

Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee

Meeting held online

October 15, 2021 Minutes

STSC Attendees

- X Richard Staudt (SPS)
- X Lee Bruch
- X Mary Ellen Russell, Chair (parent volunteer)
- X Margaret McCauley (pedestrian safety advocate)
- X Jennie Meulenberg (SDOT, corridors and Ped transportation planner)
- X Marilyn Firman (citizen-at-large)
- X Yvonne Carpenter (SPS transportation crossing guard manager)
Charlie Simpson (bicycle advocate)
- X Hunter Maltais (SPS Transportation Manager)
Richard Best (SPS Capital Projects)
- X Jeanne Suleiman, KC Metro (customer relationship manager in mobility division)

Other attendees

Dr. Varun Jhaveri, (parent-pediatrician)
David Burgess, SDOT Pedestrian Neighborhood Projects
Ashley Rhead, SDOT

Public Comment

No comment.

Last Month's Minutes

September meeting minutes approved.

ACTION: Peaches Thomas has resigned. **Margaret McCauley** will undertake writing the letter to the City Council members to request Data Collection about crashes be transferred from Seattle Police to SDOT. There is a need for information about street conditions around crashes similar to MASS coalition priorities Data Collection in Portland. **Check in again.**

CONTINUED ACTION: **Richard Staudt** has not been able to inquire about who would/could write a curriculum piece for SDOT, This would be about the mode choice survey that explains how mode choice impacts students and schools. Covid priorities intervene. If **Jennie** could find curriculum at SDOT it is possible that the SPS curriculum people would relatively easily adapt it to Seattle. **Check in again.**

ACTION: Jennie will keep tabs on 4-way stop sat Lawton, Madison, John Hay, and loop in committee this winter as finalized. **Check in again.**

ACTION: **Jennie** reached out to Ashley Rhead on whether school patrol stipend could be funded by SDOT mini-grants or similar program. Mini grants could fund school patrol but not crossing guards.

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Meeting with Councilman Pederson's Office Coordinator, Willa Hevly: Mary Ellen met with Ms Hevly and she reached out to the two councilmembers at large and her District 3 councilperson. We are strongly urging Bus Tablets and Routing Software for Schools and School bus Drivers be included in the upcoming budget. All members should contact their local council person and, if possible, connect with the local schools and others to send letters to the council.

ACTION: **Mary Ellen** will forward letter she has with information she sent to the above with info for us to use.

More on Tablets and Routing Software: Hunter Maltais said at the present time Transportation is unable to know where buses are or what students are on what buses. Also, drivers must follow routes on paper (a real distraction from the already difficult task of driving and supervising students at the same time). Hunter has not even been able to get the data on who is riding. A program, **My Bus Stop**, has built in GPS connectivity and WIFI routing which would really help. It shows point by point routing, and who is riding and where. Parents could even check where their child's bus was and when it would arrive. At the current time we are not able to cover 80 routes, and recently a high needs student was missed and still at school at 6:30 PM.

School Pool: Jeannie Suleimann said it is ok in 5 eastside districts but the Seattle school district still does not allow information about students and families to be given out. Question: Who does the screening of drivers in other districts? Jeannie said it is not Julie Burrell. It must be in the schools or community.

ACTION: **Jeanne** will get more information from Julie.

Safe Route to School Coordinator:

Hunter reports he wants to repost the position but two people have left HR in the last month and he can't get any response. He has 2 qualified applicants, but he needs to have the position posted for 3-4 days so they can apply.

ACTION: **Hunter's** goal is to have this position filled by Thanksgiving and on-board by December 1st. In addition, he is concerned that the Addendum is not signed re the city paying for the position. **Jennie** said she will try to find out whether it is signed.

CONTINUING ACTION: Lincoln Bus Loading No action taken. However, the driveway west to east will only be obstructed for 1st couple of months of the project. Soon the parking lot will be better. Richard will loop Brian Dougherty when he acts.

7th and McGraw: Lee researched the historic attempt to improve this crossing. He contacted Michael Herschenson, community activist in Greenway and historical matters and Mark Ostrow, lead on the initial try. They think it would be worth the effort to try again, and they would be willing to help but not lead the venture. What is needed is someone from the school or PTSA to lead the charge. Lee thinks it would be easy to create a design more attuned to the historic, sensitive nature of the site. This might really help get approval from the Landmark Board.

ACTION: Check back with **Brian**. Follow up to see if there is someone interested in leading?

Crossing Guard update:

Yvonne Carpenter said there was one guard lost at Hazel Wolf. There are new guards at BF Day, Bailey-Gatzert, Concord, Eaglestaff and Cascadia. SPS is up a net 4.5 guards on the month. In addition, there are three fingerprinted applicants waiting for approval from HR.

Yellow Bus Update:

Hunter Maltais reported that First Student may lose as many as 20 to 25 drivers on Monday, who do not have proof of vaccination. Drivers with religious or medical waiver requests have been allowed some delays so, IEP students can get to school. But only until the first of the year. Overall, 142 routes will not have coverage. All SPED routes will be covered, then Interim School Sites, then Schools of Promise. Tier 4 schools will not receive bus service Monday. They are only receiving notification today, hopefully. They will be covered as soon as drivers can be found. There was a request for info about where to find the school tier designations.

Jeannie Suleimann, with Metro said temporary ORCA passes have been sent to Middle Schools but have not yet been given out to students. Hunter said that for the 22-23 school year they hope to have more companies hired for the Seattle schools busing. Ideas also include Metro Vans leased to the district, Zoom Vans, a White Van fleet ...

The biggest problem is finding drivers. There is a driver shortage everywhere. Transportation Dependent Students who have used Yellow Cabs will not be able to do so after Monday.

Transportation's goal is reliable, consistent service. They wish to transition away from alternative service providers. They are exploring options with Metro but that takes time. They hope to start with 10 vehicles and 10 drivers. Richard has been asked about insurance requirements for using Zoom drivers with Metro Vans. Gregory Navarre said that Zoom would be the one that leases the vans, but sees this as a possibility. The goal is to create mini-routes, 6 students per route. To get state funding for this they must have a state qualified driver and are unsure exactly what the requirement is for that in terms of license endorsements.

Stoneway and N. 41st at Hamilton: Dr. Varun Jhaveri: He has witnessed several near misses walking his son to school. This intersection serves 3 schools, Lincoln, Hamilton International Middle School and B. F. Day Elementary School. He would like, a crossing guard, or 20 mile an hour school zone with camera, or Audible Alarms. Many suggestions were made such as parking pulled back for greater visibility. We discussed the point system SDOT has for identifying crossings needing amelioration, and the fact that even if we identified a need for a crossing guard it is hard to hire them. Dr. Jhaveri volunteered to help find a guard if this intersection qualifies.

ACTION: Jennie will investigate a point score and potential physical improvements and we will go from there.

SDOT PMP prioritization process: David Burgess (SDOT) presenter:

Pedestrian Neighborhood projects:

Master Plan created in 2017 for priorities funded by New Seattle Levy Funds. Established priority investment network focused on connections to transit and schools. A map of these priority areas covers

a large portion of the city. First way to narrow scope is prioritize based on ex conditions. Scoring factors are safety, health/equity (including obesity, income, race)/age-friendly (older adult populations, not young people going to school)/urban villages/distance score for off-street projects only (making direct connections such as building stairs at street ends to reduce walking distance). They are currently working on a draft for 2022-2024. We were shown the 9/21 draft. Aurora Ave is listed as a priority. Few improvements have been built here but SDOT is going to do a study this year. There are many challenging issues (as we know) and these include cooperating with WSDOT. who control the curb to curb, while SDOT controls the sidewalks and/ or right of ways. There are also drainage issues. They generally do not talk with schools about project selection but do talk about project engagement. This was a very interesting presentation and can be followed up on the SDOT website.

SDOT SRTS update: School zone camera funds and Hands up tally. Ashley Rhead presenting.

SDOT has a Safe Route To School Partnership using a heat map to ascertain where students live and need exists for improvements. **SSTPIF: School Safety Traffic and Pedestrian Improvement Fund** is funded primarily through the school zone camera fines. Ashley keeps hands off and cameras are coordinated through the Transportation Operations Division at SDOT. The last levy funded one improvement per school. For example, no project has yet been identified for Sand Point Elementary where we go next month. There are two new cameras this year, one at Whittier and 8th and one at Our Lady of Guadalupe in West Seattle.

70-100% of SRTS budget comes from school zone camera tickets. New Sidewalks 20-50% tickets. Greenways 8%, Vision Zero 80% (programmatic, not infrastructure), SRTS Coordinator.

To Ashley's knowledge there's no tracking on comparing total funding of car vs. other types of improvements, largely because there are blurred lines between the two with paving program installing bike lanes & curb ramps, but not sidewalks.

Move Seattle Levy included commitment to 1 safety improvement at each school.

First school zone cameras were installed 2012. Ordinance passed in 2013 saying these had to go to school safety including both education and improvements. Ashley feels that the existence of this funding stream create disincentive to fund through other programs. Levy funds have been significantly higher than camera funds, this is the best way to advocate for funding going forward. Having funding so closely tied to enforcement is not ideal.

Police department runs program deciding. SDOT transportation operations division takes lead on deciding when & where new cameras are installed.

Whittier on 80th & Our Lady of Guadalupe both got new cameras this fall.

SRTS Program Annual Report is on their webpage. Internal financial policy puts limits on how funds can be used intended to make sure it's really oriented toward school safety.

The presentation was fascinating, and we ran out of time for the Hands Up discussion but learned a lot about current funding.

ACTION: Ashley will research how much money goes to Bicycle Pedestrian Improvements vs. other improvements. There are not clear lines between funding, and this may be a barrier to answering this question.

Future Topics

- Sand Point Elementary walkthrough (November)
- 4-way stops (December)
- Walk Boundary Subcommittee
- Seattle's climate change planning for transportation (November?)
- Annual calendar lookahead
- Bus Stop Paddle Funds 2019-2020, 20-21, and going forward
- Possible grants to buy electric white fleet vehicles (Mary Ellen to research)

Next Meeting date: November 19, 2021 at Sand Point Elementary