

Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee

Meeting held online and at Room 2765, John Stanford Center

September 16, 2022, Minutes

(There were some difficulties initially with the audio and Lee Bruch was ultimately forced to leave because of hearing difficulties.)

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 Robin Schwartz (parent volunteer)
- X Robbie Frankel (Metro Representative)
- X Ashley Rhead (SDOT host)
- X Noa Guter
Gary Davenport SPD Liaison
- X Sara Colling, Safe Routes to School Coordinator
- X Diane Walsh: SDOT, new SDOT representative

Other attendees

Shelly Kerby, Seattle Schools
Mathew Campbell SDOT Intern
Joe Hebert: SPS Transportation Manager
Rachel Marks, Magnolia Elementary School Teacher

Last Month's Minutes and Action Item Updates:

1. 14th and Henderson: Robin called David Shaw about 14th and Henderson, is waiting for call back.
2. On VA **Continued Action**: Margaret and Richard are planning to meet with them. Margaret has been calling but no one admits to responsibility. She will keep trying. (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 was not updated this month because the information was not available. **ACTION: Mary Ellen** will update it when information is available. **Joe Hebert** will get Mary Ellen the information.
4. Crossing Guard Communications. We are still about 40 crossing guards short. Joe Hebert will begin to look for a replacement to Yvonne next week.

5. **Action: Lee, Mary Ellen with Margaret as alternate**, were appointed as a sub-committee last month. They are to meet with Richard Best and Melody Berry SIP review team to discuss issues regarding early guidance on site design and last-minute changes. These questions were detailed in August minutes. Mary Ellen said that with the Annual Report being due they had to delay until this month.
6. **Marilyn and Noa** will prepare annual calendar for next month.
7. **Ashley** has not had luck contacting with SDOT parking enforcement to make a schools hotspots list. She will circle back with Gary to ask if he has contacts.
8. SIP comments back at Montlake Elementary. 4 crosswalks were recommended (not a requirement) at one intersection because of sidewalks and children walking from all directions. Street Improvements can be made at a school by SPS without SDOT direct approval if a Street Improvement Plan is ongoing. Richard reported that the district tries to direct children to only one crosswalk to save expense and increase safety. Margaret, Mary Ellen, and Marilyn felt given the sidewalks coming from all directions and the way children behave that the 4-way crosswalks recommended were a good idea. New Information to the committee: Speed hump cost about \$7,000.00, curb ramps cost about \$25,000.00. SPD can permit any street improvement in SIP. SDOT has requirements and recommendations, recommendations are not mandatory.

August Minutes Approved

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

Annual Report:

Margaret, Mary Ellen and Noa presented the Annual Report to the Transportation Committee of the City Council. It was well-received. During that meeting CM Strauss gave an update about our recommended code change to eliminate habitual departures, said it is moving ahead for this year to save SPS money by aligning requirements with current reality.

Joe Hebert: new SPS Transportation manager

Joe has public transit background, was at community transit in Everett. Says new bus contract is going well. Have daily check-ins with both providers every day. Joe shared wonderful news that bus drivers are fully staffed, and all routes are running. One of the advantages of having two contractors is that they can assign routes and trips to the other contractor is one is having trouble filling a spot. SPS is flooded with parent calls. One reason is because almost all the staff were on strike with the teachers so all SPS could do was take messages. They are now catching up. Service change times should be ironed out in the first two weeks. Currently, there is a daily check in mid-day to catch problems.

Zum is operating a White Van service. Zum can put drivers who are going through training in vans and provide service. This mitigates staffing issues, lets them staff up faster. Some van drivers have concerns about exiting from bus stops. Joe said he has only been working since Sept. 6th and only got the contracts yesterday, so he hasn't figured out the financials yet. One suggestion from Mary Ellen after

her conversations with SPED-PTSA is that many parents felt their students could ride on the general bus. This would cut costs. Misconduct on the bus could also be monitored by a SPED monitor. If anything on the IEP discusses transportation the district requires the student to have one-on-one transportation. Perhaps talking about the SPED supervisor about changes in IEP's would help. Fewer one-on-one rides would definitely cut costs and it might improve ride enjoyment for some SPED students.

Crossing Guard Report – Joe Hebert:

Mary Ellen asked who do people talk to if they have question about becoming a crossing guard now Yvonne is gone. Joe said call Sheri on the web page or call Him. He will begin working on Yvonne's position next week.

Joe said hourly jobs are not put into the central system even though there are coaching positions on it. Many culinary positions are also unfilled, and some schools have no culinary people at all. Why don't we marry crossing guards with school lunch? He called all crossing guards Tuesday night to alert them to the start of school. The first one he called gave two-week notice. He asked 'why?' and the person wanted more hours of work. He then asked the remainder of crossing guards if they were interested in culinary jobs and got 6 yeses which he referred to the Culinary Supervisor. Joe says the crossing guards are not paid enough.

Sara has talked with Marni Campbell about waiving upfront crossing guard fees, she said she was aware of this issue from her time as principal at Robert Eaglestaff, has already talked to HR about changing this.

There's some difficulty calculating overtime for staff who have more than one hourly role. Some are unionized, some not, makes things complicated but Joe is talking to both HR and head of culinary services to sort it out.

Action: Mary Ellen will send crossing guard map to Joe Hebert, cc Sara Colling.

ACTION: Joe will provide updated list of crossing guard positions filled/unfilled for next meeting.

Metro Report: Robbie Frankel:

Robbie says Metro roll-out of free fares seems to be going well. Metro is implementing 'service change' this Saturday, extending time between buses. Robbie says this is actually formalizing cuts that have de-facto been occurring because of few operators. Next re-adjustment of timing will be in March 2023. There is the ability to make tweaks before then if there are over-crowded buses, say by increasing the bus size of the bus. There are automatic counters on buses so even without ORCA cards riders will be counted. The student ORCA program is funded by the state legislature. All students are funded through age 18. Joe would like to know ridership for their planning.

ACTION: Robbie will help Joe get Metro ridership count info if possible.

Home Zones: Ashley Rhead:

Shauna Walgren is the Home Zone manager. Ashley showed part of the current Rainier View

School area home zone plan. They are putting in drainage infrastructure and asphalt walkways. Parking on the other side of the street often remains unchanged. There can be dedicated pedestrian space added, and existing pavement set aside in part for walking. They can remove parking on one side of the street. In general, this is a comprehensive plan for a school area without sidewalks and improvements on the streets. We ran out of time for Ashley to complete the presentation. Shauna is currently working with the Olympic Hills neighborhood in the information gathering stage. **ACTION: Ashley** will ask Shauna Walgren to meet with us for more details on where the Home Zones projects will head next.

Magnolia Crossing Guards: Rachel Marks (Magnolia Teacher)

Rachel Marks requested a crossing guard for 28th and Magnolia which is a very busy intersection right at the school corner. Locations in front of schools have heavy traffic volumes and typically are considered to be appropriate locations for crossing guards. Mary Ellen moved, and Marilyn seconded and it was approved unanimously. Rachel suggested that the guards from Catherine Blaine Elementary which opens one hour earlier could also cross at Magnolia. She will contact them.

Van Asselt Crossing Guard: Richard said that SDOT has approved Van Asselt Elementary having a parent drop off spot on the median by the school but SDOT is requesting a crossing guard. Van Asselt will be an interim school location used when other schools are being renovated, so will always be more bus & car dependent than permanent school locations. Margaret motioned and Marilyn seconded to approve a guard at this crossing.

Future Topics:

- Committee bylaws
- Bus Stop Paddle Funds through pandemic – ‘How much?’
- New SDOT Director Greg Spotts (October)
- Check back in on Metro Youth Fare program – 10 minutes (October)
- Regular report from Sara Colling
- Walk boundary sub-committee (Sara will join)
- Bylaws – Diane will check with Jennie, coordinate with Noa.
- Check in with Gary Davenport (SPD liaison) regarding hot spots list getting started again
- Home Zones pilots – have Shauna Walgren SDOT talk about this program and how it fits with SRTS?
- Annual calendar

Next Meeting date: October 21st Online Meeting

Next in-person meeting will tentatively be in December.