

The Transportation Alternatives sub-committee recommends:

[Definition: Alternatives to Transportation comprise any method of transportation which is an alternative to riding an FCPS bus]

We will focus on walking, bicycling, and riding public transit.

On walking and bicycling, there are tremendous personal and community health benefits to getting fresh air and exercise as part of the commute to school; and over time bus routes can be modified and reduced as more students walk and/or cycle.

- The walking, cycling, and public transportation components can be part of the county's **"cool counties"** initiative which seeks to lessen auto emissions.
- The walking and cycling components (and, to a lesser extent, public transit – which will likely mean longer walks between the school and/or home and the transit connection points) could be part of the **growing focus on healthy and fit children**, or "fighting childhood obesity."

On riding public transit, there are social health benefits to acclimating students to ride public transit, so that they learn an alternative to the ubiquitous private vehicle as a way to get around; and there are benefits to the school transportation system, if one or more buses can be taken out of circulation, where the route's requirements can be met by a public bus.

Encouraging the use of these alternatives is a long-term goal, but work can begin immediately.

By searching on "school transportation alternatives," we quickly found a program in Richmond (suburb of Vancouver), British Columbia, called "Way to Go," sponsored by an insurance company, which develops encouragement and tools for schools to use, to encourage cycling and walking. Material from their web site is attached. Additional material from a related organization, "Off Ramp," a student-based organization to promote cycling, walking, and public transportation, is included: a nice survey for high school students to learn their commuting habits and learn what would encourage them to use these alternatives to transportation. We can also study Arlington County's "Safe Routes to School" model.

We recommend that the school board sanction the development of a community/grass roots organization to promote and advocate for needed changes in attitudes and in walk/bike road safety improvements, community by community. We believe that the FCCPTA might encourage this effort, and that members of the public, including Transportation Task Force members, would work towards the goal of encouraging and

facilitating walking and biking. Such a group would also help coordinate sidewalk and safety improvement moneys allocated by our Board of Supervisors, to help ensure that school walking routes are prominent in planning these. We also ask that the school board recommend or otherwise effect the designation of one or more school system staffers as a liaison for such a program.

We wish to continue studying the potential for public bus route usage, for high school students.

We made preliminary inquiry into outsourcing, by starting to review applicable regulations. We inquired about Facilities and Transportation Services' previous findings on this option, and learned that it would mean that Transportation would have to compete for any such firm working for them, for its bus drivers. **We still need to do summary research on whether other jurisdictions have successfully outsourced, about how they did it and why it was successful.**

The Transportation Alternatives team.