

Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee
Meeting held at City Hall, 600 4th Ave, Room 370
And Online
December 15, 2023

SSTSC Members (X = present)

X Mary Ellen Russell
X Margaret McCauley
X Marilyn Firman
X Robbie Frankel (Metro King County)
X Noa Guter (chair)
X Gary Davenport (SPD)
X Yvonne Carpenter (SPS)
X Diane Walsh (SDOT)
X Brooke Nelson (SPS)
X Ryan Baum
X Kelsey Rote

Other attendees

Marni Campbell (SPS)
Fred Young (SDOT)
Sara Colling (SDOT)
Steven Richard (SPS Director of Transportation)
Jeremy Cole
David Kroman

Public Comments

none

Last Month Minutes and Action update items

1. Roxhill Elementary School: Sara checked with the Healthy Streets Program staff and hasn't heard back. **Action: Sara will keep checking.**
2. Mary Ellen reported that the Scoring Rubric committee has scheduled a meeting for next month
3. and will schedule meetings quarterly.
4. **Action: Marni will keep working on scheduling the Annual Report before the new School Board.**
5. **Action: Sara and Diane: will check into getting data about sidewalks for next month as part of**
6. **preparing for the annual report.**
7. **Action: Noa will circulate the annual calendar in preparation for approving it next month.**
8. **Action: Mary Ellen will update on what is happening with code changes in January.**
9. **Action: Marilyn and Ryan will reach out to their council members. Margaret has the talking points.**

Mary Ellen moved, and Gary seconded to have the minutes approved with a correction to the spelling of Vivian Song-Maritz.

SPS Update: Brooke Nelson, Yvonne Carpenter, Steven Richard

Brooke is working on deepening partnerships with priority schools. Her goal is to continue and increase awareness with schools and to work with PE teachers on the ALL-KIDS BIKE program. She will follow through with the information provided from the recent Youth Transportation Meeting

discussing walking and biking improvements. Yvonne reported that there have been no losses of crossing guards and one new one added.

Steven reported that this has been the best year for SPS transportation in many years and they only had very few issues. The 50-50 approach with two bus providers gives SPS two recruiting teams and fewer service failures, however, this solution is more expensive as the bus providers charge more per bus because cost efficiencies of scale are lost. They may need to reevaluate next year because of budget tightening.

Mary Ellen noted that she had heard that First Student had begun using an app to track students on the bus. Marni says Zum already has an app where the students check in with their ID cards when they enter and leave the bus. The parents can both track their students and their student's bus. Tracking the bus is effective but tracking the students themselves has proved problematic. Parents can opt in or out of the app if there are privacy concerns.

The switch from SPED busing to regular busing for some students is ongoing and positive. SPED student busing increased when the only students bused after the COVID reopening were IEP students. Many of those students wanted to be on regular buses with their regular ed peers when regular busing restarted, but it is taking a while for the IEP's to be changed. This has not shown up as fewer buses this year as the busing structure is already in place. Fewer SPED students needing special buses will show up next year giving Steven more room to maneuver and hopefully save money. The key has been SPED and transportation working in partnership. The 'least restrictive environment' for the student's benefit is provided.

SDOT Safe Routes To School Annual Report: Sara Colling

Sara shared the annual report. It is excellent and highlights the work SDOT and Safe Routes to School are doing. Our committee particularly appreciated the impact that SPS Safe Routes to School coordinator is having. Thank you, Sara, and Brooke. SDOT is on track to meet all the goals of the five-year plan. For most of the information covered check the SDOT website

https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/SDOT/SRTS/2022_2023_SRTS_Annual_Report.pdf

New information discussed:

1. Standards have changed for speed bumps and speed cushions on arterials from 8% grade to 13% grade.
2. There will be a pilot changing the School Streets at Emerson, Whittier and Genessee Hill elementary schools to Healthy Streets. School Streets operated from 7 AM to 5 PM on school days. Healthy Streets will operate year-round.
3. There was a discussion about Thermal plastic on-street art instead of painted art. It is more expensive but is safer than painted street art because it is not slippery. There was discussion about learning landscapes on Healthy streets as play spaces for children.
4. ALL KIDS BIKE program now in 3rd,4th, and 5th grades will pilot a middle school program. The plan is to have bicycle training in 3rd grade through middle school.
5. Standards for 4-way stops near schools have changed allowing these stops with different standards than general city 4-way stops.

Question: What is the plan for next year? There will be an 'all-way stop bonanza' near schools. Walkway projects continue at Concord Elementary and Louisa Boren Stem K-8. There are plans for 20 to 25 more arterial traffic calming speed cushions. James Baldwin Elementary School has plans in the works for a 12-foot-wide walkway from N. 117th to the N. 130th Link station.

Question: What affects the bike and walking-school-bus permanence? Discussion ensued. The most promising was Dunlap Elementary which has not only parents but community volunteers. The

second positive thing is that now there are experiences in place. When Viewlands Elementary asked for help, Brooke was able to share all the planning experience and expertise learned in the pilot schools, making starting at a new school much easier.

Statewide Speed Management Advisory Cooperative: Margaret McCauley

Gary Davenport has inquired of the union about their views on having less skilled employees issue camera-based tickets. This is a body of work issue. They don't believe this is needed because there has been a significant drop off of missed tickets. One problem (besides Covid) was the West Seattle bridge outage with many tickets issued there. Now that it is repaired the pressure is off. The committee's concern is that we are expecting the workload to more than double with SDOT doubling the school safety cameras and bus paddle tickets becoming a local issue. Marni says her best guess is Bus Paddle stops will be local in September 2024.

Margaret and Brooke went to a statewide Safe Routes to School Conference. Three issues are important to the committee in the upcoming legislative session:

1. State Law funding crossing guards
2. SPED Student transportation funding (and funding for homeless students' transportation)
3. Staff for bus camera issues.

Action: Kelsey will connect with the statewide committee (Washington State Transportation Commission) and see if she can move these issues forward.

Northgate/Meridian Intersection, Outreach Strategies: Robbie Frankel

Students traveling to Ingraham High School transfer at the Northgate/Meridian intersection from bus route 40 to bus route 245. Particularly going to school, this results in large groups of students running across Northgate Way to catch the bus. They must go from the SE corner to the NW corner. If they are even 5 minutes late to class, this can have serious consequences for them. A lengthy discussion ensued with brainstorming about what could be done. Bus stop placement change is not feasible. Scheduling changes are also not feasible as those buses already run very frequently. **Action: Brooke will engage with the Ingraham HS student body to see if they have a workable solution.**