**Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee**

**October 23, 2015 Minutes**

**Attendees**

Members: Elaine Albertson (Feet First), Yvonne Carpenter (SPS), Jen Cole (Citizen at Large), Brian Dougherty (SDOT), Shannon Koller (Cascade Bicycle Club), Rich O’Neill (SPD), Ashley Rhead (SDOT), Richard Staudt (SPS Risk Management), Cathy Tuttle (Seattle Neighborhood Greenways)

Public Attendees: None

Other Attendees and Presenters: Kyle Brown (SPS Transportation), Teresa Frizell (Feet First), Weiran Zhao (SDOT)

**Public Comment:** None

**September Minutes:** Approved

**Approval of September Minutes and Review of Action Items**

* Website is now up on City of Seattle Boards and Commissions site (<http://www.seattle.gov/school-traffic-safety-committee>).
* Follow-up on tasks:
	+ Ashley is reaching out to recruit committee members.
	+ Rich O’Neill looked into the logistics around stop paddles, and will discuss this and other traffic data today.
	+ In November, STSC committee members will go to a school board meeting to award the Golden Shoe and Pedal Award.
	+ Ashley is working with SDOT’s graphic design staff to make infographics on the mode choice tally findings, to accompany a full report.
	+ A student may still make a video about walking school buses. The process is that projects are pitched, and about 1/3 of those projects get produced.
* Additions to today’s agenda:
	+ Discuss pick-up and drop-off at John Rogers Elementary.

**DECISION**: Include our organizational affiliations with our names in the minutes.

**ACTION**: Elaine will make sure August minutes got updated as requested in September, and send August and September minutes to Ashley.

**Debrief After Rainier Beach Meeting**

* Students at Rainier Beach High School are requesting that all students, including those who live within two miles of school, receive Orca cards due to concerns about crime and violence in the neighborhood. Community members and neighborhood organizations are supporting the students’ ask.
* Current cost estimates put it at $193,000 to give Orca cards to all students within 2 miles. The school district would have to coordinate the funds. If it’s too costly, could Orca cards be opt-in in the 1-2 mile zone, or at a very reduced rate?
* General view is that students should be able to focus on school, not stress about getting to school. If students have to work, it’s hard without an Orca card.
* At the Rainier Beach meeting, there was limited discussion at the meeting about ‘Take Back the Streets’ or getting more people on the street.
* Safe routes to school laws typically focus on traffic hazards and distance, and do not define neighborhood crime as a hazard. This is a broad trend, for example, enforcement focuses more on traffic than on street crime.
* Discussion of Safe Passages and the Chicago Public Schools model. This program is just near campus, and does not operate at all times of day.
* Remaining questions:
	+ Would this decision set a precedent or affect other schools?
	+ What is Metro’s role in this decision?
	+ What are time-of-day patterns in crime? What kind of crime data could justify including neighborhood crime in safe routes to school decisions?
	+ What can we do as a committee? Is it within the scope of our committee to take position? Should we assist with implementation?

**DECISION**: Discuss this more next month when we have more information.

**Bike and Ped Education Curriculum Committee & Bike Acquisition Updates**

* The Safe Routes to School Action Plan was recently announced at a press conference. Seattle will have bike and pedestrian safety education in every elementary school for 3-5th graders. The curriculum will align with new state PE standards, and stakeholders are designing the curriculum now.
* The bike fleet is being reset, and they are going with Redline bike and looking for grant money. The goal is to outfit Seattle Public Schools, Highline Public Schools, and Lake Washington School District.

**SNG Request for Heat Maps for Walking Audit at Eagle Staff MS**

* Seattle Neighborhood Greenways is requesting student density heat maps for the five elementary schools that will feed into Eagle Staff MS. The goal is to use the maps conduct walking audits and figure out the best routes.
* Currently, the way data is mapped protects student privacy. The school district’s GIS staff suggests that requests to come through our committee, and we can make a recommendation of how to proceed. They also suggested SDOT can make these maps now because they have the data. However, there is a need for more clarity around SDOT’s role before they share the data publicly.

**DECISION**: We approve sharing the existing maps, which protect student data.

**Transportation for Eagle Staff Middle School**

* This new school is opening in 2017 at 90th street near Aurora. Nearby crossings are dangerous.
* We will need to look at student demographics when it opens to see how it prioritizes in safe routes to school.
* Discussion of opportunity to put a signal at 92nd. There may be some political pushback and funding constraints if it doesn’t qualify for safe routes to school.
* Discussion of whether students on the other side of Aurora will be bused.

**DECISION**: Our committee will try to take a field trip there, for our January meeting. We will invite a contact who can tell us more.

**Speed Humps Near Schools**

* Speed humps can be a relatively cost-effective way to slow down traffic. Would it be possible to put them in every school zone?
* SDOT will look into the feasibility and whether it would be necessary to change current policies that suggest you have to do a speed study first. A blanket policy exists for greenways, which could be a precedent.
* Discussion of effect of speed bump design on school buses, especially special education buses. Could the humps be narrow enough for buses to straddle them, but wide enough to slow down personal vehicles?

**ACTION**: Brian will discuss this with SDOT staff, and will send speed hump dimensions to Kyle to compare with buses.

**ACTION**: Cathy will connect Brian to her contact in Vancouver to see if we can look at their policy as a model.

**SPD Enforcement Activity Near Schools**

* Emphasis continues to be in the 4 SDOT grant schools. On 10/7 and 10/8, officers were on-site at Mercer Middle School, Wedgwood Elementary, Greenwood Elementary, and South Shore K-8. Officers were there for three hours before, and three hours after school (only afternoon at Wedgwood).
* At Mercer there were 25 contacts in the two days, at Wedgwood there were 12, at Greenwood there were 48, and at South Shore there were 34.
* Officers focus on speed, but also distracted driving, right of way of pedestrians, illegal turns, and vehicle license violations, and equipment violations (mirrors, headlights). The exercise is traffic-focused, but will push crime away from school.
* The next emphasis is 10/26-10/28, at all 4 grant schools, before and after school.
* Crossing students with a bus paddle at 1st and 80th is dangerous. Rich O’Neill will ask officers to focus there.
* Rich O’Neill brought data on photo enforcement of speed, both tickets and warnings. Fines increase with how many mph over the limit. Rich will bring these monthly. The categories are the mph over the 20mph speed limit. These are just the school zone cameras, and don’t include others throughout the city.

**Bus Paddle Updates**

* The plan is for 40 stop paddle cameras. SPD employees are more or less ready to add this to their work.

**ACTION**: Kyle and Richard Staudt will investigate key contacts and specific barriers to initiating this program, and will let Rich O’Neill know.

**Metro Policies for Serving Student Riders**

* Sandra was unable to attend to discuss this.

**Crossing Guard Updates**

* They are training four new guards next week, to be placed at Bailey Gatzert, Greenwood, Sacajawea, and Olympic View elementary schools.
* 31st and Holly lost a guard, but the position will be filled with a new trainee. Dearborn lost a guard for the afternoon, but the morning is still filled.

**ACTION**: Yvonne and Brian will share information regarding potentially adding a crosswalk where the crossing guard is at Sacajawea.

**Crossing Guard at Boren**

* This position ranked high because of the numbers of students crossing here, but the student density map shows it’s unlikely many students in the walk zone use this crosswalk. Most use arises because drivers are using Boren as an extension of the drop-off/pick-up area.
* It was agreed that crossing help is beneficial at this location, but debated whose responsibility it should be to fill the spot. District policy does not place adult crossing guards in school bus zones or drop-off/pick-up areas. Those areas are to be staffed by school personnel.
* This issue is highlighted because of an overall shortage of guards. SPS moved the guard from 16th near Sanislo to fill the Boren crosswalk, leaving the Sanislo position unstaffed.
* Student density maps show where students are coming from. There may be a need to look at how crossing guards are being used here and what the training process has been. Can SDOT study this again?

**DECISION**: We recommend leaving the crossing guard there this year, but developing a communication plan and working with the school to prepare a school staff person to assume responsibility in fall 2016. Even though the flashing beacons and cameras have had a positive effect on traffic safety here, school staff posted here should receive additional training from the SPS crossing guard supervisor.

**Drop-Off and Pick-Up at John Rogers Elementary (Addition to Agenda)**

* At John Rogers Elementary, parents and buses drop-off in the same space. There are limited opportunities to separate traffic, but school administration is supportive of moving bus drop-off to the playground at the south side of the school. SDOT does not see an immediate issue with this change.
* If the change is made, they will need to plan for the time gap between when the bell rings, and when kids get to the buses.

**ACTION**: Kyle will follow-up with Brian and do a site visit.

**Future Topics and Announcements**

* Bell time changes are not finalized, but it is likely the times will change.