

# Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee

## Meeting held online

### May 8, 2020 Minutes

#### STSC Attendees

- ✓ Richard Staudt (SPS)
- ✓ MaryEllen Russell, Chair (parent volunteer)
- ✓ Margaret McCauley (pedestrian safety advocate)  
Kevin O'Neill (SPD)
- ✓ Jennie Meulenberg (SDOT, corridors and Ped transportation planner)
- ✓ Marilyn Firman (citizen-at-large)
- ✓ Lee Bruch (citizen-at-large)
- ✓ Yvonne Carpenter (SPS transportation crossing guard manager)
- ✓ Charlie Simpson (bicycle advocate)  
Danny Bell  
Dani Hurula, KC Metro

#### Other Presenters/Public

#### Public Comment

No public comment.

#### Last Month's Minutes

Jennie helped Mary Ellen get connected with Ashley Rhead to find out what is happening on 90<sup>th</sup> near Sacajawea. SDOT is working to install cost effective walkway in this area to improve pedestrian safety.

Richard confirmed that pickup sites are still in use for kids who don't get busing. Bus route deliveries started this week. SDOT turned on flashing lights but not cameras. If pickup sites stop being used Richard will let Jennie & SDOT know.

Jennie talked to Ashley Rhead and Brian Dougherty about the possibility of moving the mode choice survey to the fall and both were interested in considering this. Ashley's concern is that it can be hard to get it done in early fall, would want to target October (which is walking month). Both are open to the idea and trying to figure out the best time to get accurate data. Jennie will touch base with Brian in August to see what the school situation will look like.

Richard said SPS has been having a lot of discussions about what school will look like in the fall. The discussions have included split-shifts, partial learn from home, etc. A normal school schedule likely won't resume. Marilyn suggested the last week of September would be a good target. Bus ridership count is in early October, SPS transportation is concerned about getting as many people on the buses on that day as possible to maximize state funding.

Richard talked to transportation department about hiring the Safe Routes to School Coordinator. They said they need to get the director post filled first. The director position has been posted, closes May 24<sup>th</sup>. Lee asked whether they could advertise the SRTS coordinator while the director is advertised.

Jennie said that the City has a hiring freeze until September. Her understanding is that the SRTS coordinator would be subject to that freeze as well. Brian said that the City's finance team's position is that this position is subject to the hiring freeze.

**ACTION\_**Jennie will confirm whether or not the hiring freeze applies to the SRTS coordinator position.

**ACTION\_**Lee will draft a letter supporting funding SRTS when things start up again to be sent to Mayor's office.

Margaret confirmed that state law determines the school zone camera fine structure.

**ACTION\_**Margaret will draft a letter to send to the state safe routes to school advisory board about the school zone camera fine structure.

Mary Ellen reviewed the Ped & Bike masterplans to see how much they are specifically planning for schools. Both do respond to schools, especially the pedestrian master plan.

**ACTION\_**Mary Ellen will reach out to pedestrian advisory board to ask them to include issues around changing traffic patterns for renovated/newly built schools in the pedestrian master plan.

Polly Membrino (sat in on Feb meeting), SDOT liaison to ped board has been talking to bike board around similar issues, working with DON to get contacts for schools outreach. Jennie will let her know that this board would be a good contact point.

**ACTION\_**Jennie will put Richard and Polly Membrino in touch to find contacts at SPS for DON outreach.

**ACTION\_**Mary Ellen will reach out to Holly Goddard at SDCI about the mid-block crossing issue at Viewlands Elementary.

Last month's meeting minutes were approved.

### **SDOT Update:**

#### ***Crosswalk warrant rule status***

The rule change is currently with the City's law department. After that it would go to Sam Zimbabwe. It's still moving, no need to call anyone about it right now.

Ashley is out on leave now, Brian and Jennie are SDOT contact points while she is out.

### **West Seattle Bridge Closure**

Due to West Seattle Bridge closure traffic on Holden & Roxbury is very heavy which is impacting walk areas around several schools.

Jennie knows of several SRTS project that are teed up for this area. Richard would like to know what alternative routes SDOT is encouraging people to take to get around the closure.

**ACTION\_**Jennie will send Richard info about routing for West Seattle Bridge traffic. Richard will review and assess where traffic changes will impact school walk areas.

SDOT's current estimate is that earliest possible re-opening of West Seattle bridge is 2022.

### **Annual Report Distribution**

Tonya Ricks Sterr contributed much-needed graphic design expertise and the report looks very attractive.

The committee has a slot to present the report to the school board in June.

SDOT could do a blog post about the report.

To post it on SPS website the final PDF would need to be ADA accessible.

**ACTION\_**Margaret and Mary Ellen will coordinate with Richard to make the final PDF ADA accessible. Richard needs to go into the office to do this, he will be there early next week.

**ACTION\_**When the annual report is distributed Jennie will coordinate an SDOT blog post.

Jennie reached out to SDIT's council liaison. Right now they are only putting on formal legislation related briefings, but they could do a briefing to CM Pederson now. Council is hoping to get the reappointments done in June. When we do the reappointments we could talk a little about what the committee does and submit the report.

The plan will be to submit the report during reappointments and then request an opportunity for a full briefing.

**ACTION\_**Jennie will find out whether reappointment meeting will be in person and what the setup would look like and ask for a call-in option for those who want it.

The council Transportation and Utilities Committee is not meeting in May.

The STSC will send the annual report to Fred Podesta before wider distribution.

### **Strategy session to make progress during pandemic**

With schools closed and SDOT's budget cut and the SRTS coordinator in limbo we need to figure out a way to continue being productive.

Margaret reached out to a national safe routes to school group to look for established design standards/best practices for school site design.

Richard says that he knows the SPS design teams reference national best practices for interior school design. He thinks if there were a national best practices manual for site design he expects that they would be interested in referencing it.

Mary Ellen asked whether SPS capital projects is feeling like the committee is causing problems. Richard said he thought they weren't feeling too put upon although Brian Fabella was frustrated at having been out of the loop when feedback was given on Viewlands. SPS capital projects has been coming to Richard to get on the schedule earlier, which allows the committee to provide more productive input.

Lee would like to see STSC involved earlier in the process than we were for Viewlands, like when site design alternatives were still being considered.

Marilyn said we should create a set of guidelines that we could give to the design team, which is exactly the type of document that Margaret is suggesting.

Margaret said that the national safe routes to school group does not have a standards document. They pointed her to one that Boston made that is often referenced by other school districts.

The STSC will develop a list of best practices for Seattle and run it by SPS capital projects. Items that we would want included:

Primary school entrances should be preferentially located on a corner. If this isn't feasible there needs to be a mid-block crossing with a light in front of the entrance.

Pedestrian routes should not be crossed by car traffic (as when parking lot/ drop-off entrances cross main ped route).

New car drop-off routes for general population students should not be introduced where they do not currently exist. The best solution for parent drop-offs are to encourage a dispersed traffic parents where parents park in the neighborhood and walk the final block with their kids.

Special Education drop-off should be located on site. Where feasible this should be a separate area from general loading to prevent conflicts with rambunctious kids and medically fragile students.

Generally parent pickup should be in a separate area from bus loading.

Preschool drop-off should be accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists, and pedestrian routes should be separate from car routes.

Bicycle access should be convenient. Bike routes should not cross service paths or playgrounds. Parking should be located near the main student entrance, under cover, and where there will be eyes on it during the day. If possible bike parking should be located inside the school fence perimeter so that there is less need for bike locks for young children.

**ACTION\_** Mary Ellen will compile list and send to committee for review and input prior to sending to SPS capital projects for review.

### **Crossing guard update**

Guards aren't working now. Some guards have been lost. Lost 1 guard at Bailey Gatzert at 12<sup>th</sup> & Yesler, lost 1 guard at Broadview Thompson, lost 1 at Madrona, 1 at Loyal Heights, 1 at Olympic View, 1 at Thornton Creek, and 1 at Washington Middle school.

1 new guard was trained 2 weeks before schools were closed.

Total 5 guards lost. 1 of them did 2 schools. 1 new guard trained, 3 moved

39 full positions open, 6 ½ day position open. Currently there are 70 guards and 4 substitutes.

Yvonne had applicants that were scheduled for fingerprinting, but fingerprinting is closed.

Yvonne would like to reach out to the news again this summer. Putting the open positions on the news really helped last year.

Crossing guards are not currently being paid by SPS. SPS is not paying hourly employees during pandemic. SPS did allow them to use their paid sick leave. Guards were allowed to sign up for unemployment, but generally didn't have enough hours to qualify.

The majority of the guards are retired and on social security, so Yvonne is hopeful that many of them will be back in the fall.

### **Next Meeting:**

May 12th. Meetings through school closure will be via skype. Stanford center will still be closed to most users through June 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Future Topics:**

- Follow up on coordination meeting w/ SDOT, SDCI, Schools Capital Projects to avoid future box truck turnarounds on school property (TBD – once in-person meetings are held again)
- Circulation Plan Reviews
- Annual Report
- Northgate contractor circulation (August or September)
- Flip Your Trip presentations at additional schools (August)
- Mode choice survey schedule (August)
- West Seattle Bridge closure & walk routes (June)

**Additional Meetings/Items**

- Schedule Walk Boundary Subcommittee – need to reschedule once in-person meetings are held again