

Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee
Meeting held online

December 11, 2020 Minutes

STSC Attendees

- X Richard Staudt (SPS)
- X Mary Ellen Russell, Chair (parent volunteer)
- X Margaret McCauley (pedestrian safety advocate)
- X Jennie Meulenberg (SDOT, corridors and Ped transportation planner)
- X Marilyn Firman (citizen-at-large)
- X Lee Bruch (citizen-at-large)
- X Yvonne Carpenter (SPS transportation crossing guard manager)
- X Charlie Simpson (bicycle advocate)
Peaches Thomas (safe streets advocate)
- X Hunter Maltais (SPS Transportation Manager)

Other Presenters/Public

- X Heidi Slater (Hawthorne School)

Public Comment

No public comment.

Last Month's Minutes

Approved with one correction: Melissa Kohn is spelled **Melissa Coen**. She is SPS capital projects financial analyst.

Student Heat Maps

ACTION: Hunter: There are Density maps available for the entire school district. He will find out if these can be broken down to individual schools for raw data. He will specifically ask about Kimball and Van Assault Schools. Van Assault is the interim school building which will be used for several school rebuilds. In future Northgate Elementary and other schools might also be of interest.

Policy Operations Advisory Group

ACTION- Jennie: Jennie will continue to track meeting schedules and let STSC know. She will also discuss including our representation in future, especially when second phase begins.

Hawthorne Elementary

Jennie put Heidi in touch with Serena Lehman at SDOT. Jennie reported that applications had been made for two grants, a Covid Grant and a Safe Routes to School Mini Grant.

There are concerns about a blind crossing at the top of a hill. Speed bumps would be useful but there is a funding available budget issue. Current SDOT policy does not put stop signs in on side streets unless there is an accident history. Heidi reports that there was an accident at this location over the summer and that she has been told SDOT will not put stop signs in place until a fatality occurs, although this was a verbal communication and not written. Jennie said that fatalities are not part of the criteria. Lee said this is a just policy and can be changed. Policy allows Seattle Greenways to have side street stop control without other factors. Margaret said similar situations have come up at other schools. Why wait for a serious crash to put a 2 way stop at a school corner.

ACTION Jenny will research the exact policy code and send it to STSC.

ACTION: Margaret will draft a letter advocating Safe routes to school routes be added to policy giving exemption for 2 way stops.

ACTION: Mary Ellen: When approved Mary Ellen will send letters to Kristen Harris, Tammy Morales (whose daughter attends Hawthorne) and to the City Director of Transportation. Additionally, as Bryan is appearing at the January meeting, we will discuss this with him directly then. This policy does not require city council approval as it is a Directors Rule.

ACTION: Jenny will update status on a change to the crosswalk rule.

Jennie said that Brian Dougherty is planning to attend the January STSC meeting to discuss the City budget for 2021 and that we can ask follow-up questions about the stop-sign policy then.

Update on Departures Rule Change:

Mary Ellen talked to Mike Podowski at SDCI. He would support changing code to reduce parking requirements and allow on-street bus loading so that SPS does not continually go through departures. But direction must come from city council and the mayor's office. He gave Mary Ellen contacts. He supported her and contacted these individuals to prepare her way. City and SPS are spending staff time on departures, but SPS pays a fee that covers the time City employees spend. The city does not currently have financial incentive to clean up the process. It has a slight disincentive because of staff cost refund.

The Annual Report would be a good place to talk about this. An update would save SPS capital projects a couple hundred thousand dollars a year, money which could be spent on playgrounds and other site improvements.

ACTION: Mary Ellen. Compare capital cost of playground equipment vs directors rule change and emphasize better use of money.

Peterson is chair of transportation committee. Mike Podowski suggested that Dan Strauss could be interested in working on this.

ACTION: Everyone. Lee reported it is a huge issue to change code. Everyone needs to start talking to candidates for mayors. We need to change the code to eliminate habitual departures. Encourage other organizations as Seattle Greenways to join with us. It would help to get push from multiple angles to rewrite this short section of code.

Richard says bicycle parking comes up all the time. The requirement is brand new and a Directors Rule on bikes is not finalized. So that people can bike we need more bicycle parking. The code changed this year adding much more parking than previously. No action should be taken at this time until we see what happens. At present 50 bicycle spots for a usual 6 bikes looks like overkill, but unless we ‘build it’ for more bikes they will not ‘come’ which is our goal.

NORTHGATE:

FUTURE ACTION: Letter from committee to nearby church showing how this would benefit both school and church. Meeting with church will have a Korean translator present.

FUTURE ACTION: Update in 3 months with Chris Colman from Lydig Construction. Also persuade him to make a presentation to Haller Lake Community Club.

City Budget Update:

Jennie says SDOT is still processing the new budget. 9 million dollars goes to the school traffic safety improvement fund. Jennie is trying to see what Safe Routes to School gets. They will backfill on previous capital project improvements but will be able to continue them without expected cuts. In next two weeks Jennie will get a better funding idea but probably there is no extra funding. Probably they will fill in what they are losing elsewhere.

ACTION: Jenny and Brian update in January.

Design Standards Document - SUCCESS

Margaret said the Design Standards Document was approved at School Board. Officially it will be in Ed specs where we want to be. Mary Ellen will do final edits and have it ready for website. Rebecca Asencio wants to add it officially when the ed specs are updated this winter. Margaret sent copy to National Safe Routes to School. A State of Iowa conference in January invited her to present it. Why not have a Washington Safe Routes to School Conference?

ACTION: Mary Ellen will finalize our document and we will publish.

Return to School Buildings

There will be a School Board vote on Wednesday. If approved, March 1st PRE-K through Second will go back to school. First Student laid off all drivers. They will need time to retrain and rehire staff. They do not know how many will come back to work. They hope at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the drivers will be available. There will be more distancing on buses: one child per seat. They are attempting to build efficient routes based on actual ridership rather than rider eligibility during this no ridership period. Currently about 200 students are being bused for in person instruction which is usually for 1 to $\frac{1}{2}$ hours; none as long as a half day. Families really want to resume in-

person. School is not working for children below third grade. SPS needs a 2 month lead time to get transportation organized.

Active Transportation Coordinator due to be hired in March

Future Topics

- Seattle's climate change planning for transportation (in-person)
- City Budget updates
- Mode choice survey schedule (When in-person school is starting)
- Annual calendar lookahead
- Walk Boundary Subcommittee – in person

Next Meeting date: January 15th