

# Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee

## Meeting held online

### May 20, 2022, Minutes

#### SSTSC Attendees

- X Richard Staudt (SPS)
- X Lee Bruch
- X Mary Ellen Russell, Chair (parent volunteer)
- X Margaret McCauley (pedestrian safety advocate)
- X Marilyn Firman (citizen-at-large)
- X Yvonne Carpenter (SPS transportation crossing guard manager)
- X Robin Schwartz
- X Robbie Frankel (Metro Representative)
- X Ashley Rhead (SDOT host)
- X Noa Guter (new member from Adams Elementary)

#### Other attendees

Sara Colling (Safe Routes to School Coordinator)  
Mathew Campbell: SDOT Intern  
Mai Ketcherside: Concerned Parent  
Shelly Kirby: SPS  
Elizabeth Wooten (SDOT)  
Mathew Crane (SDOT)  
Iona MacKenzie (Project Manager SDOT)  
Ryan Packer (Urbanist Reporter)  
Laurence Idoz PPR  
Clara Cantor  
Vivian Song Maritz (School Board Member)

#### Last Month's Minutes and Action Item Updates:

1. Ashley checked on the revised all-way-stop policy which is being developed specifically for schools. They are approving a memo for an evaluated school and when that is completed it will be used for the policy. **Action: Ashley** will update us in July or August when all-way stop policy revision is complete.
2. 14<sup>th</sup> and Henderson: **Action: Robin** will recontact David Shaw.
3. Margaret completed letter supporting WSDOT To USDOT and it was sent. Margaret has completed letter to Mayor and Deputy Mayor requesting a police member for our committee. Ashley sent letter.
4. Robbie analyzed the turn into/out of the VA hospital not using the slip. It is impossible with either the small or large bus. The buses would need to swing into either one or both oncoming lanes. Discussion followed. Reconfiguring the corner is very expensive. It was suggested that the slip lane

could be painted red and be bus and freight only. Margaret asked whose land is it and what agreements are needed. The map showed us there is about 1 foot of the slip corner where the right of way ends. Richard suggested moving the crosswalk further back from merged point would help. **Action: Margaret** will contact the VA about their willingness to cooperate and what agreements are needed and then **Ashley** will go to SDOT after Margaret talks with VA. **Action: Ashley** will review if the turning radius is safe for cars as-is.

5. Ashley reported on the intersections by Denny International Middle School (25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> and Thistle). A curb ramp cannot be funded but a crosswalk and signage will be installed probably by fall. **Action: Ashley** will keep us updated.
6. **Action: Jennie's replacement** will work on by-laws when hired.

**Minutes Approved:** Margaret moved, and Mary Ellen seconded. All were in favor.

**Crossing Guard Update:**

7. Yvonne reported that a person was added to Broadway-Thompson on Greenwood and 130<sup>th</sup> (consisting of combining part-time people). A person is in the fingerprinting stage at Leschi. Loyal Heights has a very interested person beginning the hiring process, in response to the posted posters. **Action: Mary Ellen** will update crossing guard map.

**Safe Routes to School Action Plan:**

Ashley presented the 2021-2025 Safe Routes to School Plan explaining the document cited below.  
[https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/SRTS/2021\\_2025\\_SRTS\\_ActionPlan.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/SRTS/2021_2025_SRTS_ActionPlan.pdf)  
[https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/SRTS/2021\\_2025\\_SRTS\\_ActionPlan.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/SRTS/2021_2025_SRTS_ActionPlan.pdf) New to us was the plan to increase planting of street trees. This was already done at MLK. They have used publicly available heat data to guide their efforts. In some areas they will install planter strips and plant trees where there is currently gravel. Richard pointed out that the pamphlets had a picture of students holding stop signs illegally. **Action: Ashley** will take photo of kids holding stop signs out of action plan presentation.

Racial equity survey discovered that many children do not have adequate gear to bike or walk to school. To increase access SDOT's mini-grant program is being used to buy outdoor gear for low-income kids.

They are trying to expand the routes with the highest diversity using the Neighborhood Greenway Program to create safe routes with limited traffic. Mary Ellen suggested connecting with SPU. Mary Ellen has worked with them on a project which would mesh well. **Action: Ashley** will connect with Summer Johnson SPU contact person to see about cooperation.

Richard has received a donation of Police bikes from the Port of Seattle. Bike Works has agreed to check them out before they are given to students.

Mai Ketcherside said some bus stops are not safe and the problem has gotten worse after the pandemic closure. **Action: Richard** will let Transportation know there is a problem with unsafe bus stops, specifically for TOPS, and ask how bus stop locations are decided from a safety standpoint.

**Vision Zero for Youth Award for 2022** will be given to Seattle and Seattle City Schools. One award is given annually to a national and to an international entity. We have been making strides for Vision Zero Youth. Cited were reduced speed limits in the city, school streets, our racial equity survey and work, and the Let's Go Program where we are working on walking and biking safely.

**Route 48 Transit Plus Multimodal Corridor project (TPMC)** Elizabeth Wooten, Mathew Crane and Iona MacKenzie presented the plan which is online at SDOT.

The project aims to improve the connection between Rainier Ave. at McClellan for 6.5 miles to the University District, 15<sup>th</sup>Ave NE, for all patrons; cars, bikes, rollers, and walkers.

The ridership pre-pandemic was nearly 6000 per day, dropped precipitously and has returned to about 60% of the pre-pandemic average. Rainier Ave to Madison is completed with multiple street and Roadway improvements. The completion date for the rest will be at the end of 2023. \$2, 638,000 has been approved. There will be signal upgrades. Transit signal is a priority but with the walking, rolling times not changed. The Boyer Ave interchange where there is a history of crashes will be upgraded. The project is beginning the public comment period.

Richard had a question about the signal for bikes on 23<sup>rd</sup> crossing I 90 and near Rainier High School. Could those signals be extended?

Mary Ellen said this goes near multiple schools. Have the impacts been assessed? Margaret discussed Thurgood Marshall Elementary. Could King Street be opened to Washington Middle School.?

Ryan Packer from the Urbanist asked about a bus lane south of Boyer. At one point a plan included a bus only southbound lane but that was shelved. Will that be included.

Yvonne was asked about crossing guard issues, but she said there were none she could see.

Elizabeth Wooten said the questions were appreciated. The purpose of the presentation was to get input.

### **Sara Colling:**

She visited Lafayette Elementary School and Pathfinder Elementary this morning. There were 75 bikers at Lafayette and 30 at Pathfinder.

Sara is going to focus on 3 priority schools for next year and add 10 each year after that. Priority schools are Emerson, Wing Luke, Rainier View Elementary. Main criteria was equity as generally defined by SPS, also whether schools have a lot of students within 1-mile walk zone, and whether school has anything going on. Wing Luke has new sidewalk when it opens, the goal is to build on that. Sara has mostly been in conversation with Ashley Rhead at SDOT & Ashley Davies at SPS. Specific geographic or traffic concerns were not considered. Mary Ellen brought up issues like traffic & crime along Aurora that make it hard to keep crossing guard positions filled, students assaulted on the street in front of Bailey Gatzert & high rates of tardiness even though students are close to the school because parents don't think it's

safe for kids to walk on their own. SPS needs to consider traffic/street safety issues when looking at prioritizing transportation programs, general school equity tiers do not capture this lens.

Mary Ellen will connect with Sara about program at Bailey Gatzert, also concerns about Aurora crossing for Robert Eaglestaff. Richard brought up issues for crossing arterial at Rising Star, there's a big opportunity to get a lot of kids out of cars who are currently riding a short distance due to dangerous crossing. Richard commented that over 200 kids at Rising Star Elementary need a walking school bus to get to school.

School Pool is getting set up. It will start at a couple of schools. Roxhill Elementary has interest. May try with one of the priority schools. The coordination between SPS and Metro is going ok. Metro really wants it to work, there are logistical hoops on both sides. Robbie offered to be available to poke Metro folks internally if needed. Robbie also offered to make key introduction for Metro's school outreach program. Once School Pool is up and running there will be a push to get families to sign up for it. That might be an opportunity for STSC to help spread the word.

Sara says if we know about bike rodeos, walk to school day in October, pass that info to her. Also she would appreciate photos of kids walking and biking to school. Rules around privacy on school property make it hard for her to get photos.

Mary Ellen asked about SPS and Metro coordination. There are logistical hoops on both sides. Robbie said state-wide fares are free for youth under 18. Metro is working on logistics to execute. **Action:** Robbie will facilitate Sara coordinating with Christine Edens (?) at Metro.

**Action; Committee Members:** Sara asked for pictures of kids riding and walking to school.

Sara will have July until mid-August off.

**Future Meetings:** The City Meeting rooms are available for in-person meetings this summer and the Stanford Center will be open for us in the fall if Covid conditions remain the same. Tentatively we will begin combined in-person and Zoom meetings next month. Mary Ellen says Zoom meetings have increased our visitor's ability to attend.

#### **Service Standards for Buses:**

Mary Ellen asked Vivian Song Maritz, School Board Member, about the service standards for the new bus contracts. Questions from the group included:

- Families of kids with IEP
- Inclusive practices
- Bus stop locations (safety issues)
- Computer programming and laptops for drivers
- Crime related traffic safety issues
- Chronic extreme tardiness due to transport
- Possible van fleet – Vans instead of large buses 50% full or less.
- Crossing guards
- Other modes of transportation

Reimbursement by the state for transportation depends on how the contract is written. If more is included, then the probability of reimbursement increases.

**Future Topics:**

- Committee bylaws (when Jennie's replacement is hired)
- Bus Stop Paddle Funds through pandemic
- Zero Youth Fare Initiative (Jeanne Suleiman, June 9:00-9:15)
- SDOT Chief Equity Officer Emery (June 17<sup>th</sup>, 8:30-8:50)

**Next Meeting date June 17th**