

## Advisory Committee on Transportation Choices (ACTC)

May 5, 2021  
Approved Minutes

### In Attendance:

#### **APS Appointees**

Josh Folb- Sp.Ed. Parent,  
*Chair*  
Elizabeth Kiker, ES Parent,  
*Vice Chair*  
Catherine Frum, Teacher  
Dave McBride, APS Principal  
Gianmaria Davide Vanzulli

#### **County Appointees**

Gillian Burgess (BAC)  
John Carten (TAC))

#### **Staff**

Kristin Haldeman, APS-MMTP  
Lauren Hassel, APS-SRTS  
Kimberly Wilks, APS-TS  
Dennis Leach, DOT, Dir.  
Hui Wang, DOT, TE&O  
Christine Baker, DOT, TE&O  
Zara Seastrunk, DOT- ACCS/ATP

**Other attendees:** Paine Gronemeyer, Adam Rasmussen – FAC liaison,

### **1. Welcome and Administrative Items:**

- The May 2021 ACTC meeting was held via MS Teams due to the COVID-19 emergency. The meeting was recorded.
- Chair Folb opened the meeting at 7:02 with some housekeeping items related to meeting virtually.
- The Committee approved minutes from the January and March meetings.
- The recorded meetings are on YouTube. They are usually posted within a week of the meeting at: <https://www.apsva.us/transportation-services/advisory-committee-transportation-choices-actc/>
- June Meeting date will be June 16 while school is in session.

### **2. Return to school transportation update (Kristin Haldeman & Kim Wilks)**

#### Sy20-21 Bus Routes

Hybrid routes have been changed for the third time since going back to school; bus capacity changed from 11 to 21, triggering the third change. The plan used the same routes that have been used for hybrid, and just added students -- and occasionally stops. That started on Monday, May 3. A total of 500 students were added to the two sets of routes (Tues/Wed and Thur/Fri).

There have been some challenges with drivers using previous route rosters but that is getting ironed out. The drivers are really dealing well with many, many changes. We have promised them this is the last 're-optimization' for the school year, with an asterisk since SOL routes start next Monday.

Ms. Burgess asked about supporting students who are using the ART bus because they do not have a school bus. Ms. Haldeman noted that she has the ability to add some funds to student iRide cards through Metro's SmartBenefits program, but that process requires a couple week lead time to add the card to SmartBenefits. She has been letting school administrators know they should encourage students to get an iRide card regardless of how they get to school as it would get them a ride home in a pinch.

Summer School: A work in progress all around. Getting ready for students and drivers - starts July 6.

Fall: Hoping to be back to 'normal'.

### **3. Elementary School Moves & Transportation**

Key will be moving from its current site to the site of Arlington Traditional School (ATS). The school on the current Key site – now named Innovation Elementary, will be a neighborhood school. Ms. Hassel met with the principal specifically about bike racks, but she and Ms. Haldeman will meet with each principal about how arrival/dismissal works at each location. ATS is moving to McKinley Elementary, and most of McKinley Elementary students will attend Cardinal Elementary (formerly known as Reed School). Working on finalizing bus eligibility areas due to new boundaries. Hope to do what was done for school openings in 2019, meet with communities and develop walking resources. Two are option schools, so not as many walking, but two are neighborhood schools, so we will prepare resources and hopefully do community walks like in summer of 2019.

Ms. Bugess asked about extending public buses to serve the new Key location. Mr. Leach noted that the approved County budget for FY22 does not include funding for expansion of ART service. Staff has reviewed trips to the new Key and the ART 41 – picking up on Wilson near Court House Metro - with transfer to the ART 75 near VA Square Metro makes the trip. The ART 75 drops off right at Wilson Blvd at George Mason. He noted that it's an easy transfer, and all ART buses offer multi-hour free transfers. With a student iRide card it's \$1 to go from Courthouse to ATS.

Ms. Burgess also asked if late buses could be provided for extended day and after-school activities for connections to Courthouse for car-free families. This would be a conversation with the school and transportation.

Ms. Burgess also requested adequate notice about school walks/resources before they happen.

#### **4. Infrastructure Projects Near Schools (Hui Wang)**

- a. **Carlin Springs:** Ms. Wang noted that staff has received more negative feedback than positive, even with a tweak in March. Neighborhood groups, representing people living along Carling Springs, as well as Campbell Elementary principal and assistant principal gave us unfavorable feedback. Police have also seen dangerous behavior along the street and at drop off. TE&O is collecting data, starting last week and into this week and will analyze. Based on field observation and feedback, we don't see the opportunity to extend it. Encouragement from Campbell Elementary to remove it even before summer school -- a benefit of a pilot is it allows us to collect data and will help with future decisions on this stretch of road, and we have not decided at this point to shorten the pilot. The pilot, we know, means the outcome will not necessarily be what we expect. There has also been negative feedback north of Campbell, at 6th Road, where climbing the hill while turning made the sight difficult in turning left. We made a small adjustment, but it is not as good as the original road configuration. Also Carlin Springs Civic Association, which represents the S and N portion of that road, came in very early with negative feedback.

Ms. Haldeman note that she and Dan Nabors (TE&O) met with Campbell Principal and AP. There have been near misses, back-ups at drop off into the traffic lane, an SRO that is managing traffic, and the school has been moving around cones. The school is particularly not pleased.

Principal McBride has not heard from Kenmore students about this project. Most people are dropped off or riding the bus -- pretty light pedestrian traffic.

Ms. Hassel said it is light pedestrian traffic – though she has spoken with the few Campbell parents who are using it and they do like it. She has gone out during arrival times to take pictures of those using the lane and there are few.

- b. **Nelly Custis & Military Road:** County staff has looked at two main long-term options for this intersection: a signal and a round-about. Given that either option could take a while to implement,

staff decided to conduct a round-about pilot because a roundabout can lower speed and operates 24/7 without a signal cycle. Public engagement on the pilot is likely to happen in June -- the intended audience is the civic associations in the areas and Dorothy Hamm and Taylor PTA. Staff hopes to implement over the summer and run it for one year.

Ms. Haldeman added that she, Dan Nabors and Gabriella Kock - the project manager, met Dorothy Hamm and Taylor Principals and APs to bring them up to speed, show them compelling evidence about roundabouts, and request their help in getting project information out to school communities.

- c. **Walter Reed Complete Streets:** This is a two-phase complete streets project. 5th Street at S. Walter Reed is first phase and is in construction now. The project should dramatically improve accessibility on north end, and we've heard no issues with that phase (phase 1). Second phase extends from 5th Street S to Columbia Pike, with intersection improvements at S. 9th at Walter Reed to dramatically reconfigure it and make it safe -- including protected bike lanes on S. Walter Reed. Also proposing bus islands. APS and County project staff are actively coordinating on designs for both the street and the site. The bike lane on the west side of Walter Reed may be impacted by Career Center construction and the staffs will work through options.

Ms. Burgess noted that we should not make the road too attractive to cars, because a high-volume street is a more dangerous street for peds and bikes. Worried that 9th Street would be too attractive to drivers. Just want to keep looking at this. Great coordination.

## 5. Safe Routes to School (Lauren Hassel)

Bike Month: Instead of Walk & Roll to School Day (which would have been today) we are reaching out for the month. Lots of volunteers from Arlington Families for Safe Streets, and at least this year some people are going to school and the national slogan is Let's Roll With It! (Last year's slogan was Go the Distance from a Distance, so some improvement!)

Temporary Traffic Gardens: Using SRTS mini-grant funds and help from Discovery Traffic Gardens and volunteers (Including Ms. Burgess and some students), we have transformed a blacktop area at ATS into a temporary traffic garden -- a playground for young bicyclists to learn bike safety. Another traffic garden will be installed on May 10 Hoffman Boston ES.

SRTS grant for next year: VDOT has cut SRTS Funding by 67%, so we cannot expect to get the same funding. The pot for the entire state will be about \$350,000. At present there are about 17 localities with SRTS programs throughout the state. Funding notices will be sent in early June.

## 6. Vision Zero: Next Steps (Christine Baker)

Ms. Baker gave an overview of the plan elements, reminding the Committee that VZ goal is to eliminate all traffic fatalities and injuries--for all people on all modes. Arlington averages about 55 severe and four fatal crashes each year--and our vision is to get to zero by 2030. The County Board adopted the idea in 2019, and the plan itself will go to the County Board for adoption on May 15.

The plan development process included meetings with both an external stakeholders group, including Elizabeth Kiker from ACTC, as well as an internal county group composed of staff from nine departments, and three phases of public engagement -- with strong participation from many in the county. Data analysis shared with these groups showed that crashes involving pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists are disproportionately represented in crashes. And while fewer crashes involve drunk drivers -- **half** of fatalities involved alcohol. Additionally, while there are fewer drivers at night—

there are more severe/fatal crashes at night. The data is helping us map locations and action plans to end severe/fatal crashes.

Multimodal safety toolbox is a highlight of the program. Updating school zone guidelines as well – esp. signage, markings, flashing beacons. Heavily focusing on automated enforcement – esp. speed cameras and traffic light cameras. Action Items are strongly focused on ending severe/fatal crashes and fall under these pillars: Data & Evaluation; Process & Organization; Engagement; Partnerships. Community engagement tended to agree that identified actions will help achieve goals. Ms. Baker reviewed performance measures for safety target areas and noted there is a dashboard available to track progress. Next five years will be implementing projects. Project team will have multiple check in points along the way.

The Committee unanimously voted to support Vision Zero. Letter of support should come from ACTC Chair and sent to the County Board Office. Mr. Leach noted that the board members appreciate brevity, as does the staff liaison.

## **7. Speed Camera Legislation (Christine Baker, Hui Wang)**

Ms. Baker told the Committee that TE&O staff has started an inventory of speed zones and limits, along with a list of infrastructure in place (e.g., beacons and signage) to establish a holistic view of school zone existing conditions. The County also has applied for a Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (MWCOG) regional safety program grant that would provide some technical expertise to develop guidelines to help equitably prioritize locations for these cameras. County initially partnered with Alexandria on the grant application, but they dropped out as they were heading in a different direction. County is waiting to hear back. If we get the grant, it will help us determine where to place cameras and how to roll them out. County will pursue on its own if it does not receive grant funding, but it would be slower without the technical expertise the grant would provide.

Ms. Burgess asked if the County has a timeline yet for the project. Ms. Baker said they are actively working on the project but do not yet have a specific timeline.

Ms. Wang noted that there are two steps on this: first, to find an equitable and technically sound way to identify locations. Second - implementation. Both staff and ACPD are keen on automated implementation as it will help avoid certain biases.

Ms. Haldeman said she wants to be part of the conversation about school locations.

## **8. Budget**

Ms. Haldeman reported that when APS learned from VDOT that SRTS funding would be significantly cut back, she worked to have the SRTS Coordinator position added into the budget as an FTE. The School Board supported adding the position into the final budget, which they will vote on tomorrow (May 6). TDM benefit funds are also still in the final budget for next year. Both have a good chance of approval. Unfortunately, student transit pilot funding did not make it into this year's budget. Ms. Haldeman will try again next year. It is something we need to move toward and demonstrating usage will help. There are some funds left over from closing down last year that may be available next year. CaBi membership for teachers is funded by the county, so that is just a matter of fee waived for APS staff.

## **9. Improving Major Crossings to Increase Bike/Walk Access to School: Williamsburg & Glebe**

Intersection very near Jamestown Elementary. Glebe is a big arterial, and these intersections that we study prevent us from expanding our walk zones in these areas -- it would be great to get kids to walk and not need the buses for trips that are that close, but the arterial prevents this.

Ms. Wang reviewed improvements that the County has planned for the intersection via a signal maintenance operations project. The old span-wire signal will be replaced with upgraded mast arm signal posts. On the ground, the project will extend the median to stretch it out and create median refuge area. On the northeast side of the intersection, the catch basin at the end of the crosswalk will be relocated and an ADA compliant ramp will be installed. Crosswalk will be remarked with high visibility markings. On the southwest side of the intersection, the project will build a ramp to connect to where the path begins to the service road begins and add the missing crosswalk across Glebe Rd. It will replace the path with an ADA compliant Z path to deal with the slope and add a crosswalk on the side street as well to lead to the sidewalk along the retaining walk.

Re: the access road from Glebe onto Williamsburg Blvd., it cannot be closed as there are some houses whose access/egress is off of the access road. Feedback from police tells us we need lane markings and clear signage that this is just an access road for families (but it cannot be removed) and not a cut through. Because Glebe is VDOT, even a signal project has gone through extensive design and review. Everything is ready to go for construction, we are hoping it will be started in summer. It doesn't typically take too long -- hope that we can finish before September, but not committing to that.

Ms. Burgess asked if there was an opportunity for engagement with civic association or PAC/BAC. Ms. Wang noted that maintenance projects usually do not include an engagement component since they tend to be pretty straightforward. When they can, the County tries to squeeze into the scope additional improvements as funding allows. County actually had to convince VDOT that the improvements on the ground were part of the project. Ms. Burgess said she is concerned the Z path may not work well for bikes and additional feedback could help improve the concept. Ms. Wang noted that a bike improvement project in the area would have more engagement. For maintenance projects they try to get in and out quickly.

Ms. Hassell added that improvement of any nature will help; one of the problems with Jamestown access is that even if you take the backways to get there you have to go out of your way to avoid Williamsburg and Glebe.

Chair Folb noted that he is a fan of trying to squeeze safety improvements out of other projects. Also, glad to be able to cross Glebe Road in two places because of this.

Ms. Haldeman asked if there is anything we can do to facilitate change in VDOT mindset with respect to safety projects – especially near schools? Ms. Wang told the Committee that the County has started a regular conversation with VDOT using Vision Zero, and we have a couple of locations in discussion, and when we point to Vision Zero, they at least recognize the policy. Having a policy and a program to point to has helped enormously. VDOT is at the table and having a conversation.

Last word on the project – Chair Folb asked if a raised crosswalk could be implemented at the access road to disincentivize cut through. Ms. Wang said it's probably too late for changes at this point, but we can come back and revisit it. Some raised crosswalks make pedestrians misjudge cars slowing down as yielding ... which means more crashes. Mr. Leach thanked the Committee for the feedback and noted that the County may be able to layer on some more tactical fixes, particularly in the northwest quadrant.

## **10. Meetings Online or In Person?**

Recognizing the benefits of online meetings, Chair Folb asked committee and staff members to email him their opinions on meeting virtually vs. in person -- not a chat meeting, but please email him.