

Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee
John Stanford Center, room 2765
January 10, 2020 Minutes

STSC Attendees

- ✓ Richard Staudt (SPS)
- ✓ Mary Ellen Russell, Chair (parent volunteer)
- ✓ Margaret McCauley (pedestrian safety advocate)
- Kevin O'Neill (SPD)
- James Wells (Metro)
- ✓ Jennie Meulenberg (SDOT, corridors and Ped transportation planner)
- ✓ Marilyn Firman (citizen-at-large)
- ✓ Lee Bruch (citizen-at-large)
- ✓ Yvonne Carpenter (SPS transportation crossing guard manager)
- ✓ Charlie Simpson (bicycle advocate)
- ✓ Danny Bell
- ✓ Jeff Bronstein, SPS Transportation

Other Presenters/Public

- ✓ Robin Randels
- ✓ Mitchell Lloyd, King County Metro Schools lead
- ✓ Dani Hurula, KC Metro

Public Comment

Robin Randels talked about recommendations from walk audit she did at Sacajawea Elementary. The slope is too steep for speed humps here. There is a two way stop on side streets, but the downhill street (90th) is prioritized. Robin recommended 4 way stop. Ashley Rhead at SDOT Safe Routes to School did an evaluation here for an all way stop but said location doesn't meet warrants. Ashley and Robin only talked about speed humps and 4-way stop. They didn't talk about any options for other traffic calming here.

Lee said that in his experience the 4-way stop warrants are often cited by SDOT as prohibited by MUTCD federal manual of uniform traffic devices. However, the MUTCD does not include specific requirements for 4-way stops, instead referring to need for engineers' judgement. Lee wrote to Brian about this and said that Brian Dougherty agreed with his understanding. Brian sent Lee info about the City of Seattle policy that guides 4-way stops.

Robin is working on home zone projects around schools, with more coming in 2020.

James Wells is out on leave from Metro. Mitchell and Dani are filling in. Metro is starting the process to coordinate with schools. Mitchell and Dani will be attending the committee for a while.

ACTION Jennie will send MUTCD and City standards regarding 4-way stops to committee for review.

The committee will ask Ashley and Brian about updating standards to respond more to schools. The committee will also follow up regarding traffic calming at Sacajawea. This location is close to the school, with no sidewalks and traffic moving fast downhill to get onto Lake City Way. If 4-way stop is inappropriate and speed humps can't be used then SDOT should suggest another traffic calming option that does meet their standards.

Last Month's Minutes

Northgate Elementary design team will attend Feb meeting. Richard will follow up with Viewlands and Rainier Beach Elem teams.

Yvonne emailed Kevin about getting police presence at intersections that are dangerous for crossing guards. She will continue to follow up as new incidents occur. She hasn't had a time to sit down and talk to Kevin yet, but will.

Jennie is working on creating the crossing guard posters, will get them posted.

Richard checked on options for paying background checks, looks like using stop paddle funds work. There are currently short hour employees whose background checks are paid.

Mary Ellen followed up with Brie Gyncild about getting SPD involved in addressing crime issues around Bailey Gatzert. Brie agreed it makes sense to reach out to SPD. She wants to keep that outreach separate from community meetings because police presence can discourage some community members from attending.

Brie also said she is working with Bailey Gatzert staff, parents, an SDOT to start a walking school bus there. The parents will be paid a small amount to chaperone walks to school, and Brian Dougherty encouraged Brie to accept a stipend for her organizing work. The staff at Bailey Gatzert is enthusiastic about supporting this, but has little available time. They will be excited to loop in the Active Transportation Coordinator when that role is filled.

Jennie got count for crosswalk installation at 32nd & Smith, looks good, will have another update next meeting.

Richard said that Hamilton has an ADA space marked on the street.

Last month's minutes are approved.

Kimball Elementary - Paul White, Capital Projects manager, Bingram Lai (NAC Architecture)

Existing Conditions: 23rd Ave S is high traffic. There is congestion on 24th S & Hanford. Buses are currently stacked on S Hinds St. 23rd Ave S is heavily used by commuting traffic in AM. There have been a lot of concerns being raised in neighborhood meetings. There is a stop light with a

crosswalk and ped light and crossing guard at 23rd Ave S and S Hanford St. New school will be opened the fall of 2023. 4-6 buses serve the school, including special ed. Existing attendance comes mostly from west of school, but population in mixed use development to the NE is growing fast. The site is sloped with 3 terraces. Ex school occupies upper terrace. There are portables on lower terrace and faculty parking.

Students (approx. a third based on observation) walk from NW corner straight into front entrance. Parents park their car nearby and walk in with kids. About 1/3 of kids are dropped off on 24th Ave S. The school asks parents to always travel south on 24th Ave for drop-off. The school puts out signs asking parents not to park on S Hanford and to avoid blocking traffic at 24th Ave S and S Horton St. Another approx. 1/3 of students are dropped off by buses on S Hinds St, south of property and middle terrace.

The design team has been coordinating with SDOT & SDCI. The capacity of the school will be increased from 450 to 650 students. It's a 1 story building now, will be 3 stories.

The new design includes new parking lot on upper terrace. This provides ADA drop-off access for preschool. Bike parking will be dedicated, fenced, secured. Hasn't been located on the site plan. Marilyn asked for a smaller bike area to be included by preschool drop-off, Bingham said short term parking will be provided per City's ordinance on bicycle storage. The steep slopes on site and the locations of exceptional trees limit the options for locating entrances and walkways. The location of the access road to the receiving area is not finalized yet. The staff parking lot is being expanded with the portables being removed. There will be an ADA ramp up from 24th Ave S.

The design team is considering widening the street on S Hind St because the buses are wide enough that they stick out into the street when unloading and the street becomes one lane.

Margaret expressed concern about widening the street because it would increase traffic speeds and encourage parents to drop off there. Richard said that many schools have narrow streets at bus load zones, and while it is annoying for parents it has generally been the position of STSC and SPS that temporarily slowing traffic during bus load and unload improves safety.

Mary Ellen brought up the committee's experience that dedicated car drop off areas in parking lots can cause traffic issues. It doesn't seem like a good idea to invite this, particularly when parents are currently parking in the neighborhood and walking to drop off. Richard brought up that parents often say they don't feel good about letting kids walk the last bit unless they can watch kids get into building. This proposal moves the front door where it can't be seen. It's currently on the corner of 23rd Ave S and S Hanford St. SDOT prefers that school entrances be located at the corner to provide good visibility and avoid temptations for mid-block crossings. There's also a potential conflict with kids walking past the new preschool drop-off zone. The sidewalk there would need to be very wide to avoid conflicts between pedestrians heading to the new entrance on the back of the school and cars dropping off at the new pre-school drop-off area.

Richard said truck drivers never want to drive across the playground; he is concerned about the location of the service drive. Bingham said the service drive would be separated from the playground, likely with some grade difference, and may be relocated. Richard said that as long as it doesn't cross the playground that is fine.

Margaret brought up Charlie's project to work with SDOT to allow temporary road closures or one-ways. This might be appropriate on 24th Ave S.

Committee recommendations are to

- 1) Incorporate bike circulation into the design.
- 2) Keep the parking lot for staff only and continue encouraging parents to park and walk the last block or drop off on 24th Ave S.
- 3) Avoid expanding S Hind St width.

Paul White said SPS is open to recommendations, particularly the one not to expand S Hind St.

Project is going through departures including bus loading, parking, building height.

ACTION_ Richard will forward STSC recommendations to Paul White and schedule a follow-up meeting with STSC in a few months.

Annual Report brainstorming

Margaret is starting on the annual report. The school board has requested that we present before presenting to council. Ideas to include:

Thanks for active transportation coordinator!

Temporary street closures: SDOT says they will consider allowing a closure if a school applies. Genesee Hill has this already on SW Dakota between 51st and 50th.

King County has interest in providing access to students through ORCA products. Mitchell explained that there's interest in getting ORCA cards in as many students' hands as possible. Metro needs to interface with a lot of schools, some of whom are well set up to respond, some of whom are not. Metro wants to be the best partner they can, that starts with figuring out how they do interface with schools. Metro is trying to formulize a vision of what that should look like.

Jeff Bronstein update

Hasn't been given the green light to hire. He has someone lined up who can take the position.

ACTION_ Mary Ellen will connect Jeff and Elliot Helmbrecht to try to find out what is holding up approval to move ahead with hiring the active transportation coordinator.

Richard brought up Jeff's goal to have multi-modal vision when doing early reviews of schools. Jeff is developing relationships with SDOT and parks to try to improve circulation design around schools.

Margaret brought up snow issues. Bike trails are on parks land and parks doesn't clear snow. Jeff discussed SDOT's snow planning, which is exclusively focused on arterials because the city doesn't have enough machinery to seriously plow, and the snow events occur infrequently enough that it doesn't make sense to invest in more machinery. SDOT will be clearing major arterials defined as emerald and gold lines for Metro. They will be focused on bus stops that will be sharing for school bus snow routes, approx. 400. SPS will be having drivers drive specific routes (in cars) at 2:00 AM when there is snow and rate them on 1-5 scale. They are looking at areas around schools, loading zones, and sidewalks around schools. They have selected routes around the hilliest schools for assessment. The operations team has discussion at 3:15 AM. Decision is made at 4:00 AM. Role calls start at 5:00 AM, now staff will know in advance whether school is cancelled so that they won't have to report at 5:00 on a day when school is closed.

Sidewalks are not cleared around schools. Jeff said that he has been told there are volunteers who will clear around schools, but this is news to people on the committee. There is an opportunity to mobilize volunteers to clear sidewalks around schools, could possibly be expanded to bike trails through parks. Jeff says this is a project that will happen, but SPS needs to have the bandwidth to address it, which means organizing bus response to snow first.

SPS has an app called First View. First Student developed this 3 years ago. Now it will be available to parents. This will significantly cut down on phone calls to transportation and benefit students. But the app doesn't meet ADA compliance rules which is delaying the implementation. However many other districts in WA are currently using this app. This seems similar to the legal concerns preventing SPS from using KC School Pool, which other districts are currently doing.

Walk Boundary Maps

The annual agenda says it is time to update some walk boundary maps. Charlie is interested in joining the Walk Boundary sub-committee. Richard isn't sure whether Paula or someone else will be assisting this process.

ACTION_Richard will find out whether Paula or someone else will assist the Walk Boundary Sub-committee and send out an email with potential meeting times for 2 meetings (initial and follow-up).

15th and Columbian

Adonis Ducksworth had wanted to talk to STSC at this meeting but got pulled into snow preparation work. He would like to schedule a meeting prior to STSC February meeting.

ACTION_Jennie will contact Adonis to schedule a meeting within the next couple of weeks and send out an email with potential meeting times.

Next Meeting:

February 14th is next meeting. Meetings through May will be in room 2765.

Future Topics:

- Mercer Middle School (15th & Columbian) shelved safety project – invite middle school reps and SDOT rep. from capital projects group (February or sooner, Elliot Helmbrecht and Adonis Ducksworth)
- Follow up on coordination meeting w/ SDOT, SDCI, Schools Capital Projects to avoid future box truck turnarounds on school property (March)
- Circulation Plan Reviews – Northgate Elementary
- Annual Report - draft (February)

Additional Meetings/Items

- Schedule annual report to City Council for April (Jennie, please help with this)
- Schedule Walk Boundary Subcommittee – initial and follow up meetings