushed out--Lauren will help.

Dorothy Hamm information session in the works (Kristin). This was a discussion between signal vs. roundabout, and a great test. Roundabouts have great safety stats.

Teaching residents to do the trash cans in a way that doesn't block the walking path, but kids should be able to walk by.

Pandemic related projects -- so look at Pandemic-related sources of funding (Gillian)

Evaluation will be a vital part of these projects -- particularly Carlin Springs and Lorcom will also help with traffic calming and reduce speeds (Dennis)

4. FYI on County projects near schools: Kristin Haldeman

Glebe ES – Glebe & 18th, construction starting on March 15th, the PM is in conversation with the school principal.

Jamestown ES – Glebe & Williamsburg, signal rebuild project starting now. TE&O PM will limit the impact on pedestrian path. Project duration about 2 months barring any weather complications.

Taylor ES/Dorothy Hamm MS – Pilot roundabout at Military & Nellie Custis, APS is doing part of the outreach, construction won't start before April -- spring.

Barrett ES - George Mason & N Henderson – signal rebuild project starting now. TE&O PM will limit the impact on pedestrian path. Project duration about 2 months barring any weather complications.

5. Improving Major Crossings to increase Walk/Bike Access to School (Committee)

Group discussion re: Wilson Blvd. & George Mason Road

Ms. Wang and Mr. Leach provided background on this intersection.

- Very large intersection -- and it's been narrowed, 10 years ago! Lots of turning movements.
- Peak hour volume for Wilson is 1,800 and George Mason is about 1,500 per hour -- peak hour volume.
- SE quadrant is the worst -- it's a problem (stone wall, no bump out, utility poles)

Ms Burgess: We bike through here on the Bluemont Trail all the time; crossing Wilson is considered too dangerous by local parents. Crossing diagonally would be a first step.

Ms Haldeman: Are curb bump outs possible? It is such an enormous intersection.

Answer: We do have as-builts; it was re-done more than 10 years ago so can revisit. Need to keep in mind that ART bus service, 75, both sides of Wilson needs space

Mr Rasmussen: How many students will be walking to Key?

Answer, 10. But more will be coming later when Immersion boundaries are re-adjusted.

Chair Folb: Shows intersection in Florida where lights are strung diagonally across the intersection. Can we do on the two corners where we have to most room and get rid of poles with the least room.

Ms Wang: Span-wire signals are substandard to mast arm. Less resilience to weather conditions. Exposed wires short out. Could become a safety issue. To get something as substantial as the one you show you may need to remove the current pole and install a sturdier one. The SE corner has the least turning radius which suggests limited room to bump out. That said, the current utility pole allows ADA accessibility. A lot of utilities underground and some older signals are on a Metro line, so we cannot go deep without getting WMATA approval, which is a long process.

Mr Rasmussen: Ability to build pedestrian or bike bridge from SE to NW corner?

Ms Wang: That has not been considered and that is a huge project.

Ms Burgess: Bike boxes can help; not everyone, but make it a bit better. Give bike riders a place to wait to cross and go to the trail.

6. SRTS Update (Lauren Hassel)

APS awarded a mini grant for traffic gardens, temporary installations at two schools -- at schools currently known as ATS and Hoffman-Boston.

The non-infrastructure grant for the annual fund that funds the SRTS Coordinator position is due this week and the deadline has been delayed, which is worrisome.

Need pledges of support from Chair Folb and Mr Leach; they will be in touch.

Chair Folb asked for motion to support the grant. Support passes enthusiastically and unanimously.

Navigation maps: <https://www.apsva.us/safe-routes-to-school-overview/walking-school-buses/>

We always fight for the funding; this would be year 8 of the funding. The grant funding is not forever -- need to add to the budget, as advocates. An FTE for APS.

Feedback on Return to School:

Mr Carten: In the past week or so, we were talking about Kirkwood Road crossing s of N. 17th Street and it looks like we have the counting/speed material on the pavement.

Ms Wang: Yes, those were installed. Counting volume isn't good right now, but taking speed is very important now. Setting out to capture speed data.

Ms Burgess: This is a model committee and a great way for APS and County to work together

Ms. Garvey: Kudos to Josh on how he runs this; working together -- this is delightful to see.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:41

NEXT MEETINGS: May 5 and June 16