



School Traffic Safety Committee

July 18, 2025

To: Mayor Harrell
Members of the Seattle City Council

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 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.

Required parking (SMC 23.54.015)

STSC has been advocating for updates to the Seattle Municipal Code to eliminate the specific parking requirements for public schools. The limited space in urban school properties means that not only is the current code impossible to comply with, but attempting to do so takes away educational space – the primary mission for public schools and the land the schools reside on. The City of Seattle has been revising parking requirements throughout the city to reflect the ongoing evolution of the city and how people get around. Schools are integral parts of our neighborhoods and our shared built environment; there is no need for a separate parking requirement in city code just for public schools.

While the proposed requirement for one parking space for every two classrooms is lower than current requirements, it is still an arbitrary amount and does not consider the specific physical context each public school is in. We appreciate the efforts to decrease the parking requirements; however, we believe the code should be further amended to remove school-specific parking requirements altogether.

Building height and bus loading in residential zones (SMC 23.51B.002)

The STSC enthusiastically supports the code update to allow on-street bus loading space. STSC believes that educational land should be used for educational purposes and that school design should minimize the number and width of vehicle entry points for students to cross – this is made possible by keeping buses on the street. To allow for increased flexibility in determining load zones, we urge you to amend this proposal to remove the need for departures when bus loading zones are expanded.

Sincerely,

Noa Guter
Kelsey Rote
Margaret McCauley
Ryan Baum
Mary Ellen Russell
Maris Zivarts