

# Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee

## Meeting held online

### December 16, 2021, Minutes

#### STSC Attendees

- X Richard Staudt (SPS)  
Lee Bruch
- X Mary Ellen Russell, Chair (parent volunteer)
- X Margaret McCauley (pedestrian safety advocate)
- X Jennie Meulenberg (SDOT, corridors and Ped transportation planner)
- X Marilyn Firman (citizen-at-large)
- X Yvonne Carpenter (SPS transportation crossing guard manager)  
Charlie Simpson (bicycle advocate)
- X Hunter Maltais (SPS Transportation Manager)  
Jeanne Suleiman, KC Metro (customer relationship manager in mobility division)
- X Robin Schwartz

#### Other attendees

Patrice Carroll – Seattle City Office of Planning and Community Development  
Joanna Valencia – Co-lead Seattle Transportation Plan SDOT, Resource and Capital Development  
Manager for SDOT  
Jonathan Lewis – Co-lead Seattle Transportation Plan SDOT

#### Pre-Meeting Discussion:

*Margaret suggested we add a 'Frequently Asked Questions' resource to our website. Those present agreed and some ideas were:*

1. *Flashing Beacon Criteria? Where? What time?*
2. *Crossing Guard Information: Hiring policy? What intersections qualify?*
3. *Could we have a stop sign at ... intersection?*
4. *STSC- What we do (& don't)*

#### Last Months Minutes:

#### Review of Minutes and Action Item Updates:

1. Margaret's letter re data collection will not be sent because the program is already begun. SDOT is piloting a new way of analyzing crash data by SDOT instead of by the police.
2. Richard reported that there is an assessment of walking/biking pre/post the Cascade Bicycle Club curriculum. Richard was concerned that because of the varied dates the weather would be different at each school and would cause varied results. On the other hand, teachers do not want to do 'yet another survey'. After discussion Jennie clarified that Ashley Rhead of SDOT was satisfied with the current method and we will leave it as is.
3. School Patrol supervisor stipend: Richard said state law says only a school district employee can supervise a school patrol and SPS District policy is that only a teacher may receive the stipend.

Therefore, parents and PTA can't staff it. A PTA and/or parents can however apply for and SDOT mini-grant for a stipend to organize walking school buses and run that independently of the school. Marilyn mentioned that for the school she worked for in Yakima it was a para-pro that led school patrol. Richard said that at SPS hourly staff can't run school patrol because of how the union contracts are set up. Other districts have teachers and staff represented by the same union which can give them more freedom to have hourly staff do things like school patrol.

4. Crossing Guard Map: School walk maps currently show where adult guards are supposed to be placed but there is no map showing which spots are currently vacant. Jennie will try to get an intern to build a map which will be easily updateable and show staffed and unstaffed recommended Crossing Guard locations.
5. The discussion about 4 way stops at Lawton & Madison was deferred to next month because SDOT does not have updated info ready. Have Jennie check in next meeting.
6. \*The 24<sup>th</sup> and Irving concern: Jennie will check to see if there are any planned improvements by SDOT's neighborhood greenway program, as there is a NGW in the area. If not, SDOT safe routes to school will evaluate for speed humps. If approved, they could be in as soon as 2023.
7. 14<sup>th</sup> and Henderson:  
Robin will contact David Shaw who is creating a trail for King County that borders this area. She will urge him to take protective measures to calm the traffic off the freeway and she may write a letter confirming this need.

STSC authored the Rubric for grading intersections to evaluate the need for Crossing Guards. Therefore, we can revise it.

8. \*Genessee and 19<sup>th</sup>: Jennie is working to get an SDOT crosswalk evaluation. When a school crosswalk is put in, they automatically add school crossing signage. Richard is working with SPS to get speed cushions on the driveway. They are pricing it and seeing if school crews could do it or if they would have to hire outside. They need to identify a funding source. It would probably go in before next school year. Yvonne was excited about a new crossing guard hire for this intersection. Unfortunately, per state law, we cannot have a crossing guard until a crosswalk is there. She will start him at 21<sup>st</sup>.  
Jennie will confirm with Brian on whether the change to crosswalk warrant policy has been signed or not.
9. Jennie advised several corrections that were included in last month's minutes. Jennie's advice that 'SDOT did not create the Crossing Safety Rubric' was not included in the minutes. We did not know that in November but gratefully do now.

Minutes were approved as corrected.

#### **Crossing Guard Update:**

The Bailey-Gatzert and Washington Middle School guard quit after 2 weeks. There are 3 guards who have completed all applications and are waiting for the return of fingerprints. Also, there is one for Pathfinder, Genessee Hill who will be placed at 21<sup>st</sup> until a crosswalk is in at 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **Active Transportation Coordinator:**

Hunter reported that they had found the perfect person, but he didn't accept the job. They are advertising again and hope to have someone by the end of January. Hunter's one concern is they may not be offering enough money given this tight economic market. They are offering \$62K to \$93K.

### **School Bus Update:**

Hunter reported they have reestablished 50% of the routes eliminated in the beginning of the school year. They were able to take training drivers off driving routes and have them only train. Right now, they have too many drivers calling in sick to be able to start new routes. They have 27 on standby to fill in for sick drivers instead of filling new spots.

In 2022-23 they will guarantee 6 hours a day for each driver instead of the 4 this year and this may help get and retain drivers. Also, they would fill spots better if they could have a 3-tier system with schools having variable starting times.

They are losing too many drivers immediately after they are trained. Some go to neighboring districts because they are more conveniently located and /or guarantee more hours. Also, Amazon guarantees 6 hours and pays more.

There was much discussion of the walk-zone. Hunter said that the WAC's and RCWs suggest that if an outside agency (like STSC) requests a boundary reduction for a problem they could reduce the boundary. Some metrics to consider are reducing truancy, subsidized housing, (perceived) dangerous neighborhoods, and homeless encampments. The latter unfortunately move often and so are hard to plan for in the long term. Future ACTION item: **Review Walk Maps**

**Police Representative and Metro Representative:** These positions are vacant. Kevin, our former police representative, has retired. Jennifer will talk to Brian about how to fill these spots. The partnership with Metro and King County Vans is up and running. Hunter says that SPS has reached the limit of how many routes can be migrated to this program right now because special ed drivers are refusing to move to general ed routes.

### **School Pool:**

Richard got the guidelines for starting school pools from Jason Halvorson. 7 schools expressed interest, all in more affluent areas. These are also generally in areas where there is currently no bus transportation. We cannot start them until the Safe Routes to School Coordinator is hired.

### **City of Seattle Transportation Plan:**

Joanna Valencia and Jonathan Lewis, co-leaders of the SDOT Seattle Transportation Planning Team gave us a presentation of their planning process which is targeted for 2024.

### **Seattle Comprehensive Update Plan**

Patrice Carroll from the City Office of Planning and Community Development explained their process in the beginning planning stage also aimed for completion in 2024. Both plans were urged to include school planners as well. Patrice said that they indeed did have school personnel on their committee. **Mary Ellen** will send her all our email addresses so we can be included in the invitations and announcements as this committee goes forward.

OPCD is launching their interactive website in January to enable all who wish to follow or participate in their planning process.

#### Future Topics

- 4-way stops
- Walk Boundary Subcommittee (start in January)
- Review/reassess SDOT intersection scoring criteria (January)
- Committee By-laws needed (January)
- Boren STEM K-8 parking lot, Caitlin Huertas (January)
- Seattle's climate change planning for transportation (February?)
- Annual calendar lookahead
- Bus Stop Paddle Funds through Pandemic (March?)

**Next Meeting date: January 21, 2022**