

Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee
Meeting held at City Hall, 600 4th Ave, Room 370
And Online
March 17, 2023

SSTSC Members (X = present)

- X Lee Bruch, community volunteer
- X Mary Ellen Russell, parent volunteer
- X Margaret McCauley, pedestrian safety advocate and secretary
- X Marilyn Firman, citizen-at-large
- X Robin Schwartz, parent volunteer
- Robbie Frankel, Metro Representative
- X Noa Guter, Chair, parent volunteer
- Gary Davenport, SPD Liaison
- X Yvonne Carpenter, SPS field staff supervisor, crossing guard supervisor.
- X Diane Walsh, SDOT Representative
- X Sara Colling, SPS Representative, Safe Routes to School Coordinator

Other attendees

Becky Edmonds (Vision Zero Review Team Member SDOT)
Steven Richard (SPS)
Marni Campbell (SPS Executive Director of Operations)
Gregg Spotts (SDOT Director)
Jim Curtain (Vision Zero Team Member SDOT)
Vivian Song Maritz (School Board Member)

Richard Staudt had to resign as the representative of SPS due to department downsizing. The new SPS voting representative is Sara Colling.

Vision Zero Update: Gregg Spotts, Jim Curtain and Becky Edmonds

SDOT Director Gregg Spotts said his number one priority for everything SDOT does is safety. He is trying to change the orientation of the entire organization to focus on safety in an organized, timely and effective structure. To this end, he appointed two staff members including Becky Edmonds to review the Vision Zero process.

Jim Curtain said that although the focus has been on safety, since at least 2015 there have been over 1400 people severely injured this year and as of this morning 200 people killed. The street safety philosophy has changed since 2015 when Jim came aboard, not only here but world-wide. It has gone from E. E. E. (Engineer, Educate, Enforce) to Safe Systems. Safe Systems operates under the assumption people will make mistakes and such things as safer speeds and safer street structures need to be built into overall planning.

Becky Edmonds said that SDOT has received a grant of about \$25 million for Safe Streets for All. They have about \$50 million to work on Aurora with the State Highway system element. They have completed a streets safety checklist. SDOT has permission to reduce speed and drivers' convenience to improve safety. Automated Enforcement has proven effective and will be expanded if they are able to make it equitable. This is especially significant with the shortage of police to enforce laws. They are planning to strengthen SDOT's customer service process so reports of dangerous street issues can be processed more quickly and effectively.

For complete information go to seattle.gov/transportation/vision-zero-review.

Gregg Spotts said the organization structure currently has each project siloed. He is working on organizing the cooperation between projects with safety in mind. Venu Nemani has been elevated in the organization chart. He will continue as City Traffic Engineer but also be responsible for safety. Gregg believes Venu Nemani to be the most safety-oriented, progressive city engineer in the country. There is now little discretion now to move money between programs. They must and will finish strong on this current levy with mostly the current structure. With the next levy he hopes to put cooperative cultural changes into the financial structure.

Questions:

Sara Colling asked about arterial streets. One-way streets are safer.

Margaret was concerned about the Dearborn and Rainier Crossing

Red Light Cameras reduce the right angle crashes 45% and collisions with pedestrians 33%.

Lee asked how the distribution of the \$25 million will be decided. Gregg said public input went into the grant process. They are trying new ways of outreach to help planning. For instance a group of Cambodian elders was taken on a field trip with an interpreter to get their input and also to educate them about what was available in transportation

Public Comment:

There was none

Last Month's Minutes and Action Item Update:

1. Meeting with VA: Sara and Margaret will continue to reach out. If there is any progress, they will report back.
2. Mary Ellen, Marni and Lee's meeting with the SIP/Capital Progress meeting was postponed until next month. They will iron out coordination issues.
3. Stop paddle tickets are still not being issued. (See later discussion)
4. Diane brought Name Tags. Thank you, Diane.
5. Diane said the Seattle Transportation Plan will come out this summer.
6. Noa updated the calendar and distributed it.

7. **Action: Diane** will schedule a walking tour at Concord and John Stanford Elementary schools.
8. **Action: Steven** will schedule with Paula about meeting for the Walk Boundary Committee. They need for two screens if done by Webex or Zoom.
9. Richard Staudt has scheduled and coordinated with buildings planning construction. Who will do this now? **Action: Steven** will research Capital Projects that are in the design process for next meeting.

A correction was made to the minutes to delete the last sentence in South Seattle Safety Issues which was incorrect. Margaret motioned to accept the minutes as corrected and Mary Ellen seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Equity Metric and Walk Boundary Process Update:

Mary Ellen, Sara, Ashley, Marni and Steven will be on this committee. Richard Staudt will be greatly missed. It is currently not clear how equity is overlaid, as a standalone criterion or woven into all criteria as typically are more danger zones in low income and racial equity concern areas. They have planned a test case using the new metric with 3 schools in different zones to see if they get different results.

SPS Update: Sara Colling

Wing Luke had a Valentine’s Day Walking day with 35 kids. More are committed and Wing Luke will have a walking Wednesday’s the rest of this school year. Walking to the school is expected to be easier next year when a new sidewalk currently under construction is finished.

Bike to School Month is in May. The Cascade Bike Club is contacted to help. May 3rd is National Bike and Roll Day this year. Sara is trying to make it more equitable and thinks to have scoring in three regions. The problem is areas where bikes are not affordable. Peace Pelaton is a new organization that promotes getting people-of-color in Seattle biking. Sara will try to work with Peace Pelaton next year to get bikes for kids in the Rainier Beach Schools.

Sara has packets for Bike to School. It is best for Volunteers to ease burden of school staff by leading this drive. Parents can get word out to staff. The parent underground is already talking about it. Sara has templates for flyers to school so they can tailor their own templates.

Crossing Guard Update: Yvonne Carpenter

A crossing guard at 14th and Hill Street passed away. The crossing guard from 15th and Hill is now covering that intersection leaving 15th and Hill empty. There are three people in the process of training right now, one will be to Kimball Elementary when trained.

May Day, Monday May 1st is Stop-Paddle Day nationally. Yvonne is waiting for the paperwork to be sent.

Benchmark Progress:

Noa would like some method to determine if we are successful as a committee. Also, this aligns with preparing for the Annual Report. Members brainstormed. This year we have systemized

our administrative infrastructure with the prodding of SDOT. Issues we are currently concerned about are stop-paddle funding/operation, and transportation funding especially for SPED children.

We have been thrilled with the improvements in busing with the two Bus Companies. Zoom has the computer system in place we spent so much energy advocating for last year and First Student will have one soon. First Student has been handicapped by following strict district guidelines. Zoom simply thought being hired meant their computer system (way of doing business) was approved. Parents love it, so the district is fast-tracking the process for First Student. The legal components are still in the works for both companies.

We continue advocating for new rules to eliminate the need for so many expensive departures due to rules requiring excess parking when schools are constructed. Nathan Torgelson, Director at Seattle Department of Construction, and Inspections has been working on code changes so a solution is hopefully in the works.

We are currently working on the Walk Boundary Review.

Possibly tracking the number of crossing guards and crossing guard vacancies would be a benchmark.

We are the intersection of so many agencies. Our goal is collaboration which is hard to measure. Not having strict measurements in place gives us room to take on issues as they arise.

The count day will help us know how we are doing as a city. We will know the number of students and the number of schools participating. Mary Ellen needs the speed zone camera tickets from last year. This was a valuable tool for us in the past to know where to focus our attention. Currently Broadview-Thompson and Bailey-Gatzert we think have high speed risks.

No Right Turn on Red:

Marilyn motioned and Margaret seconded that we send a letter to the advocating No Right Turn on Red. Discussion followed since we were overtime, we tabled the motion until the next meeting.

Future Topics:

- **Finish Red Light discussion**
- **Plan June Retreat**

Next Meeting: April 21st

Primarily Online but Diane will be at City Hall if anyone wants to come in person.