

**APS Multimodal Transportation & Student Safety Committee**  
**June 5, 2013**  
**Minutes**

Attendees: Kristin Haldeman, Jana Lynott, Tim Rosato, Nancy VanDoren, Erik Maskelony, Jane S. Kim, Ronna Weber, Gillian Burgess, Jack Owens, Lauren Hassel , Dennis Leach, Bob Laws

By Skype: Eric Goodman, Penny Everline

Public Comment: Donna Owens

The meeting began shortly after 7pm with the Committee observing a moment of silence in memory of the APS High School student killed the past week.

The Committee next approved the evening's Agenda and minutes from the 5/23/13 meeting.

**Public Comment Period -- Donna Owens**

Ms. Owens told the Committee she is part of a group of parents known as 'Safe Busing Now' who have been working on the bus issue since last Fall. Often when she comes to speak at this meeting it is to get their concerns and feedback to us. She brings two recommendations for the Committee based on that input.

1. Maps: She noted that while the maps are a significant milestone the feedback process needs to be broader. She recommended that the Committee suggest to the School Board that there be a school by school community feedback process for reviewing and changing them as necessary. This is not something for which the Committee can take responsibility, as the input must come from those who use the schools and it must be a transparent process.
  2. Courtesy vs. regular bus designations: Those students in the 'walk zone' who have received bus eligibility this past year due to a safety issue should be coded as 'regular riders,' not courtesy bus riders – regardless of the zone in which they live. This is not currently the case.
- Ms. Burgess said she thought the Committee had been told that courtesy busing was going away because all kids in the walk zone who had a safety hazard would be identified for the 2013/14 school year as regular bus riders. While the Committee understands that APS wanted to move quickly on the maps, we really should have understood each other.
  - Ms. Weber has heard from several families about letters amongst family members not being consistent. Mr. Laws said that families are not tagged together, and with Kindergartners and rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders, they don't know their schools until late Spring. Ms. Burgess said one family in her neighborhood received a rising Kindergarten letter though the child isn't going to an APS school.
  - Mr. Maskelony said he doesn't think APS has worked out the underlying data issues and they need to get that correct first and foremost. Mr. Laws said that his department is creating a data integrity process that will cross-check the student information system with Edulog. This will begin on 6/17/13. Ms. Haldeman asked that he provide a status update on that process. **(ACTION ITEM)**

Ms. Burgess noted that APS must make sure staff has what it needs to do what they need to do. The report makes 'general' mention of this – is there anything else we should add in there that would be helpful? Mr. Laws said he feels he's getting the support he needs.

### **APS Staff Update: Map Feedback – Bob Laws, APS Transportation Director**

The call center has logged 168 calls to date; 8 are still open. Of these, 2 request new stops; 1 concerns the walk area for Oakridge; others concern after school bus for next year. APS has received 6 comments on the maps via the website. Mr. Laws is concerned that parents are confused – thinking they're losing bus service again. Mr. Laws said that he has reached out to the Taylor parents who had appealed their 'courtesy designation' to discuss their eligibility situation.

#### *Committee comments:*

- Would rather see APS set safety criteria, and apply it equally.
- Committee should not be doing staff work in setting criteria.
- Committee can certainly recommend that APS apply its own policies.
- Concerned that those who don't 'get the ear of APS –Transportation aren't being heard and that by shifting the burden to families in terms of reaching out to APS means they have to know they need to call, rather than APS reaching out to ensure families have what they need.

Mr. Laws noted that he is about to start reaching out to families in the perimeter and telling them about courtesy busing. He has Spanish speakers on staff to handle Spanish speaking calls, but does not have a language line for other languages. *\*Note – APS likely has one and Transportation should ensure it has access to it. [ACTION ITEM]*

- Committee must recommend in the report that any child with a walk hazard becomes a 'by right' bus rider.
- The maps need to reflect the service that is being provided. Some members are receiving calls from parents asking if their child will get bus service. If the maps do not reflect all hazards that lead to courtesy bus service eligibility, only those who made the appeal will know they are eligible.
- The maps should be updated routinely to reflect new safety findings, until they stop coming.
- Committee members raised questions about how hazards from temporary conditions (e.g. construction) are handled. Mr. Leach responded that as the County reviews construction plans every phase will require a 'maintenance of traffic' (MOT) plan. These will address transportation impacts and mitigations during that period. He noted that Ashlawn will likely be the most difficult site.
- County staff has all the maps. Mr. Leach will be reviewing the maps with a team over the next few weeks. They will be looking at the maps and the zones and asking why APS might consider something a barrier – is it perceived? Is it 'real?' Certainly within a ½ mile is goal. Transportation & Engineering has the maps; County GIS has the layers it needs – schools is providing the walk/bus barriers.
- The County must be sure it looks at the hazards from a kid's perspective.
- There still needs to be a process to identify and mitigate an issue a parent raises. We don't really have a process to do this. And who bears the risk.

- To some extent APS won't be able to resolve everything a parent brings forward, as parents view things differently. We need to have a public process for review.
- Question to APS : Does APS have a plan to pull together information in a systematic way to get map feedback? Mr. Laws noted that right now it's just the call center. Ms. Johnson may have something else in the works.
- APS must make sure that is done. We were led to believe that APS was going to set up a process to get school input. It's fine if this is still being developed, as long as it is planned; however, the Committee does not get the sense that this is happening.
- It is not clear that there's a consistent outreach effort and process.
- APS must have a transparent and proactive communication process.
- What are the criteria that the maps are developed from? We don't have that. We may have the big items (e.g. major streets; missing sidewalks), but not the 'not so obvious' are not there. What exactly are the rules in the software that helps APS develop the polygons.
- APS must ask parents – "are there hazards along your walk route that prevent you from being comfortable from walking your child."
- Someone outside the organization should be responsible for institutionalizing the criteria. Need your checks and balances. Perhaps a safety organization or safety officer.
- There are many hazards we have not considered.
- Mr. Maskelony offered details on how an independent safety entity might work, as well as thoughts on a mitigation process.

### **Report Development**

The Committee began discussing the summarized work product from each 'section group' and comments on them, starting with the shortest sections. In addition to editorial comments (i.e., word-smithing and moving certain recommendations to more appropriate sections), the following substantive comments were made:

### **Transit**

- Be sure to note that we're not looking for 'home to school' routes to be replaced by transit.
- Question as to whether current curriculum includes transit education. Committee could suggest that transit training standards be standardized and systematized.

Voting to include the elements of this section included – 2 abstentions; 1 no; all others, yes.

### **Private Vehicles**

- Language in this section should focus on encouraging alternatives to single-family vehicles.
- Discussion around whether the bullet on site design should say APS is specifically trying to minimize parking area.
- APS' TDM program will need to get to reducing traffic and congestion, per the site conditions.
- Not all members agreed with the language in the site design bullet. Voting: 9 yay; 3 nay to retain.
- Remove the reference saying that children should not be artificially separated from school site traffic.
- Curriculum recommendations – travel training and education – should pertain to all modes.

## **APS Policies**

As there are several APS transportation policies currently in effect, the Committee recommended that report language should say these policies should be 'revised and updated.'

## **Active Transportation**

- Use the primary recommendations; put strategies in text.
- Strongly recommend that APS do a safety study.
- Mr. Leach noted that transportation surveys conducted for Ashlawn and the new elementary school show that driving trips increase at ½ mi. to 1 mi, but drop off after 1 mile, where bus service is provided.

## **School Bus**

- Eliminate recommendation that APS provide parents with specific direction to determine if a walk route is safe.
- SB Policy/PIP 50.5 says "Safety will be the primary consideration in the location of bus stops and may occasionally dictate the establishment of bus stops within one mile for elementary schools and one and one-half miles for middle and high schools. If a student's walk is not safe, students are eligible for a bus. Therefore, safety criteria must be transparent.
- Some were uncomfortable using the word 'safe' vs. 'hazard,' as 'safe' can be subjective.
- Want to be sure language on school bus section re: 'safe' does not undermine active transportation.

Ms. Haldeman said she would prepare a final draft for the Committee to review. It would have to be edited substantially to bring it down from the 27 pages of text used for this meeting. She would aim to have it available on Friday or early Saturday. Committee members were asked to review that draft by Sunday evening and provide comments that could be incorporated by Tuesday, for a final version to be voted on at the 6/13/13 meeting. Also at that meeting will be a presentation by Toole Design on the TDM study scope.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50pm.