

Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee
John Stanford Center, room 2750
August 16, 2019 Minutes

STSC Attendees

- Richard Staudt (SPS)
- ✓ Mary Ellen Russell, Chair (parent volunteer)
- ✓ Margaret McCauley (pedestrian safety advocate)
- Kevin O'Neill (SPD)
- James Wells (Metro)
- ✓ Mitchell Lloyd (SDOT)
- ✓ Marilyn Firman (citizen-at-large)
- ✓ Lee Bruch (citizen-at-large)
- ✓ Yvonne Carpenter (SPS transportation crossing guard manager)
- ✓ Charlie Simpson (bicycle advocate)

Other Presenters/Public

Public Comment

No Public Comment.

Last Month's Minutes

Action_ Mary Ellen will follow up Rachel Osias asking about interest from Cascade Bicycle Club for open position.

Mitchell shared info about open position as part of sharing equity report.

Mitchell will be leaving SDOT after Labor Day, moving to King County Metro. Congratulations! Brian Dougherty will be filling in while a replacement is hired.

Mitchell checked in with James 2 months ago. He had transitioned to a new position at Metro, could still be contacted, didn't anticipate being able to attend meetings.

Action_ Mitchell will check with Brian about getting a more active Metro representative.

Action_ Mitchell will share new contact info when he is at Metro. We don't want to lose touch with you!

Mary Ellen relayed updates on QAES crosswalk boondoggle. After following up with Brian Dougherty and Ashley Rhead, SDOT has a policy that ped counts must happen before crosswalk installation. In this case the front door of the school is moving and a crosswalk is clearly called

for, but SDOT is waiting until after school starts. This is a different response than at Lincoln High School, where pedestrian improvements were planned and installed prior to the school opening.

Brian says that this fall he is planning to push to change this policy. He also plans to review internal processes to keep this from happening at future school renovations. He says it would help to have the STSC doing walk-throughs farther in advance to flag issues. Richard pointed out via phone to Mary Ellen that STSC did a walk through at QAES 2.5 years ago and flagged this issue. The committee is going to look at upcoming school renovations and make a schedule of walkthroughs to hope to avoid this issue in the future.

ACTION_Mitchell will approach Ashley about finding the right community group and help make the connection to get a walking school bus started for Emerson Elementary. Margaret will do SDOT grant paperwork if needed.

ACTION_Mary Ellen will follow up with Steven Richard about locations where the Walk Boundary Subcommittee felt an additional guard could open the walk boundary further and reduce the number of bused kids.

ACTION_Richard remembers that there used to be input to this committee by the Childhood Obesity Committee, will reach out to Victor Colman at copcwa.org to renew that contact.

ACTION_Richard will ask transportation if there is any history of a collaboration with afterschool groups allowing other students to walk along, and how it might get started.

ACTION_Richard will reach out to staff/students at Franklin High School about joining STSC for 2 years, possibly to get credit in Social Justice curriculum, or to count toward community service hours.

July minutes approved.

Council Items Update

Margaret went to press conference before the special Council meeting to discuss red light camera funds going to Safe Routes to School and Vision Zero. Tone of the meeting was very positive, but was mostly about a broader package of transportation proposals. Mary Ellen wrote a letter in support of directing Vision Zero funds to improvements, not traffic enforcement.

Lee suggested that the Deputy Mayor is a good person to approach on these issues. Lee is hoping to introduce himself to her, Shefali Ranganathan.

Mike O'Brien's office is hoping to include funding for Active Transportation Coordinator in this bill, Mary Ellen helped put them in touch with people at schools to explore coordination logistics on this.

Crossing Guard Update

Lost guards at Whittier, Viewlands, Cascadia/Eaglestaff, lost one at Emerson, AM at Alki, one at STEM. PM at Alki moved to Emerson.

45 open posts, 5 or these are part days. (40 totally open, 5 half).

2 Madrona, 1 Van Asselt, 1 Olympic View, ½ Hazel Wolf coming online.

9 people emailed interest, but only 5 remain interested.

Crossing guard at Alki posted her open position on the West Seattle Blog.

Action: _Mary Ellen will forward open position/crossing guard special interest info to Lee.

Action_ Lee will approach media with crossing guard info/ interest story.

Action: _Yvonne will ask around at SPS transportation about reaching out to news with crossing guard open position info.

Yvonne said that transportation has many openings, it will take a while to fill them and she suspects that crossing guard assistant will be lower down the priority list.

SDOT Update – Walking School Buses at Rainier View

SDOT is willing to partner with any school to do a walking school bus. They usually try to focus on schools that don't have strong PTA support. They have been able to get grant money for equipment and training from the state. SDOT got a bucket of money to do a WSB at 4 or 5 different schools, Rainier View was one. They usually try to get a parent or employee to lead it so that they have a strong connection to the school. At Rainier View it was a part time employee. Pednet out of Oregon was open resource for assistance, came out and did training session for WSB leader. SDOT paid for a phone to reach out to parents, etc., and employee was paid a stipend, approximately \$3k, to set up walking school bus. This isn't intended for her to be the chaperone every day. SDOT used school email to recruit families. Coordinator built routes in response. SDOT did a walk audit to address barriers/concerns around debris, greenery that needs clearing, etc. SDOT created maps with route and schedule and distributed them.

Challenges: Consistency – employee worked part time at the school and wasn't always available for communication. For 6 weeks some UW students led the walking school bus twice a week.

Reception was very positive, there was a lot of interest, there just wasn't a lot of capacity for community members to support it.

Lessons Learned: might be more successful to make a push for a temporary period: 4-6 week push, not necessarily an expectation of permanence. Try to get parents seeing it as an idea. The coordinator role is too big of a commitment to do it for a whole semester for the resources available.

Environment at Rainier View is not conducive to walking. Parents were very interested in signing kids up, but there wasn't interest in leading walking groups.

In the spring SDOT had a grant to approach 4 middle schools about walking school bus coordination but they got zero response from school admins. Finding the right person at each school to actually get a response, help get in touch with PTA is a challenge.

Any school that wants to do walking school buses could reach out to SDOT and access it. Safe Routes to School website doesn't include info that these funds are available. Getting info onto the website is a challenge, but might be doable once a new person comes online.

SDOT is looking at restructuring the mini-grants to include larger amounts for WSB coordinators. The Safe Routes to School Action Plan is being updated Q3 2019 to Q1 2020, will likely include this.

117th St Overpass Connection

Northgate Elementary is right next to new Light Rail station. It's currently the only location where I-5 can be crossed. The school boundary is I-5, so not a lot of kids need to cross. Approx. 20 students and teachers cross there. Crossing will be closed due to light rail construction for 2 years. The detour is going to be to route people south on 5th to Northgate Way to cross under I-5. This is a very high traffic and collision area. N end of 3rd is closed, just a driveway. A better route would be to take 3rd S to Northgate, then W on Northgate to 1st, then N and across I-5. Sound transit can't endorse using a private driveway, but pedestrians can probably get away with it. A better route might also be cutting through parking lot of northgate apartments. This is also private property, so would have to be informally used.

Updates on Director's Rule Changes

Mary Ellen relayed convo w/ Gordon Clowers: He says that this DR change really only applies to smaller projects. Schools will still need to do a SEPA traffic study. Mary Ellen asked how the goals of this change, i.e. reducing SOV trips and parking requirements for development, can be implemented for schools too, especially in light of schools often being required to install extra street improvements in exchange for departures from unrealistically high parking requirements. Gordon said this was an interesting question, and one that another person in the office has begun looking at.

Mary Ellen also asked if improvements for Safe Routes to School could be included among the mitigation options listed in this DR. Gordon said he would explore whether that idea was legally tenable.

Action: _Mary Ellen will follow up w/ Gordon Clowers, also invite him and Jonathan Lewis (SDOT) to come talk to STSC.

Establishing a Yearly Schedule

Margaret brought up the idea of establishing a yearly action plan for the committee to get in front of annual cycle, also try to provide continuity moving forward as membership changes.

- Annual report/presentation to City Council - April
- Site visits at remodeling schools – keep a running list, schedule visits in advance w/ an SDOT follow-up after each visit.
- Hands up survey – talk about in March to prep for survey in late May.
- Crossing guard promotion – talk in July, contact news in August, make sure power pole signs are update prior to school
- Pilot program for WSB in Walktober – try to get a new one started every year?
- School bus paddle funds – October
- Speed Zone Camera stats – August is earliest, possible for year, could be Sept.

Action: _Marilyn will take on writing up the action plan.

Future Topics:

- Speed camera update (September)
- Partnering with Open Sidewalks (September)
- End of year speed camera update with year over year comparison, (September)
- Pilot project for school road closure - Charlie to reach out to Ashley Rhead
- Bus stop paddle funds – 2nd year accounting (October)
- SDOT sees bike share program evolving into micro-mobility program including e-scooters, single wheel, skateboards, etc., ask Brian when we should talk about this w/ SDOT. Joel Miller is in charge of bike share program.
- Mercer Middle School (15th & Columbia) shelved safety project – invite middle school reps and SDOT rep. from capital projects group (Sept or Oct)
- School staff training as crossing guards for backup