

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

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Executive Director of Transportation, APS



ATLANTA
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

APR 11
2022



A yellow school bus is shown in the background, partially obscured by a semi-transparent yellow overlay. The words "SCHOOL BUS" are visible on the front of the vehicle.

AGENDA

Purpose

To provide an overview of the Transportation Department and the challenges faced impacting the overall performance.

Roadmap

- Overview
- Challenges
- Response to Feedback
- Recruitment & Engagement

Takeaway

Awareness of the efforts underway to continuously improve the performance of the Transportation Department.



First and most importantly,

THANK YOU

**to our transportation staff for all the hard work you
do day in and day out!**

THE PEOPLE



29 open jobs

Bus Drivers
373 positions
344 staffed

- 20 FMLA, ADA or Workers Comp.
- 11 Special Trips and Programs
- 25 average absences a day
- 8 new active drivers in permit or driver training
- **Access to ~280 drivers/daily**

5 open jobs

Mechanics
23 positions
18 staffed



7 open jobs

Monitors
81 positions
74 staffed

- Currently, 3 monitors are out on FMLA, ADA or Workers Comp.



THE WORK



302
total daily
bus routes

73
Special
Education bus
routes

229
General
Education bus
routes

6+
average field
trips per day;
down from 50-60
a day pre-Covid

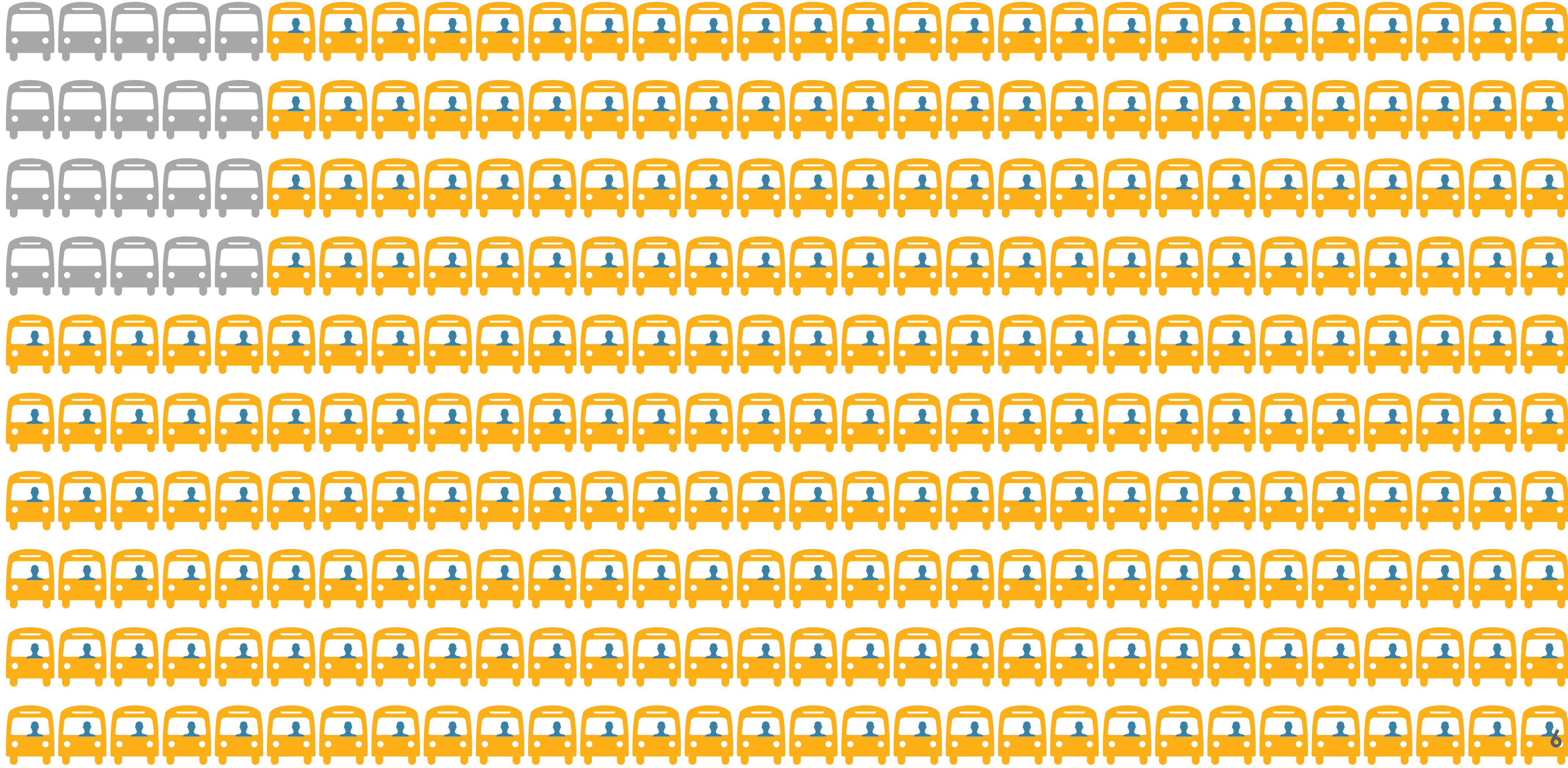
THE GAP



300+ total daily bus routes

280 avg. available drivers

20+ daily Unstaffed Routes



THE EQUIPMENT



398

total bus
fleet

317

71 passenger
buses

81

assorted
buses

10 years

average age
of fleet



Transportation
Department Call
Center

~18,500
calls presented
in English

~500
calls presented
in Spanish

Let's Talk!

784

Messages Received



Here Comes the Bus App



~40

Daily messages
pushed to notify bus
tracking subscribers
of bus lateness.



Here Comes The Bus®



Here Comes the Bus

A School Bus Tracking App for Parents

Tracking Features

Shows the real-time location of your child's bus on a map

Gives scheduled and actual arrival times at home and school for bus routes

Provides push and email notifications when the bus is near

**RIGHT BUS.
RIGHT STOP.
RIGHT TIME.**

Sign Up Instructions For Parents:

1. Download Here Comes the Bus app or visit herecomesthebus.com
2. Click the "Sign Up" button
3. Enter school code **87794** and click "Next" followed by "Confirm"
4. Complete the "User Profile" box
5. Under "My Students," click "Add." Enter your child's last name and student ID number
6. Once you confirm your information, you're ready to begin



GET IT ON
Google Play

For more information, visit: atlantapublicschools.us



HERE COMES THE BUS



7,046

App Subscribers

- Launched January 25, 2021.
- A parent or guardian may subscribe to one or multiple transportation-eligible dependent children (except DSE) and set a radius for the alert.
- Subscriber should get real-time location of child's bus, scheduled and actual arrival times, with push notifications when bus is near.

HERE COMES THE BUS APP: HOW IT WORKS



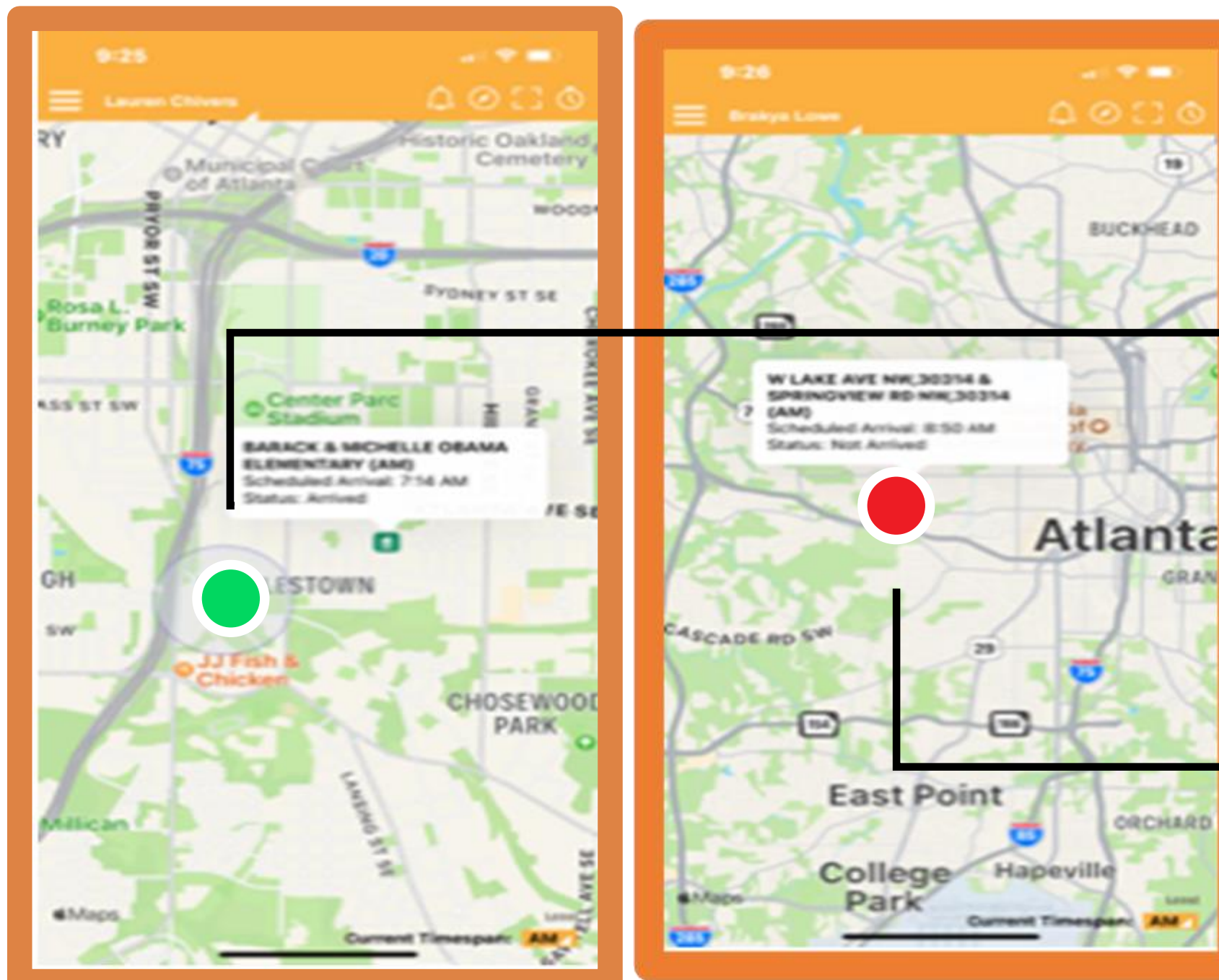
- Optimal functionality occurs when each bus route is staffed and punctual with a dedicated operator (i.e., when all positions are filled and everyone shows up on time).
- Unable to track students who cross tiers.
- Only one bus can be substituted/displayed on a tier.
- **APS reality:** numerous buses are performing multiple runs on a tier and will not display.

SY21-22 Tier Bell Schedule

Elementary	High	Middle
7:45a – 2:45p	8:45a – 3:45p	9:15a – 4:15p
Pick-up Time		
6:00a – 7:15a	7:16a – 8:35a	8:36a – 9:15a

HOW IT WORKS

- 1 **Bus Operator** logs into a tablet on the bus or bus substitution.
- 2 Planned **route data** overlays actual GPS data.
- 3 Bus **location displays** in the application with the parent radius.



Properly staffed bus route, punctual, assigned driver displays as green.

Doubled route shows as red.



National Survey Indicates 'Severe' School Bus Driver shortage.

Aug. 21, 2021

A trend that began during the pandemic continues to this day. A quick Google search shows that school systems across the country are scrambling for talent.



Staffing Challenges

- 20 unstaffed bus routes
- 20 - 30 daily absences
- More than 100 COVID cases

Resulting Impact



- Doubled bus routes
- Late to stops and school
- Late dropping off
- Lack of confidence in the app

School Bus On-time % morning

pre-pandemic

MAR 2020

96%

FEB 2022

81%

Daily World

St. Landry schools may pay potential bus drivers' training costs to combat shortage

St. Landry Parish school officials are hoping to offset a potential shortage of qualified bus operators by paying at least a portion of the...

1 day ago



WAVY.com

Parents scramble to pick up students after major school bus driver shortage in Norfolk

NORFOLK, Va. (WAVY) — A school bus driver shortage in Norfolk left some parents scrambling to pick up their students Wednesday afternoon.

1 week ago



WHSV

ACPS still feeling the impact from the bus driver shortage

(WVIR) - The need for bus drivers is affecting school districts across the country. Albemarle County is aggressively recruiting to fill the...

3 weeks ago



WEAU

Area school districts 'desperate' for staff as bus driver shortage ...

MONDOVI, Wis. (WEAU) -While having a lack of bus drivers may not be unusual the severity of the shortages during the pandemic has been...

2 weeks ago



NKyTribune

Kentucky's bus driver shortage prompting 'all-hands-on-deck'

...

Jeff Aulick starts his day as the superintendent of Bracken County Schools, but some days he ends it as a bus driver.

17 hours ago



News 13

School bus driver shortage looms in Osceola County

School bus driver shortages continue in Central Florida; Osceola County School District held job fair Tuesday; District operates 242 bus routes,...

2 weeks ago



National Technician Shortage

A trend that began during the pandemic continues to this day. A quick Google search shows that school systems across the country are scrambling for talent.



Vehicle to Technician Ratio



	# of Vehicles	Technicians	Industry Recommendation	APS (Current)	APS Fully Staffed
Buses	398	15	1:20	1:26	1:21
Support Vehicles	217	3	1:60	1:72	1:54

23 Technician positions / 5 vacancies

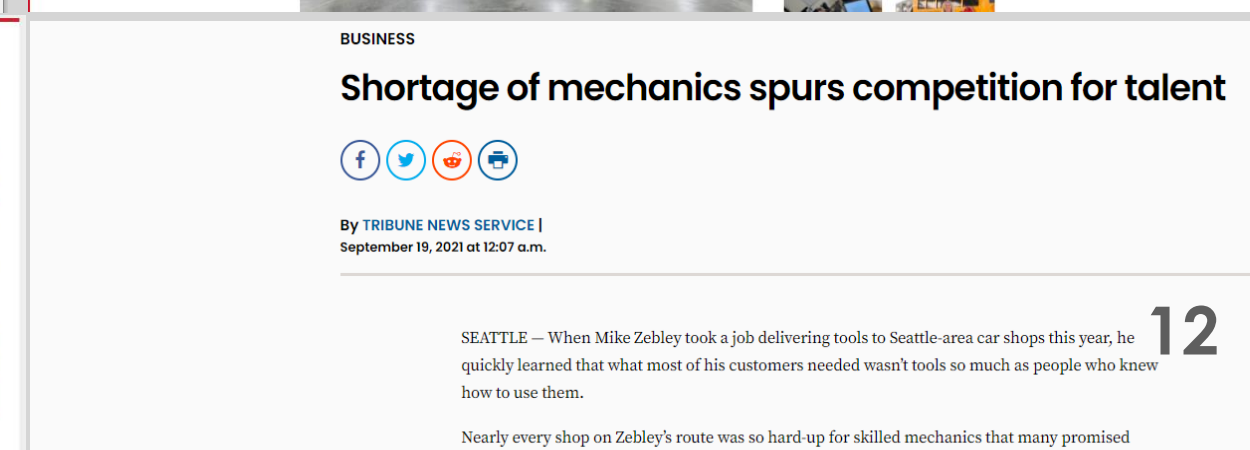
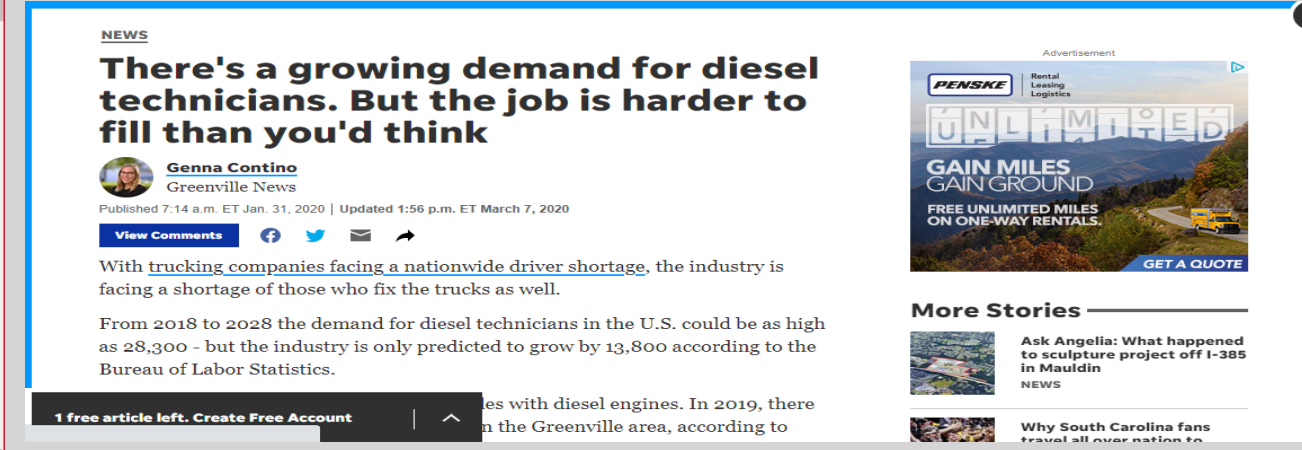
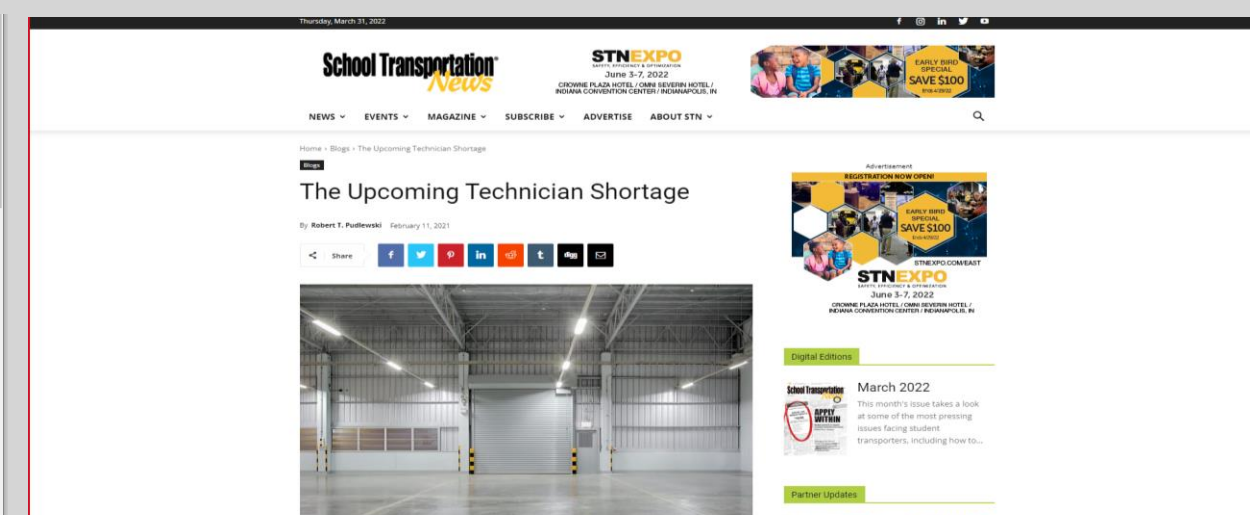
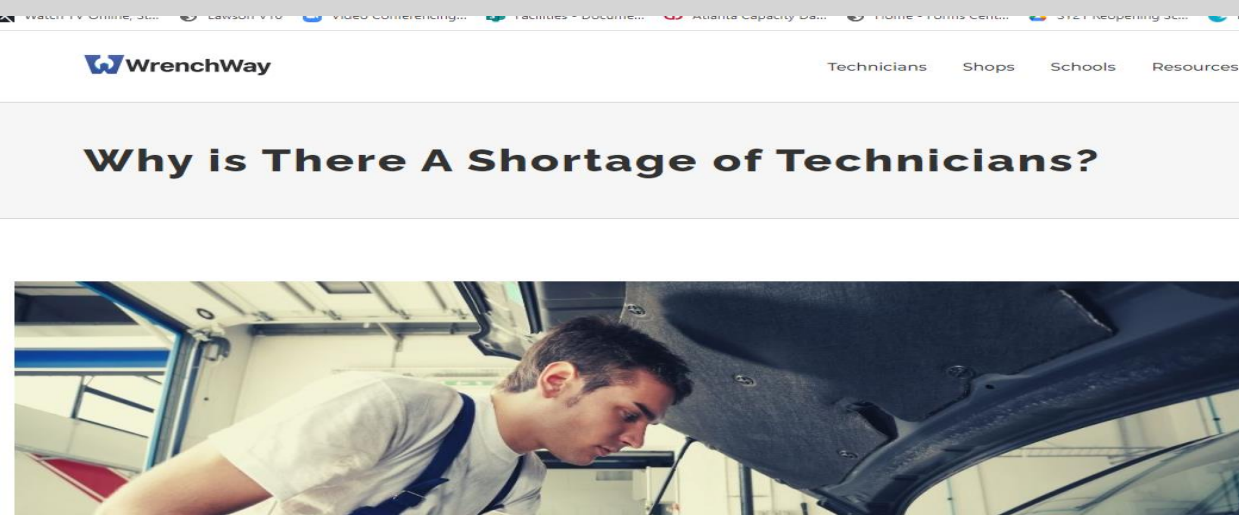
SY21-22 Bus Accidents: 74

Staffing Challenges

- 5 of 23 unstaffed Mechanic positions
- Current salary structure is below market

Resulting Impact

- Buses out of service
- Delayed PMs



RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK & NEED: COMPLETED AND WORK IN PROGRESS



COMPLETED:

- **4,000** work orders
- **2,300** bus inspections
- **25** new propane buses ordered

IN PROGRESS:

- Pre-Trip/Post-Trip Compliance
- Consistent School Bus Availability
- 2021 Parts Audit
- Bus Driver and Mechanic Staffing Initiative
- NW Transportation Depot

I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right. — Gallup Engagement Survey



Pre-Trip/Post-Trip Compliance

- November, 2020, converted from paper to a tablet based recording of pre-trip and post-trip inspections.
- Continued focus on training and coaching to ensure compliance.

Consistent School Bus Availability

- Implementing a bus refresh / replacement program to improve age of fleet.
- Replacement of wheelchair lifts.
- Inconsistent SPLOST-revenue collections caused a pause in bus refresh/replacement efforts.

Mechanic Staffing Initiative

- Established two Mechanic Apprentice positions.
- Developed a student work program.
- Student internship opportunities in Fleet Maintenance with past participants from:
 - The Henry Louis “Hank” Aaron New Beginnings Academy, Midtown High School and Therrell High School
- Current participant is from Carver Early College High School

2021 Parts Audit

- Implementing controls on approval of parts over \$1,000.
- Developing protocols to monitor vendor spend thresholds.
- Improving processes to ensure separation of duties.



Transportation Investments



FISCAL YEAR	ALLOCATION	Buses
FY23	\$3.882M*	30
FY22	\$6.325M	55
FY21	\$0	0
FY20	\$7.015M	50
FY19	\$0	0
FY18	\$0.840M	12

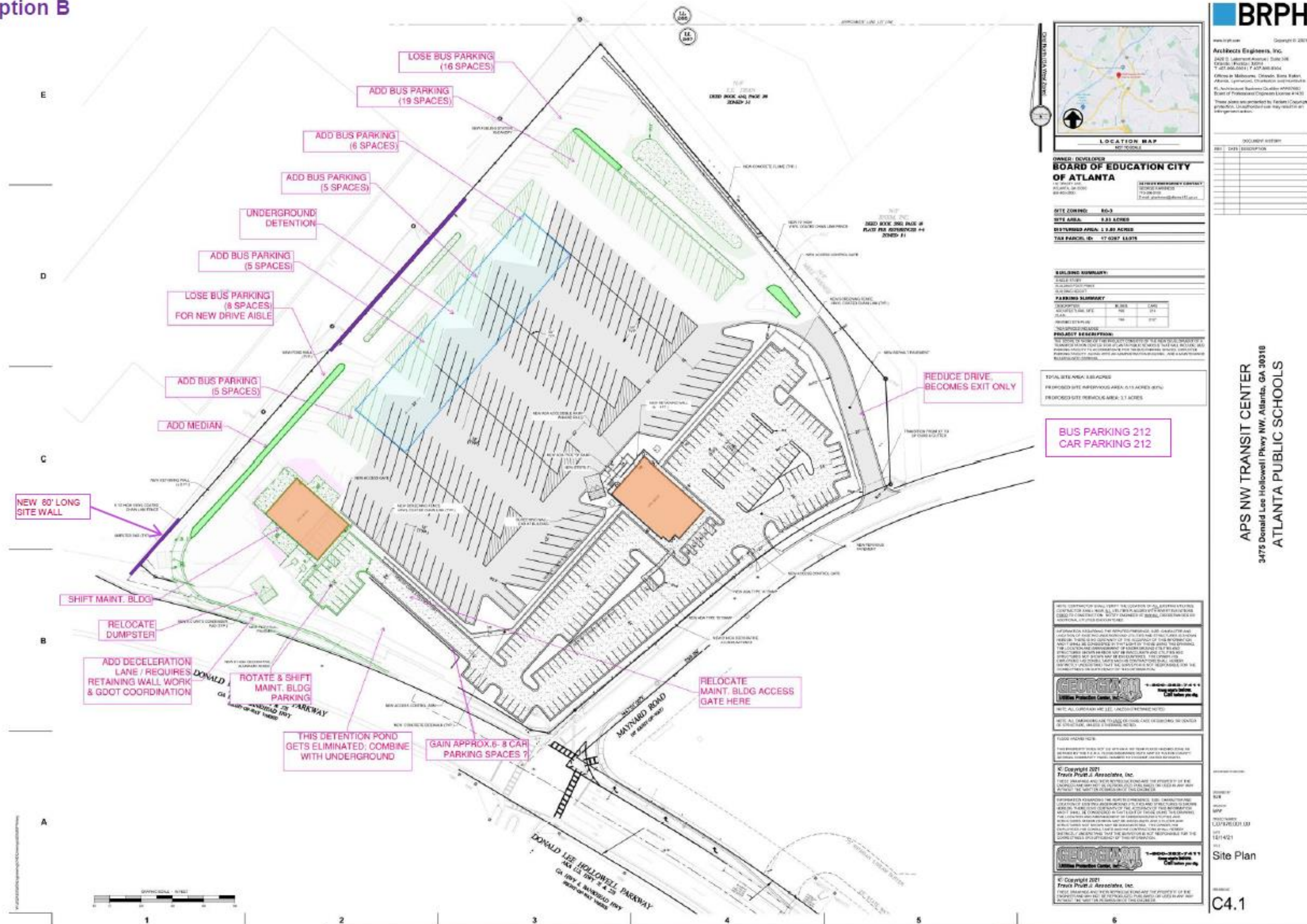
*Planned investment SPLOST 2017

Future SPLOST 2022 -2027: \$17.5M

Northwest Transportation Depot- Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway



Site Design – Option B



- ### Status
- Currently in design
 - SPLOST 2022 approved budget: \$13.2 M
 - Projected Construction start: Summer 2023
 - Projected Construction completion: Summer 2024
- ### Need
- Strategic Geographic Location
 - Dead head Milage Reduction
 - Appropriate Facility
 - Maintenance Facilities
 - Fueling Stations
 - Adequate and Secure Parking
 - Wash Rack

OUR VISION

APS Transportation, a recognized leader in environmentally conscious/responsible K-12 transportation, an employer of choice in our local community, and well positioned to deliver high quality transportation solutions for APS' future.

REQUIREMENTS / GOALS

Sufficient parking for # of buses and transportation vehicles

Security to prevent theft, vandalism, etc.

On-site maintenance

On-site fueling (gas, diesel and propane)

Wash rack

Depots should be strategically located and in a primarily industrial areas

Minimize "deadhead" mileage

Minimize carbon footprint

Attract a wider pool of employment candidates

Deadhead Mileage Analysis

	Metropolitan	Northwest	Savings
Daily Deadhead Mileage	5,318	4,092	1,227
Annual Dead Head Mileage	957,296	736,472	220,824*
Annual Dead Head Cost (Driver & Fuel)	\$ 8,092,787	\$ 5,706,778	\$ 2,386,010
Annual Average Mileage Reduction Per Bus	3,754	2,888	866

* Reduction in miles traveled = reduced carbon footprint

School Bus Runs out of NW Depot: Beecher, Bunche, Bolton, Boyd, Brandon, Cascade, Continental Colony, CSK/BEST, Douglas, Deerwood, Fickett, FL Stanton, Garden Hills, Harper Archer, Jackson, JL Invictus, Kimberly, Mays, Miles, N. Atlanta, Peyton Forest, Rivers, Scott, Smith, Sutton, Therrell, Usher, West Manor, Young

“While the department can have all these successes, it will come over time. The success they will not have is a significant increase in on-time performance without other significant changes throughout the district as well. These changes include a review of the bell time structure and the reevaluation of a bus depot to be located in the northern area of the district. APS cannot beat Atlanta traffic, ever, under conditions that exist outside of the internal operations of the transportation department. Therefore, strategic decision making regarding bell times and thoughtful foresight and planning to develop a northern bus depot can provide an end run around to the Atlanta traffic problem.”



RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

- Engagement with district-wide Go-Teams.
- School/cluster-based recruitment campaigns.
- Strategic alignments with APS Human Resources Division and Adult Education.



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Department of
Transportation

www.atlantapublicschools.us/transportation



▶ WE'RE HIRING ◀

**Transportation Scheduler,
Mechanic, Mechanic Apprentice,
Dispatcher, School Bus Driver**

Great Wages * Flexible Hours * State Benefits*
These are just a few reasons why you should apply
to APS.

**Location: Cleveland Elementary School
2672 Old Hapeville Rd SW
Atlanta, GA 30315
Date: December 4, 2021
Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

Scan QR Code
To Fill Out The Form.



www.atlantapublicschools.us



RECRUITMENT TACTICS

Sign & Drive Bonus

- Prorated bonus for CDL qualified, with endorsements, turn-key applicants.
- \$400.00 upon successful completion of training.
- \$300 upon first three successful months.
- \$300 upon 11th successful month.
- Total of 20 have enrolled, 4 resigned, 1 disqualified (15 eligible).

Paid Permit Training

- Fully vetted applicants are hired, under probationary employment, without a CDL permit and provided three paid weeks to earn their permit.
- Since inception, 11 of 21 candidates have successfully passed their permit to become operators.

Mechanics Apprentice Position

- Position established to home grow APS technicians.
- Although established in summer 2021, have yet to staff either of the two positions.



TEAM ENGAGEMENT & RETENTION



Clockwise from Top Left:
2020-21 Elite Employee Recognition, APS board;
Branded masks gifted to drivers; Breakfast for APS
drivers; Georgia Driver Appreciation Day



Engagement Sessions

Driver and monitor work:

- Ongoing partnership with the Office of Equity and Social Justice related to student behavior and other equity issues related to Transportation.
- Work sessions on defining bus behavior expectations with the Office of Schools and Office of Discipline and Student Assignment.



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APS has successfully been awarded a project with the **Georgia Institute of Technology H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial Engineering** to engage the services of a Senior Research Design team. The eight-student team — all seniors studying industrial engineering — will review and optimize selected bell schedules and bus routes/stops to both benefit APS and suffice their graduation requirement.

Questions

Appendix



OPTIONS EXPLORED

SHARED FACILITY/BUS PARKING WITH MARTA

(Perry Blvd Bus Maintenance Facility)

- × Not enough room for APS Buses to park
- × MARTA not willing to share bus maintenance bays

MINI-LOTS ACROSS THE DISTRICT

- × Safety/Security (increased risk of theft and vandalism)
- × On-site maintenance
- × Fueling
- × Substitute Drivers
- × Inspections

PARTNERSHIP WITH MARTA TO PROVIDE SERVICES

- × Federal Transit Authorities can not provide exclusive school services
- × Appropriate proximity of MARTA stations to schools / homes

REVIEW OF FULTON CO. GOVERNMENT PROPERTY INVENTORY

(Fulton Industrial Blvd.)

- × Available properties are too far south
- × Properties have significant topography variations

OTHER APS PROPERTIES

- × Former C.M. Pitts ES (2210 Perry Boulevard, Atlanta, 30318)



APS hosted The Lions Electric Co. Electric Bus Demo

Bus Electrification Efforts

- Preliminary conversations with HNTB Corporation regarding the development of a Bus Electrification Strategic Plan
- Issues
- Cost: \$350 - \$400K per bus
- Battery Life
- Battery Range (100-200 miles)
- Charging Times 3-8 hours
- Grid Power Planning with Ga Power

Vehicles

- \$350-\$400K
- 2X diesel
- Subsidies available
- Grants available

Charging Equipment

- Highly variable costs
- Pilots vs. fleets
- Subsidies important
- Grants available
- Utility support

APS Perspectives

- Identify goals and timeline
- Discover resulting infrastructure needs and timeline
- Identify collaboration and funding partners
- Develop funding strategy
- Consider “as a service” models and leasing
- Prepare budgets
- Consider training costs