

**Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee
John Stanford Center, room 2765
February 14, 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

Other Presenters/Public

- ✓ Tracie Twitchell, SPS
Mitchell Lloyd, King County Metro Schools lead
Dani Hurula, KC Metro
- ✓ Polly Membrino, SDOT
- ✓ Clara Cantor, Seattle Neighborhood Greenways

Public Comment

No public comment.

Last Month's Minutes

ACTION_ Mary Ellen will follow up with Ashley Rhead to find out what is happening on 90th near Sacajawea.

Mary Ellen met with Jeff and Brian Dougherty about moving ahead with hiring the active transportation coordinator. That is moving, but it's not likely to get someone in the position before June.

ACTION_ Richard will connect with Jeff to get Paula on board with walk boundary sub-committee meeting.

Last month's meeting minutes were approved.

Safety situation at West Seattle bus stop (Tracie Twitchell)

Parent contacted Tracie with concerns about a stop at Marine View Drive SW and 45th. Tracie and Annette (SPS Transportation) went and looked and did find that the visibility is not as good as they would like. They thought they might install a 'school bus stop ahead' sign, however

SDOT said they don't use this signage in an urban setting. There are not currently any speed limit signs near this intersection. There are existing 'crosswalk ahead' signs. Richard suggested maybe SDOT could add orange diamonds to the top of the sign to increase visibility. A 'limited sight distance' sign might be another option.

One possibility is to reverse the direction that the bus travels for this route which would allow students to load on the other side of the road. SPS is reluctant to reverse the direction because it means they would be travelling past families that are on the bus as space is available first, with an empty bus, which makes managing those families more difficult.

ACTION_Jennie will take this issue to SDOT to see if there is another intervention that might make sense at Marine View Dr SW and 45th Ave SW and report back to the committee.

Northgate Elementary Circulation Plan (Vince Gonzales SPS, Dedy Fautleroy)

The existing 1960 building is going to be knocked down and replaced. The capacity will be increased to 650. The new building will be built while kids are in the existing building, then the older one will be demo'd after the new building is complete. The new building will be occupied in 2023.

Currently parents use the parking lot at the church across the street from the main entrance to drop off. This results in kids darting across 1st, an arterial, to run into the school. Parents also drop off on 1st, blocking the arterial. The design for the new building moves the main entrance to the corner of 1st and N 120th, which will likely reduce this behavior. There is currently a designated drop-off area on the street that doesn't get used because the visibility to the front door is poor. Instead parents often go through the ex. Parking lot where they can see kids walk into the school. There are no street lamps, so the area is very dark in the morning.

The design team is proposing parent drop-off on 120th and bus drop-off on 1st Ave NE. There is a secondary entrance mid-block on 120th, and there will be a fence around the facility, so this will likely ease parent concerns about seeing kids enter the school.

The church is happy for the school to continue using its parking lot for events unless the days conflict with church events.

A previous plan showed the parking lot as an in & out with a 2nd driveway at the corner of 1st and 120th St. The current plan reduces car conflicts with pedestrians at the front door and provides space for an entry plaza. The committee agrees that the current plan is a better solution. The single-entrance parking lot is good for staff cars and works best when parents are not allowed to drop-off there.

Bike parking will be at the front, also under an overhang near parking lot. The team is considering adding bike parking off of the playground.

The committee would like to make sure that there is an entrance point available to kids on the west side of the building, since there will be a greenway there.

Dedy says families mostly don't bike because conditions on the street are not good for it. However they have the bike education program at school and neighborhood greenway improvements are planned for the area.

SPU is planning drainage improvements on the north side of 120th, possibly raingardens. This would discourage parents from dropping off on the wrong side of the street.

Kids living nearby don't walk because of the lack of crosswalks, sidewalks.

SPS is debating having sped buses drop on the west side of the building, but is also debating whether it would feel like they were being hidden on the back side of the building if they went with that option.

SPS has not engaged with SDOT yet about changing traffic patterns in the neighborhood. Vince works with Sara Zora on departures. The project will be doing street improvements all the way around the exterior of the block. That will definitely include sidewalks, may also include street lights.

ACTION_Jennie will take this design to SDOT to get Safe Routes to School planning to respond to changing traffic conditions around the new school.

Vince would like to come back in 6 months to talk about managing access during construction.

SDOT scooter share program (Stefan Winkler)

Stefan is a program manager at SDOT in charge of the scooter share pilot. Some of the scooters will be standing scooters, some will look a lot like bikes. Seattle is the last city of this size that doesn't currently have shared scooters. The shared scooter industry has come a long way in the last few years. The City is very interested in the more substantial 'sit style' scooters that feel more comfortable and bring the center of mass down. Bike share has been shown to bring more business to local shops, the City is interested to see how scooter shares can fit into neighborhoods to promote fitness and bring business to local businesses.

Pilot considerations: The permit will be city-wide with a select number of vendors, likely 3-4. The City wants to implement the scooter share without losing the bike share program. The bike share has been successful and the City has learned how to manage issues like parking, and wants to keep that program going. Jump is the only bike share company still operating. The City also wants to make sure that scooter share will be safe both for people riding and for people on the sidewalks, particularly people with mobility challenges. The City is building on lessons learned from the bike share program to ensure safety.

Parking: there will be geo-fenced areas where no parking is allowed, such as Pike Place. Margaret pointed out that there are car parking spaces at Pike Place, it seems strange to forbid scooter parking where car parking is allowed. Scooter parking will be nearby, but not inside. Other examples include movable bridges. The City will require that there is accountability for parking, such as taking a photo, so that fees & fines can be assessed for improper parking. In 2019 the City built 1500 parking areas for bikes & scooters around the city. This helps, but parking is still tough in areas with narrow or no sidewalks. The City is changing rules to allow parking in the planting strip in residential areas.

Charlie brought up concern around requiring photos to park the scooters because it will limit the ability of students to use them. Parents can unlock a scooter or bike for a kid to use, but the kid might not have their own smartphone. Margaret brought up the concern that right now bike shares say a person has to be 18 to use a bike share, which seems inappropriate because the age is higher than driving age. King County is putting together a scooter share program that is asking companies to encourage access for younger people.

The City wonders what the committee recommends in terms of age. The committee would like to see these as an option for kids starting in 6th grade (age 12) because that is the age when students are expected to go 1.5 miles to school on their own.

Some companies require a driver's license to use a scooter or bike share. There is a study showing that people who have a driver's license have a lower crash rate on scooters, however this is with a very limited data set. It doesn't make a lot of sense to require a driver's license to use a car-free transit mode, and requiring a driver's license presents equity concerns.

The City is working on rentable helmets that have peel off layers inside. They are also working on developing a way for people to access the scooters without needing a smart phone and a credit card.

SPS already has a bike education program in every elementary school. It would make sense to add more safety information for scooters to this program.

Scooters top out at 15 mph. One possibility would be to add a kid mode that lowers the top speed. Stefan will check to see if this is possible. Clara pointed out that many people might choose a slower setting if it's available. Stefan said that many existing scooters start up very quickly and the City is working with companies to make start up slower. It might also be possible to reduce speeds in geo-zones.

The City will allow scooters in bike lanes and on streets that are 25 mph but not on sidewalks. However this will not generally be enforced with tickets. The City recognizes that there are gaps in bike infrastructure where riding on the sidewalk makes the most sense. Marilyn suggested that if there was a reduced speed mode that might be a way to allow riding on sidewalks.

SDOT is working with vendors to have ongoing safety education for the scooter program, funding for this will come from permit fees. The City is working on figuring out how they can get people to stop and look at safety info in the app, possibly a quiz that the user has to fill out to make sure they actually read it instead of swiping through.

Tracie Twitchell asked whether there is any consideration of allowing kids to use youth Orca passes to access scooter shares. Right now Jump offers a lower rate for people who qualify for the Orca lift program. Stefan thinks that using the actual Orca card to unlock scooters would be difficult but connecting accounts to the Orca account might be possible.

Marilyn brought up the fact that students living at Mary's place are not allowed to have bikes. Scooter share could be a way to provide more mobility for these families.

Scooter vendors are open to working to provide helmets for students. Kevin asked whether there is liability that attaches to the scooter company if someone gets injured by a car when they are not wearing a helmet. Stefan said the companies have already worked out their liability strategy.

For future school planning SPS could designate locations around schools that are preferred for scooter parking.

Stefan.winkler@seattle.gov

Stefan will pass info on to Jennie. City Council will vote on fees and changing the code. The mayor's office has more to say about the exact terms of the permit.

Margaret suggested that we could write a letter to the Mayor's office to emphasize the committee's concerns.

ACTION_ Margaret will write a letter to the mayor's office to support student access to scooter shares.

Recap of 15th and Columbian Meeting

Lee and Mary Ellen met with SDOT regarding the proposed changes to 15th Ave S and S Columbian Way. SDOT would like the committee's support.

The committee endorses this statement:

"These changes at 15th Ave S and S Columbian will simplify the intersection and make it safer for students to cross to Mercer Middle School. The School Traffic Safety Committee has been concerned for years about the high number of speeding tickets issued near this location. The committee supports SDOT's proposed changes and looks forward to safer street conditions leading to Mercer Middle School."

Kevin suggests that there should be a 'No Left Turns' sign out of the Mercer Middle where there is currently an unofficial

ACTION_Jennie will ask SDOT whether an official 'No Left Turns' sign could be installed here.

Crossing Guard Update

1 new guard at Kimball, lost a guard at Loyal Heights, lost PM guard at Highland park. Net for the month is down ½ a guard.

Draft Annual Report

Margaret will share the current draft. The committee has 2 weeks to finalize draft, then will send to Jeff and Fred Podesta for comments. Jennie will share the draft with SDOT.

Seattle Neighborhood Greenways

Clara said that SNG is having meeting Wednesday Feb 26th, tentative location is Bailey Gatzert to coordinate advocacy push for this year.

Next Meeting:

March 13th. Meetings through May will be in room 2765.

Future Topics:

- Follow up on coordination meeting w/ SDOT, SDCI, Schools Capital Projects to avoid future box truck turnarounds on school property (March)
- Circulation Plan Reviews
- Annual Report
- Northgate contractor circulation (August or September)

Additional Meetings/Items

- Schedule annual report to City Council for May (Jennie)
- Schedule Walk Boundary Subcommittee – initial and follow up meetings