



School Traffic Safety Committee

January 20, 2026

To: Councilmember Eddie Lin, Chair
Councilmember Dan Strauss, Vice-Chair
Members of the Seattle City Council Land Use Committee

This letter regards the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections proposal to update the Land Use Code, supporting school programming for Seattle Public School students by amending Sections 23.45.504, 23.51B.002, 23.54.015, 23.55.020, 23.55.022 and 23.79.004 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

The Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee (STSC) was created in 1975 to coordinate work on creating and providing safe routes to school. The Committee includes representatives of public agencies and volunteer community members. This letter is on behalf of the volunteer members.

The STSC has been advocating for changes to the land use code for public schools for years as the current code includes outdated remnants that are simply not applicable to our urban schools today. We were pleased to finally see the SDCI issue proposed recommendations in May 2025. However, we are deeply disappointed to learn that the Land Use Committee does not have any plan to take action on these badly needed updates.

To comply with the code as written, schools would have to pave yards and playgrounds to provide parking and cannot update HVAC systems on school roofs due to height limits, among other limitations. Seattle Public Schools are instead required to apply for “special departures”, a process that not only adds time and costs to the projects, but also allows for anyone to challenge the departures in court, further adding to delays.

Continued inaction on issuing these updates are costing the city millions of dollars and forcing schools to spend additional years in temporary buildings during construction. We urge you to promptly schedule time on your committee’s agenda to take up and approve these badly needed and long delayed updates to the land use code.

Sincerely,

Noa Guter
Kelsey Rote
Margaret McCauley
Ryan Baum
Maris Zivarts

STSC Volunteer Community Members