

Good evening,

My name is Anne O'Neill, and I am a resident of the West Side - Seminary Valley neighborhood. \* On a side note, I recommend that the School Board utilize social media/website tools to obtain input from West Side residents if residents cannot attend School Board meetings in person.

I was the Safe Routes to Schools Coordinator for 7 years with the James K. Polk PTA until June 2018. I am an advocate of safe walking and biking for all Alexandria residents. I am here to contest a decision made in Summer 2018 to eliminate bus transportation for many West side 9th graders to the TC Williams High School, Minnie Howard Campus. Students in Seminary Valley were grouped in a 1.5 mile walking radius. However, this is not a walkable 1.5 mile route nor is it safe, according to Safe Routes to Schools standards. It is a 1.9 mile walking route from my house to the Minnie Howard Campus, and Seminary Valley students were always issued bus transportation in the past. I am requesting bus transportation to and from school for West siders in this predicament; specifically for Seminary Valley and Seminary Towers.

In September, my son walked to school twice. He told me that the route was not safe - he j-walked across the busy Seminary Rd at N Howard St - and luckily was not hit. It took him well over 50 minutes because of traffic and a parent picked him up on N Howard Street to drop him off at school to make it on time.

Here is language from the ACPS Transportation website:

“students in grades 9-12 who live 1.5 miles or less from their campus are each designated as a walk-to-school student.”

“ACPS will provide transportation to students in grades 9-12 living beyond a one-and-one-half mile radius from the school they attend, or who live within a one-and-one-half mile radius, but who could not reasonably walk to school without passing through a hazardous area.”

**I believe that we qualify for an exception to this rule.**

On January 9, 2019, I walked from my house to Minnie Howard between 12:15-12:45 pm (not morning or afternoon rush hour traffic), and conducted a walking audit and noted unsafe conditions and solutions to these areas for all residents. It took me 35 minutes to walk 1.9 miles - and this was without a heavy backpack and not in rush hour traffic. I would add 10 minutes onto this walk. So, for a 9th grader in good weather conditions, it would take 45+ minutes. If it were raining or snowing, it would take much longer - and with snow, much of these routes would not be shovelled and would be treacherous to walk on to school.

**Here are the noted areas that are currently unsafe for walkers:**

- 1. Unsafe crossing at Braddock Road and Seminary Road.**

a) What doesn't work here & solutions

1. The crosswalk light on the Seminary Rd/395 section (from West side):
  - a. NEVER allows walkers to cross the street.
  - b. Walking from N Howard to the Seminary Rd side to INOVA Hospital, the light for pedestrians does not function. It is completely black - never allowing pedestrians to cross.
2. There is no zebra-striped crosswalk painted at this 4-way intersection with heavy traffic.
3. Solutions:
  - a. Fix the functioning of the crosswalk from West sides approaching light.
  - b. Paint 4 way crosswalk with zebra stripes with Complete Streets/ACPS Safe Routes to Schools.



b) What does work

1. The crosswalk light on Seminary Rd/towards Janney's Lane (East side) does work and allows walkers to cross the street.

## 2. Intersection of N Howard Street and Braddock Rd

- a. What doesn't work
  - i. Faint/old zebra striped crosswalk.
  - ii. If people are walking parallel to the Episcopal boundary, there is not a good crosswalk here; it is not safe.
- b. Solution
  - i. Repaint zebra striped crosswalk.
  - ii. Make the crossing for walkers adjacent to the Episcopal school boundary safer.



## 3. Crosswalk at intersection of Marlboro Drive and Braddock Rd

- a. What doesn't work
  - i. No zebra striped crosswalk
- b. Solution
  - i. Paint crosswalk at Marlboro Drive and Braddock Rd intersection.



**4. Crosswalk at intersection of N Early St and Braddock Rd (a lot of traffic and bus routes)**

- a. What doesn't work
  - i. No zebra striped crosswalk
  - ii. Crosswalk in this area
    - 1. From the West side, the pedestrian signage is before the crosswalk in the median, where drivers may not see it. On the East side, the pedestrian signage is at the crosswalk.
  - iii. Solution
    - 1. Paint crosswalk at Early and Braddock Rd intersection.
    - 2. Move pedestrian signage (from West side) to the crosswalk.
    - 3. Add a light for visibility; as there is a lot of vehicular traffic on Braddock Rd at this location.



**5. TC Williams High School, Minnie Howard Campus (upper parking lot)**

- a. What doesn't work
  - i. Conflict with parents driving into the school at the upper parking lot for drop off with walkers trying to cross the entrance (with heavy vehicular traffic) with no zebra striped crosswalk or traffic light here. On morning, a student walked in front of my car as I turned into the school without looking, and I almost hit him. I have told Principal Eisenhower, and he agrees that this is a safety issue.
  - ii. Sometimes cars exiting the school do not allow cars to enter from Braddock Rd (i.e. cars will pull up into the lane where cars turn into from Braddock Rd, blocking the entrance).
- b. Solutions
  - i. Paint crosswalk from walkers crossing from Fort Ward Park side to enter the school without getting hit from parents dropping off their children.

- ii. Install a traffic light to enter and exit; this is very dangerous if there is a lot of traffic on Braddock Rd. Cars drive too fast and it is almost impossible to make a left hand turn out of here without being hit.
- iii. Paint dotted line at the entrance/exit to separate cars coming into the school and cars exiting.

