

Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee

Meeting held online

May 21, 2021 Minutes

STSC Attendees

- X Richard Staudt (SPS)
- X Lee Bruch
- 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 Yvonne Carpenter (SPS transportation crossing guard manager)
Charlie Simpson (bicycle advocate)
- X Hunter Maltais (SPS Transportation Manager)
- X Peaches Thomas (safe streets advocate)
Richard Best
Jeanne Suleiman, KC Metro customer relationship manager in mobility division

Other Presenters/Public

Deborah Hutchinson
Nicole Larson – SDOT intern

Public Comment

No comment.

Last Month's Minutes

Approved.

SDOT Update

Seattle pedestrian advisory board - STSC and ped board are planning a joint meeting in July, the 14th at 6:30 (Wednesday evening).

SDOT transportation equity work-group is doing presentations about their process for City boards. The program manager has offered to come to STSC. Annya Pintak (Transportation Equity Program Manager, Office of Equity and Economic Inclusion (OEEI)) is the contact. This group is coming out of Office of Equity and Economic Inclusion within SDOT. SDOT also has a 'change team' with members from all divisions who apply racial equity toolkit.

Marilyn has been approved for re-appointment to board. At the Council meeting Alex Pedersen mentioned last year's report. Jennie brought up that she is trying to get this year's report presentation scheduled. Jennie also elevated this to the SDOT coordinator to get a presentation scheduled.

Jennie has language about crosswalk rule change for the annual report, will send to Margaret.

ACTION: Send Jennie potential discussion topics for joint pedestrian board meeting in July.

Collision Analysis Webinar recap - Peaches

Portland did an analysis trying to find data on how crashes were responded to and also planning for street design. They were looking to understand the causes of crashes, provide evidence to prove or disprove the theory that pedestrian deaths are rising because people are walking around distracted by their phones. It was costly and difficult to gather the information. The group took police reports from fatal crashes, traffic data, street view, speed data, other info trying to find all of the different characteristics that impact crashes. Data is on 48 car-ped crashes from 2017 to 2019. The focus was on equity, looking at which areas have been more impacted than others, areas with different types of street infrastructure, the neighborhood demographics. There are higher fatal crashes in an area with higher BIPOC, unhoused residents. Poor lighting was a frequent factor in crashes, also whether someone was using mobility assistance device i.e. walker. The team used that information to create an interactive map that is hosted on their website. The team noticed biased language in police reporting. The biased language tends to make it seem like the crash was the pedestrian's fault. They recommend that police should not be the group charged with following up on crashes. Recommended prioritization of street improvements in East Portland where crashes are disproportionate. Recommend changing the language from 'high crash areas' to 'trauma impacted communities'. Recommend establishing a fatal pedestrian crash response report. Peaches appreciated that they personalized the statistics. Often they are presented as just numbers, which keeps people desensitized to what is going on.

Richard asked whether there was any connection to transit stops – i.e. people running to catch a bus. Peaches said she didn't recall that, but there was a clear connection to how far away the next signalized intersection was because people will run across the street if it's a long distance to the next crosswalk. SUV's and trucks also were clearly connected to higher deaths. Speed limits and design speeds were also a major factor in deaths.

<https://americawalks.org/the-collision-analysis-you-want-your-city-to-do-to-save-lives/>

ACTION: Peaches will write a letter to the City requesting a similar analysis here in Seattle and that the City carry it out by funding groups who are already working in this space.

Crossing Guard Update

Lee asked whether crossing guards are working at Bagley and Eaglestaff (they are). Lee is scheduling an Aurora walk right at Bagley for June 1st. There's a coalition of organizations called Aurora Reimagined gearing up to do a drive to improve Aurora prior to the City & State doing their analysis next year. They are going to have visioning workshops in July & August, possibly online or in-person. Starting 2 weeks ago they are hosting walks along different segments of Aurora to get a feel for problems and opportunities. The next one will be near B.F. Day. SDOT is exploring the feasibility of having more at-grade crossings for pedestrians and bikes.

Seattle backed down from a previous plan to refurbish Aurora 15 year ago due to business opposition. Shoreline moved ahead with their plan and has much safer street conditions now.

ACTION: Lee will forward information about schedule for Aurora walks & workshops to STSC committee members as it becomes available.

Deborah Hutchinson – 75th St and 40th Ave NE

Deborah has experienced multiple close calls with drivers gunning through the intersection. Deborah has spoken to Ashley Rhead about grants for flags at the intersection.

There is already a flashing red light along with 4-way stop signs. This is an intersection of 2 arterials. Deborah's experience is that the traffic is heavier travelling E-W on 75th. Cars pull up in 2 lanes each leg, so pedestrians need to deal with eight cars when they cross.

Jennie will check in with the pedestrian master-plan team to look at whether this intersection is on their plan.

Jennie said that the overhead light in addition to the stop signs is a legacy condition that SDOT doesn't install anymore. Lee pointed out that SDOT installed a refuge island at a similar nearby intersection a couple of years ago on 39th which is a greenway. Richard said that improvements were focused on 39th because the expectation was that families would use the greenway.

ACTION: Jennie will dig into SDOT's history with 75th St and 40th Ave NE and any planning related to it and report back to the committee.

Annual Report

Margaret is editing a draft. Charlie and Jennie have both contributed language that Margaret will incorporate.

Hunter says MOU with the City for the Safe Routes to school Coordinator is complete, the job posting is with HR now. Everything internally has been resolved, the job description has been approved by HR. HR will post the job any day. They are also fast-tracking a pay-grade adjustment for some staff who will be supervising this position in order to keep pay-grade consistent in transportation department. This means some transportation staff will be getting well deserved and long overdue raises.

ACTION: Margaret will forward out draft of Annual Report for committee review on Monday, all committee members will get input back to Margaret by EOD on Wednesday the 26th so that report can be finalized by Friday the 28th.

Mode Choice Survey Planning

This effort has not moved forward. SPS's re-entry plan for September is due June 1st and all decision makers at SPS are focused on that now. Richard will follow-up on this for next meeting.

Ashley Rhead prefers keeping the mode-choice survey in the spring and would really like to do one this spring. Richard did propose that at SPS and the response was that it doesn't make any sense to do it this spring with the hybrid school format that they have and no general ed busing. Jolynn Berge said there is absolutely no way they would do it this spring.

SPS is looking at how to encourage participation from teachers & schools to do it in the fall. Marilyn pointed out that the Safe Routes to School Coordinator will be on-board in the fall and in a position to support the mode-choice survey.

ACTION: Richard will follow-up with mode-choice survey planning for the next year at next month's meeting.

Transportation Service Standards

The transportation service standards committee will begin moving at the end of the school year, right after July 4th. Right now SPS transportation is focused on planning for summer school.

Busing update: Durham busing pulled out of Seattle market this year. They used to provide about 45 buses. They are working with a new busing contractor called BusUp. One hang-up is that they need more fingerprinting documentation for their drivers. First Student currently has 200 drivers. The 2-cohort schedule doesn't work well with busing, drivers can only do AM or PM. SPS will need 420 to 440 drivers in the fall to be fully staffed. First Student offers a training program, but as soon as drivers are trained they are poached by other employers. One big thing to look at is increasing pay for drivers in the market to retain drivers.

Funding stabilization from the state will give SPS \$12 million plus to provide more transportation support. Projection is for 21-22 school year busing will be operated in the red for about 17 million. This is growing every year as more and more students are identified for IEP transportation out of their home-school zone. General ed busing will not be impacted by the projected deficit. The expectation is that gen-ed will be in a normal mode for the fall, which means they expect to be able to deliver both sped and gen-ed busing.

As we look at the transportation service standards SPS wants to build relationships with Safe Streets groups.

SPS will look into how they can create a structure in which they utilize drivers to provide as many hours of service as they can in order to retain drivers and provide them all more hours.

Fall is looking murky still. It's unclear what spacing will be on buses, i.e. 1 per seat or fully loaded.

Future Topics

- Mode-Choice Survey
- Finalize topics for Ped Board meeting
- School summer sign audits – Jennie will touch base with Ashley on needed effort
- Committee presentation to school board – Margaret, Mary Ellen, Richard, Marilyn
- Walk Boundary Subcommittee
- Seattle's climate change planning for transportation (when in-person meetings resume)
- Annual calendar lookahead
- Bus Stop Paddle Funds 2019-2020

Next Meeting date: June 18th