

# Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee

## Meeting held online

### November 18, 2022 Minutes

#### SSTSC Attendees

- X Richard Staudt (SPS)
- X Lee Bruch (community volunteer)
- 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)  
Noa Guter
- X Gary Davenport SPD Liaison
- X Sara Colling, Safe Routes to School Coordinator
- X Diane Walsh: SDOT representative.

#### Other attendees

Shelly Kerby, Seattle Schools  
Mathew Campbell, SDOT Intern  
Ryan Packer  
Ingrid Golosman, Eaglestaff School parent.  
Marni Campbell, SPS Executive Director of Operations

#### Welcome Marni Campbell, SPS Executive Director of Operations

Marni came to SPS admin from previous role as principal at Robert Eaglestaff Middle School. She let us know that Joe Hebert, the recently hired transportation manager, is gone from SPS and that Yvonne has been rehired to manage crossing guards and upgraded to field staff supervisor. They are looking for a replacement for Joe.

Mary Ellen commented that parents consistently report that the bus routes are going much better this year. Apart from minor issues at the beginning of the school year the buses have been reliable and on time. **Action: Mary Ellen will get Marni** some example comments for the media.

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

1. Sara Colling and Margaret MacCauley have arranged an appointment on November 22 with the VA Hospital Staff to discuss changes for the slip lane between Mercer Middle School and the VA Hospital. **Action: Margaret, Richard, and Sara** will report back in December about the meeting.
2. **ACTION:** Last month, **Lee and Mary Ellen with Margaret** as alternate, were appointed as a sub-committee to meet with Richard Best and Melody Berry (SIP review team) to discuss issues

regarding early guidance on site design and last-minute changes. A meeting is scheduled in early December when a new hire replacement for Melody will be there as well as Melody.

3. **Action: Noa and Marilyn** will present new calendar in December.
4. **Action: Ashley** has scheduled a meeting with parking enforcement to talk about a hot spot list, parking, and other issues. **Gary** agreed to attend. **Diane** will get him information about the time and place of the meeting.
5. Stop Paddle Situation: Marni said that SPS is committed to fund crossing guards regardless of whether stop paddle tickets are interrupted. It was suggested to send a letter to King County Sherriff asking them to continue supporting stop paddle tickets. Another possibility would be to go back to SPD and ask them to take over. Originally SPD had disagreed with SPS about how much staff support would be needed. Now that concrete data on staff support are available it might be easier to negotiate an agreement. **Action: Marni** will reach out to SPD about the possibility of them taking over the work supporting stop paddle tickets.

Richard motioned that the September minutes be approved, and Margaret seconded. Minutes were approved.

#### **Sara Colling: SPS Update**

Crossing guards: none lost. Hiring for Yvonne's position completed. Yvonne is coming back to SPS! Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day happened on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> at Denny Middle. About 18 students participated along with handful of adults. Here's the recap and video for Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day: <https://www.seattleschools.org/news/denny-honor-of-ruby-bridges/>

Richard asked if the crosswalks were in yet on the east side of Denny International School. **ACTION: Diane** will check on crosswalk installation at Denny International.

Sara continues to work intensely with the three schools: Emerson, Dunlap and Wing Luke elementaries. They are now having a drive for warm clothes, boots, and bike locks. Ashley (SDOT) is working on traffic rerouting Wing Luke and a sidewalk project. Kenyon Way South will become one way. Project will finish next year.

#### **Diane Walsh: SDOT Update**

There are currently 35 speed zone cameras in 19 school zones. This year they are doubling to 70. They were turned off during Covid and turned on again in 2021. The numbers went up steeply from before Covid but then came back down. Tickets fund safety improvements around schools.

Councilman Pedersen was behind the push to double the cameras and wanted more equity in distribution of cameras. Councilwoman Morales was particularly concerned that her district, the SE district had a higher number of pedestrian accidents and wanted more cameras in her district. The question was raised if fines could be on a sliding scale rather than a flat rate so first-time violations would be relatively small. The answer is no unless state law is changed.

A discussion ensued about how and why to try and get reports like the ones we had prior Covid (with a lot of work by Mary Ellen) Gary said we are now working with a new company and may not be able to get the information, **Action: Mary Ellen** will send **Gary** an example of the former report and Gary will check if getting that information is possible.

Diane shared SDOT's school speed zone camera report with the committee. SDOT's report does not break out numbers of tickets by location. It doesn't show which locations have higher ticket numbers, or which locations have ticket numbers that stay high over time. **Action: Committee will follow up on ticket data to break out highest ticket locations and locations where ticket numbers do not go down over time.**

Committee Bylaws: Diane Walsh and Noa Guter:

The entire committee reviewed the bylaws in preparation for this meeting. All agreed it was an excellent document. There were a few additions:

Add as duties:

1. Reviewing plans for new and remodeled schools.
2. Reviewing walk maps and boundaries for walk zones.
3. Review and evaluate locations for crossing guards.

Change:

4. The annual retreat to "may" rather than "will" have an annual retreat and leave out "December" leaving us free to choose a more convenient time in the future. The consensus is that the best time for an annual retreat is June.

Clarify:

5. Language for SDOT membership versus liaison so that in the future the voting member could be different from the person acting as liaison.

**Action: Diane** will include changes and send the updated bylaws.

**Action: all committee members** will review revised bylaws and prepare to vote on them next month.

Now that SPS has a Safe Routes to School Coordinator it makes sense for Sara to be one of their voting members. Since Yvonne is frequently pulled away from meetings by other duties it could make sense for Sara to take over her voting position, though the committee still depends on Yvonne to coordinate regarding crossing guards. **Action: Richard and Sara** will talk to Yvonne about whether she or Sara will be the second voting member for SPS.

**Crossing on 90<sup>th</sup> and Aurora going to Robert Eaglestaff Middle School. Ingrid Golosman:**

Ingrid is a parent at Robert Eaglestaff Middle School. She shared concerns about serious, frequent near misses with students crossing Aurora at 90<sup>th</sup>. The first month of school she walked with a group of 6<sup>th</sup> graders to school and observed quite a few near misses from cars turning right. She had to jerk one child back by his jacket to keep him from being hit. There is currently a crossing guard at 92<sup>nd</sup>, but not at 90<sup>th</sup>. She says it is not reasonable to expect middle schoolers coming from the south of 90<sup>th</sup> to go 2 blocks north to 92<sup>nd</sup> to cross and then come back 2 blocks to 90<sup>th</sup> to go to the entrance of Robert Eaglestaff. Aurora crossings are treacherous due to the very high speeds along the corridor. SPS has a hard time keeping crossing guards posted along Aurora. Recently the crossing at 92<sup>nd</sup> has been substantially improved for pedestrians and bikes.

One suggestion was a crossing guard. We are having trouble keeping crossing guards at this intersection. Another suggestion was a NO RIGHT TURN ON RED sign. **Action: Diane** will fast track a request for a NO RIGHT TURN ON RED sign at 90<sup>th</sup> and Aurora. She will contact Ingrid and report the results.

Intersection Scoring Rubric:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1988rNNQzqJli1J44-SCeTBSRISc4wzKzPv0xin8ZMy0/edit#gid=0h S CeTBSRISc4wzKzPv0xin8ZMy0/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1988rNNQzqJli1J44-SCeTBSRISc4wzKzPv0xin8ZMy0/edit#gid=0h%20SCeTBSRISc4wzKzPv0xin8ZMy0/edit#gid=0)

The biggest issue is that reporting just pedestrian collisions as we do now and not all collisions doesn't seem to accurately reflect the dangers.

Other suggested additions are adding:

1. Slip lanes.
2. On and off ramps for freeways nearby. Speeds are significantly higher near freeways.
3. Reductions for the traffic calming improvements
4. Freight (Truck) high use roads.

**Actions:**

1. **Diane** will ask Intern (Matthew) to score several intersections using both rubrics to present at the December Meeting.
2. **Diane** will ask Brad of the Vision Zero group about the weighting of the rubric and if we are capturing everything.
3. **Mary Ellen** will send Diane a list of three/four intersections to score. Suggestions were:
  - a. 14th and Henderson
  - b. 90<sup>th</sup> and Aurora
  - c. Rainier Ave S. intersections.

Richard suggests looking at zone along Rainier where many intersections had been judged ok based on street improvements that had gone in. Sara says that 5 years of data wouldn't capture changes made 2 years ago along Rainier.

At the next meeting we will see the results, with the objective of approving the rubric as revised.

**Action: Sara will ask Marni** about stop paddle funds – whether SPS has data from last school year yet, and ask that this info be shared with committee when it is available.

**Metro Report: Robbie Frankel:**

It is not yet possible to get a report of youth ridership. He did meet two weeks ago with the research team that is working on it.

Robin asked if it was possible to do an instruction program for Middle Schoolers on how to ride the bus and how to take their bikes on the bus. Suggestions included adding this to the traffic playgrounds that are going into elementary school playgrounds. PE teachers are teaching pedestrian and bicycle safety in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade and the program is expanding to 6th, 7th, and 8th. Another suggestion was teaching students how to use a smart phone to get bus routes and times. Robbie said that right now Metro is really focused on starting free youth fare, however they are interested in more educational pieces in future, particularly if SPS can take the lead.

Margaret pointed out that some special ed teachers already have a transit unit. Could this be expanded to be more generally available to middle or high schoolers? **Action - Sara** is going to ask around about whether there's a way to incorporate transit education into traffic playgrounds. Traffic playgrounds will eventually be located at every school in order to support bike education module in PE. Robbie says Metro would be interested in supporting PE teachers in adding transit component. Sara mentions that kids need help practicing putting their bikes on the bus rack.

School Board Director Song Maritz wants to talk to Robbie about optimizing routes to help get kids to & from school conveniently. Right now most routes are oriented around commuters downtown or to the university. The committee has heard from parents that many schools are not well served by metro routes. The routes don't go close enough to the schools, or don't run at the right times. Does Metro need more funds to increase routes serving schools?

Robbie says current challenge is drivers more than funding. They are struggling to keep existing route frequency because they can't get drivers. Also points out that SDOT does fund some routes, and could opt to direct those funds toward supporting schools.

**Future Topics:**

- Committee bylaws (continued)
- New SDOT Director Greg Spotts (December)
- Regular report from Sara Colling
- Annual retreat: plan for June

**Next meeting will in person on December 16th.** Location to be Room 370 at City Hall as sound system at John Stanford meeting rooms is not adequate for large meetings to also use Webex for those who cannot attend.