

Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee

Meeting held online and at City Hall

8-19-2022, 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)
Robin Schwartz
- X Robbie Frankel (Metro Representative)
- X Ashley Rhead (SDOT host)
- X Noa Guter
- X Gary Davenport SPD Liaison
- X Sara Colling, Routes to School Coordinator

Other attendees

Shelley Kerby, SPS risk management
Branin Burdette
Jackson Keenan-Koch, SDOT
Melody Berry, SIP Review Team

Last Month's Minutes and Action Item Updates:

1. 14th and Henderson: **Continued Action:** Robin will recontact David Shaw. Robin can't access 14th and Henderson data. Robin will send link to Mary Ellen who will ask contacts for help accessing & sorting data.
2. On VA **Continued Action:** Margaret and Richard are planning to meet with them. Margaret has been calling but not getting a response. If the VA is supportive of the need for pedestrian improvements than **SDOT** (Ashley?) can begin taking a more comprehensive look at slip lanes & prioritize improvements.
3. The crossing guard map has been updated. **ACTION:** Mary Ellen will update it monthly.
4. Changing bus stop locations. Mai Ketcherside has sent concerns about bus stop issues at TOPS to Richard, who has forwarded them to transportation. SPS struggles to respond to street crime issues at bus stops. They do relocate stops to locations they feel are safer. Mai asked for more clarity on reporting mechanism.

5. Crossing Guard Communications. Mary Ellen has arranged for notices in the in the newsletters of SPED PTSA and PTSA Council. Robbie is including it in back-to-school messaging from Metro. Ashley has arranged for it in SDOT postings.
6. Ashley attempted to contact Parking Enforcement and got no response. Gary said he regularly contacted them. **Action: Gary and Ashley** will coordinate to get in touch with SDOT Parking Enforcement.
7. John Rogers Elementary Planning told Richard they have consulted with us twice and did not think it would help them to present again. September consultation is cancelled. **Action: Richard** will advise us of any newly pending constructions in time to schedule early. Richard said now they come to him early to schedule with us.

August Minutes Approved

Richard motioned that the June minutes be approved, and Margaret seconded. Minutes were approved with no corrections.

SPD Traffic Coordination Report:

Gary asked about summer school coordination. For example, he was concerned about heavy traffic flow around Broadway-Thompson at 130th and Greenwood during drop off and pick up hours. There were no functioning lights or traffic beacons. Discussion followed. The current policy is to have no special lights for summer school. Richard said even he cannot get a schedule of which schools will be operating until about a week before the summer school begins. Ashley said it takes about a month to reprogram all the lights. There would need to be policy change and lead time for the lights to be programmed for the summer times. Ashley also felt that they needed to publicize a change such as this. Richard said they did know most of the schools holding summer school as early as April. **Action: Marilyn and Noa** will put it in the calendar to revisit this in the spring.

The speed zone cameras have not been added to our reports in two years (since we lost Kevin our former police representative). **Action: Gary** will keep track and bring the information to the committee. SPD and SDOT worked together to decide where cameras should be located. SDOT takes the lead in identifying the locations for new speed zone cameras. SDOT works with SPD and their vendor to move it forward. SDOT looks at speeds & volumes of drivers using the black tubes put across the road.

Gary's email address is: gary.davenport@seattle.gov

Annual Calendar:

The calendar has not been updated since before the pandemic. **Action: Marilyn and Noa** will form a subcommittee to update the calendar. Mary Ellen suggested moving the Annual Report to the School Board and to the City in August. This seems to be a convenient time for them to hear the report.

Crossing Guards: Yvonne's Final Report:

Yvonne has accepted a job Lake Stevens/Granite Falls to be Assistant Transportation Coordinator, doing all the Transportation at Granite Falls. She will be sorely missed. She reported Leschi lost both guards, BF Day, Sacajawea, and S. Shore Dunlap all lost a crossing Guard. She is training three new guards Saturday who will be at Leschi (31st & Yesler), Loyal Heights and Whittier (8th and 75th). She will be moving the crossing guard at View Ridge to the 75th location as requested by parents and will put the next guard at the 70th location.

Yvonne will be available for questions and is trying to help on Fridays in Seattle during the transition to the new person in her position. She is working 4/10's in Granite Falls.

SDOT UPDATE:

Jackson Keenan-Koch: There is a misunderstanding about the Mercer Middle School Project. The statement in the Annual Report that SDOT required the school to give up property for the street is incorrect. This was pulled from the presentation that SPS's design team made to the STSC. STSC needs to circle back with the design team to understand where the miscommunication is happening. There are portions of the right of way dedicated to an 8-foot sidewalk and curb. This narrows the roadway by 1 ½ feet. Jackson says Seattle Public Schools initially suggested the pull out on school property for parent drop off. It is not required by SDOT. Their priority is a narrow roadway and wide sidewalk. If SPS wants to remove pullout it is ok with SDOT. Having the street one-way Northbound is being considered and will probably need to be one-way only during school hours.

Much discussion followed with more detailed explanation with plans. Ideas included fence between park and VA so that would be a safe path. Would require park cooperation. School Street an idea and there were many more. Richard said they had 6 meetings to talk about alternatives and ended with this as a best of bad alternatives. They are 60 % along and don't want to change now. That was supported by the group.

Jackson says that he's happy to come talk to the committee in the future. STSC will happily take him up on that offer!

Melody Berry: Melody is temporarily overseeing the SIP review team. STSC questions are about emphasizing public benefits, school dollars for school construction vs. other traffic considerations. SIP must enforce federal requirements which are not negotiable. In general, they support street improvements. They consider street improvement development and the land use code. Restoration Rules are from SDOT alone.

Mary Ellen posed two questions from the committee.

1. Early Guidance. STSC has seen early guidance pushing SPS to locate more parking and bus circulation on school sites in order to improve traffic throughput on streets near schools. This early guidance is not always a requirement, but it does have the effect of locking these elements into site designs as design changes are harder to implement later in the process. STSC would like to see SDOT SIP team adopt a policy of formally weighing the public benefit school buildings & playgrounds into its considerations in order to reduce emphasis on traffic alone at the expense of core educational elements. Melody says we need more brainstorming with transportation operations in conversation to look at this, and suggests STSC set up a meeting to talk about

coordination. **Action: Mary Ellen will contact Melody to set up a meeting to talk about SDOT's policies about reviews for schools, look for opportunities to maximize public benefits.**

2. Problems have arisen when SDOT inspectors change street restoration requirements mid-project, typically when there is staff turnover inside SDOT. Leaders have changed requirements that resulted in major change orders with large cost overruns and months-long project delays. Can this be corrected? Ex. Magnolia elementary, initially only three sides of the school required new sidewalk. A new sidewalk on the fourth side was required by the new SDOT inspector even though the three sidewalks were done, the project was near completion and there was no budget for another sidewalk.
1. Melody says this should NOT be happening. SDOT is in process of trying to fix this. Report to Melody if happens again. **Action: Mary Ellen will invite Richard Best, Head of Capital Projects, to meet with Melody.**

Sub- Committee appointed to discuss: **Action: Lee, Mary Ellen with Margaret as alternate.**

Annual Report:

Committee members had reviewed the Report ahead of the meeting. Changes included adding school pool to Sara Colling's duties as it was our number one priority in seeking to get her position. Lee suggested saying the Seattle Land Use Code is badly out of date. Ashley said it is unclear why we are requesting them to fill in gaps in walking routes to school. She suggested that we add a section in the main body of what specifically is the problem. Free youth transit starts September 1st, add blurb to report.

Motion made by Margaret and seconded by Marilyn to approve the Annual Report pending edits by new subcommittee was approved unanimously. Edit correction for spelling, punctuation can be sent to committee. Report is due to Ashley by August 28th. **Action: Margaret and Mary Ellen** will update and all who can, will join presentation at 9:30 AM September 6th at City Hall to the Transportation Committee of the City Council. Margaret and Mary Ellen presented the Draft to the School Board last night (August 18th) and was asked for copies to give to others.

Departures at Montlake and Alki Elementary Schools:

Traffic Control:

Richard Raised issue of intersection at SW Hines St & 47th SW. There is poor visibility due to grade, intersection is totally uncontrolled, there have been crashes. Neighbors & community are hoping for improvements. Ashley says that SDOT is installing 4-way stops around Madison and this is one of those intersections. Ashley reached out to the principal earlier this week.

Richard got a request for time-restricted one-way at Loyal Heights ES on 25th and 26th. The school could work with their parents to encourage good behavior. Ashley suggests that they can use mini-grant program to apply for funds to buy cones, sandwich boards, and can put cones and sandwich boards out on parking strip.

Future Topics:

- Committee bylaws (when Jennie's replacement is hired)
- Bus Stop Paddle Funds through pandemic –JoLynn Berge, our contact in accounting is leaving.
- New SDOT Director Greg Spotts (October)
- Check back in on Metro Youth Fare program, (September)
- Check in with Gary Davenport
- Home Zones pilots – would someone at SDOT talk about this program, and how it fits with SRTS?

Next Meeting date September 16th, in person