

APS Multimodal Transportation & Student Safety Special Committee
February 5, 2014
Kenmore Library

Attendees: Kristin Haldeman, Gillian Burgess, Jane Kim-Guthrie, Tim Rosato, Lauren Hassel, Eric Goodman, Jana Lynott; **APS:** Scott Prisco, Kyle Lukacs, Cintia Johnson; **Arlington County DOT:** Dennis Leach

Speakers: Toole Design Group (TDG) - Alia Anderson, Jim Elliott

Absent: Aja Sae-Kung, Nancy Van Doren, Erik Maskelony, Ronna Weber, Jack Owens

Agenda approved; Hold on 1/29 minutes until next meeting

Public Comment: Cathy Constantine, an Arlington Forest parent whose 6th grader is bused and who has another child at W&L spoke about her courtesy busing experience. They obtained courtesy busing for their W&L child as they were just inside (2 blocks) the 1.5 mi walk zone. She is concerned they may lose the courtesy busing, though, because the bus they are assigned to is full of transfer students coming to WL. They need the bus because her child has large sports equipment to carry and the walk itself is long and not very safe. She invites anyone to walk with her child with books and sports equipment.

PTA meeting summaries:

Randolph ES (Kristin)- They have no regular school buses; just two special ed buses. Parents have concerns about walking and walking safety. Parent drivers making u-turns after drop-off conflict with walkers trying to cross at intersection near school. They had an issue with lighting the park trail behind their school. Kyle assisted and worked with County Parks to change the light timing. Will send an email summary.

Drew ES (Eric G.)- Eric sent a summary already, but most of their concerns related to busing. Some parents reported that their kids were on the bus for more than an hour. Also, buses have been getting kids to breakfast late, so they end up eating in the classroom.

Ashlawn ES (Jana)- Jana also sent an email summary. They have had communications issues related to late buses. Text messages are not making it to parents in time for them to act on the alert and use another transportation option. Tim R. asked if APS staff could comment on where the bus communications originate from, as he tends to get 2 for his kids – one from the school and one from APS.

School Board Request: Kristin told the Committee that she spoke with Abby Raphael earlier that week and the School Board would like the Committee to provide a recommendation for a transportation philosophy and for the walk distances by the end of the month. The Board will then have the information to consider as they discuss the Superintendent's budget, which will be released on 2/27. This will be a topic at the next meeting.

TDM Plan Update: Task 2 – Existing Conditions (*see presentation*): The TDG Consultant team presented their findings from their Task 2 work. This included: a review of summary survey results focusing on student travel, including respondent demographics; some policy review and operational costs findings; and a brief overview of the 'access opportunity score' to be developed and used at the school level for goal setting. Task 2 findings will set mode choice baselines and targets. TDG stated that the goal of the TDM plan is to reduce vehicular trips to/from schools. TDG will present Task 2 work – including staff data analysis - to the School Board at the end of February.

TDG noted that they conducted aggressive follow-up on the survey for low-response schools and constituencies. Findings show the APS Hispanic community may be underrepresented in the survey responses. Of note, while paper responses were fairly low, TDG found that Hispanic respondents were more likely to use

paper than other groups. TDG will not be weighting responses to accommodate, but as recommendations are made they will pay particular attention to this group and dig deeper into the data as they go.

Discussion/Q&A

The slide comparing mode choice shows some difference in tallies vs. parent survey as student travel tallies were a snapshot in time. Parent survey asked to rank the three most common used travel modes.

Interestingly, almost 20% of elementary families living w/in ¼ mi of schools responded that they used a car to travel to school.

Re: staff travel and home origin, TDG reported that APS staff were more likely to live in Arlington County than County staff. TDG said they would forward a zipcode breakdown.

Re: student Public transit use, Dennis asked that TDG follow up with his staff before finalizing this data as he believes the usage may be more robust than in the study. Many students are still using 50 cent tokens. County has information by route. Tokens may be phased out.

Re: the access opportunity scores, are choice schools (which by their definition are drawing from the whole County) - located near transit, but not taking advantage of it getting higher scores? TDG replied that whether the school is 'choice' or not is factored into the score, so it could cancel out the transit score.

Re: Student parking permits, at some schools there is plenty of parking. The pass program is managed by each school and managed differently. Parking will be addressed in more detail in the report. Discussion ensued about students parking in neighborhoods and the County receiving the complaints, not the schools.

Jana offered two comments re: the presentation materials 1) report the 'N' when providing survey response info.; 2) note where the \$86k comes from in the income question.

Re: Bus costs per student – do we have a comparable cost per student on ART? Dennis noted that the special ed transportation cost is similar to the County's paratransit costs. Would be helpful if TDG showed how many trips are being provided for each type of service.

Concern that the survey is not capturing trip chaining, i.e., parents' ultimate destinations after children go to school. This may be something that could be looked at by individual school. TDG's scope is district-wide.

Of note in the mode choice comparison, TDG learned that walk or bike might be the 2nd or 3rd mode used by parents, which suggests that many may have the ability to use these modes, but something else prevents them from using as the primary mode.

Gillian pointed out that it would be helpful to breakdown the data by distance and by school level and possibly grade level more than is done in the presentation. To get at the question –how does school age factor into mode choice decisions? Could TDG look at that using grade level? In particular, it would be helpful to have slides 19, 23, 24, 26 and 27 by distance and slides 19, 20, 26 and 27 by school level (and even grade level).

Cintia Johnson noted the 22% transfer student rate. Transfer policy has big impacts on transportation. She also offered that TDG should provide more info about the taxi service transportation as little is known about it.

TDG will be back in March to hold small group sessions with the Committee for input on Task 4: Define Program Goals and Performance Targets.

The meeting ended with a note that a draft for the Board recommendation will be prepared and circulated prior to the next meeting.

Adjourn 9pm.