

CITY OF SEATTLE  
SCHOOL TRAFFIC  
SAFETY  
COMMITTEE

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

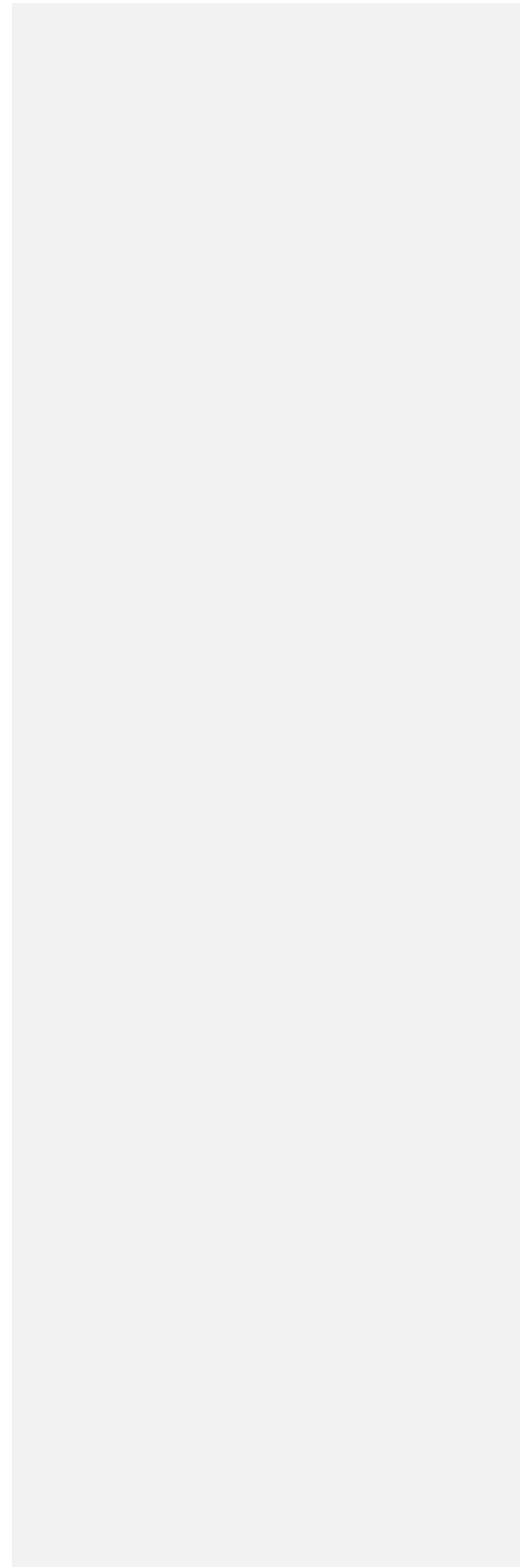


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Acronyms used in this report

OPCD	Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development
SDCI	Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections
SDOT	Seattle Department of Transportation
SPD	Seattle Police Department
SPS	Seattle Public Schools
SRTS	Safe Routes to School
STSC	School Traffic Safety Committee
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation

## What is the School Traffic Safety Committee?

The City of Seattle [School Traffic Safety Committee](#) was created 50 years ago on March 10, 1975 by Ordinance 104344 and codified in SMC 3.80. It brings together Seattle Public Schools, the City of Seattle, and community members to improve safe routes to school. The STSC is an 11-member board with 6 community volunteers representing pedestrian and bicycle advocates, parents, grandparents, and neighbors and 5 staff members representing Seattle Public Schools (SPS), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), Seattle Police Department (SPD), and King County Metro.

All meetings are open to the public. [Please come and join us!](#)

## What does the committee do?

A complex array of details needs to add up to ensure our children and neighbors have safe routes to schools. The Committee was created to ensure that there are working relationships between the different organizations that each have a piece of the puzzle and that there is a mechanism for any community member to raise school traffic safety issues and get a response informed by that multi-agency coordination.

The Committee:

- Provides a forum for community members to raise school traffic safety issues with SDOT, SPS, SPD, and King County Metro
- Helps connect professional staff across city, county, and state agencies to holistically address school traffic safety concerns
- Identifies needed crossing guard assignments using intersection safety data provided by SDOT
- Works to improve crossing guard recruitment
- Uses SDOT and SPS information to update elementary school walk boundary maps
- Reviews and advises on traffic circulation plans for new and/or renovated schools
- Engages with and responds to emergent school traffic safety issues as they arise.

## Where does the committee meet?

[Meetings](#) are open to the public and are generally held 8:30-10:30 a.m. on the third Friday of every month. Meetings are hybrid and one can attend online through Teams and in-person at Seattle City Hall (Room 370, 600 4th Ave, Seattle, WA 98104).

## Highlights of 2025

### Seattle Public School Walk Zone Boundary Updates

In Washington, each School District is responsible for determining the recommended walking routes to each elementary school (WAC 392-141-340) using a process that involves parents, school administrators, law enforcement representatives, traffic engineers, public health or walking/biking advocates. For Seattle Public Schools, the STSC is the group that supports the district in determining these safe routes to schools and thus elementary school walk zone boundaries.

#### Reviewing all SPS School Sites

For the past two years, STSC has worked with SDOT Safe Routes to Schools and SPS Transportation team on a comprehensive review of school walk zone boundaries for *all* 87 elementary and K-8 school sites in the district. This is the first complete review of all schools in over seven years. Following Washington State law, we started with a one mile walk out from each school building and then reduced the walking zone boundaries as needed by identifying hazardous-to-cross intersections based on traffic incidents and road conditions (crossing distance, travel lanes, arterials, etc.).



*Students crossing at updated crosswalk near Kimball Elementary. Photo credit: SDOT.*

Using SDOT data and input, we developed a safety scoring rubric to help review over 700 intersections across the city. All potentially hazardous intersection identified were then individually reviewed by the committee. This review also included crossing guard posts to see where we needed to add or could remove guard posts based on safety conditions.

#### Changes as a Result

As a result of this work, we made **37** adjustments to walk zones to 29 elementary and K-8 schools, adding to the walking zone for 21 school sites, and reducing the walk zone at 16 school sites where crossing conditions were **hazardous** (8 schools had both additions and reductions). 15 unfilled crossing

Commented [RB1]: Check for photo credits.

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guard posts were also removed where intersection conditions no longer warranted a guard and three crossing guard posts were relocated to higher-need locations.

**Thank You SDOT for making changes to intersections to keep kids safe on the way to school.**

**Let's keep it going in 2026!**

Walk zone changes went into effect at 14 schools for the 2025-26 school year. The remaining 15 schools with boundary changes will be updated for the 2026-27 SPS school year and visible in January during SPS Enrollment Period.



An example of the outcome of this process is **Emerson Elementary** in SE Seattle, where we had to close off the walk zone boundary west of S Rainer Street due to hazardous traffic conditions and inability to consistently staff a crossing guard at the Rainier Ave S & Seward Park Ave S.



Google Maps Street View of S Seward Park Way and Rainer Ave S



But we were also able to open up additional walking area for Emerson Students across S 51<sup>st</sup> Street because of a recent [SDOT safety project](#) to add a new all-way stop at Renton Ave S and S Roxbury St and a new crosswalk and center island at 51st Ave S and S Roxbury St.

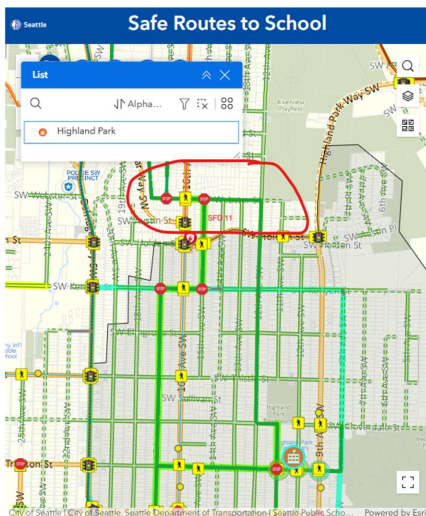


All-way stop at Renton Ave S and S Roxbury St and crosswalk at 51st Ave S and S Roxbury St. Photo credit: SDOT

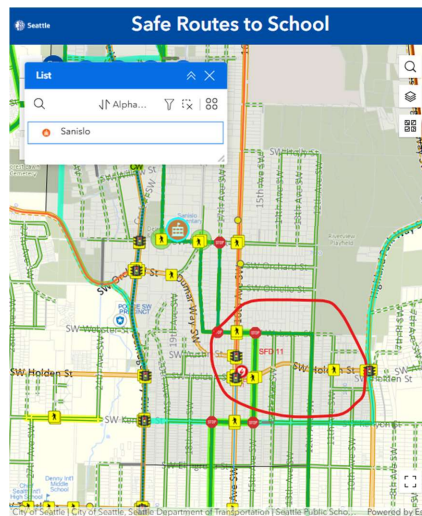
Commented [RB3]: Pull box on thank you for making changes

Taking a comprehensive approach based on intersections within one mile of school, regardless of current school attendance areas, allowed us to fix inconsistencies in walk zones between schools and ensures that walk zones for each site won't change if SPS attendance boundaries change in the future.

For example, SW Holden Street in West Seattle was already included as crossable for **Sanislo Elementary** due to improvements made during Reconnect West Seattle project related to the West Seattle Bridge closure. **Highland Park Elementary** is less than 1mi away but had a walk zone that ended at SW Holden Street, not reflecting these improvements.



Highland Park Elementary Walk Zone



Sanislo Elementary Walk Zone



A similar example where boundaries were inconsistent was in Queen Anne where the Coe Elementary walk zone showed Queen Anne Blvd N was crossable at Smith Street but Queen Anne Elementary showed Queen Anne Blvd as the northern boundary of the walk zone. Reviewing the traffic data, we opened the walk zone for Queen Anne Elementary north of Queen Anne Blvd N, matching the Coe map.

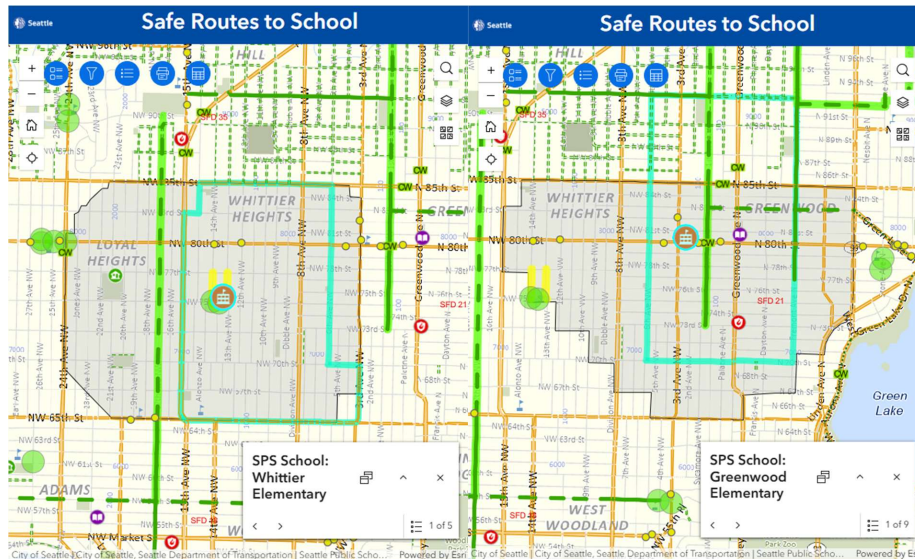
#### Where we go from here

As a result of this effort, we identified a watch list of intersections where further safety improvements would allow for more students to safely walk to school. In 2026 we will flag these intersections SDOT's internal tracking (DOT maps) for regular monitoring of whether there is any safety improvements planned and whether there are any additional traffic accidents that would then trigger a walk zone review. We will operationalize this data by reviewing the list of watch list intersections with changes at least annually, making sure that the SPS walk zones and crossing guard posts stay up to date.

One pattern that emerged from this data relates to arterials and nearby SPS elementary school sites. Where current attendance zone boundaries follow arterials, for example at Whittier Elementary in NW

**Commented [RB4]:** My goal is to get this done by end of October, review in November and thus be able to use for presentation to council.

Seattle where the Whittier attendance zone is bounded by NW 85<sup>th</sup> Street, NW 65<sup>th</sup> Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NW, students don't have to cross arterials to get to school.



Whittier Elementary Walk Zone

Greenwood Elementary Walk Zone

However, if the same arterials cut across attendance zones, for example N 85<sup>th</sup> St in Greenwood, hazardous conditions require offering busing to students who are well within the 1mi walk zone. For example, Greenwood Elementary is located very close to 85<sup>th</sup>, but students need to be bused in the attendance zone north of 85<sup>th</sup> due to a hazardous arterial crossing. We see this concern with hazardous arterials and the need to careful craft walk zones in areas such as 45<sup>th</sup> St in Phinney Ridge, 50<sup>th</sup> St in Green Lake and the U-District, N/NW/NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street, along Lake City Way and NE 125<sup>th</sup>, and painfully in South Park on 14<sup>th</sup> Ave S where multiple fatalities led us to close off the walk zone east of 14<sup>th</sup> for Concord Elementary students.

## Cross-agency collaboration

As an interagency commission, STSC is uniquely positioned to help foster collaborative work and holistic problem-solving across government agencies.

- **Site visits and walking tours:** After a tragic accident in the parking lot, multiple members visited Washington Middle School together to look into installing a [School Street](#) to improve traffic conditions near the entry to the school parking lot. The 20<sup>th</sup> Place S School Street is now in process of becoming permanent.



Commented [RB5]: Add item for advocacy for non-sworn officers to review automated traffic tickets.



STSC members also attended sidewalk walking tours, part of the [Sidewalk Development Program](#), where members of the community and SDOT come together to help figure out where new sidewalks should go and how Seattle Transportation Levy dollars should be best utilized for pedestrian safety.



Highland Park Sidewalk Tour. Photo credit: SDOT

- **School Speed Zone Ticket Review Process:** The STSC advocated at the state, city and county level to allow school speed zone tickets to be reviewed by parking enforcement officers in the Seattle Police Department, helping ensure that tickets can be promptly reviewed and issued, regardless of sworn officer availability. This change further helps support the expansion of school speed zone cameras.
- **Youth involvement:** It has been a goal of STSC to get more youth involvement. This year, we received public comments from Meany Middle School students and other middle and high school students. SPS and SDOT explored options for bringing young people on to the committee. We are now pursuing a Safe Routes to School high school youth internship in 2026 in partnership with the Seattle Youth Employment Program. We look forward to hearing more from and working with the youth on what they want for their schools and their city!
- **Intersection review:** Students, parents, and neighbors come to STSC meetings for public comment and to share their concerns about the intersections near their local school. Volunteer members and SDOT liaison members review the intersections in question and look into what traffic calming measures can be implemented. Over the course of the 2024-25 school year, 20 projects were completed that included traffic calming such as all-way-stops, flashing beacons, speed cushions, and intersection daylighting.
- **STSC, SPS, and SDOT coordination:** After advocacy from the Committee, SDOT funded a Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator position embedded within Seattle Public Schools. The coordinator has been in their role since August 2023 and meets at least weekly with the SDOT Safe Routes to School team to provide wraparound support for families to walk and bike at equity-priority schools. Here are some examples of this collaboration:
  - SDOT and SPS worked together to add bike racks at five schools this year
  - The Safe Routes to School coordinator, in collaboration with others, supported:
    - Students, staff, and families at Meany Middle School in advocating for crossing improvements on 21<sup>st</sup> and John

Commented [RB6]: Add in comment about King County Metro reviewing bus stop location.

Commented [RB7]: Can we be more firm about this? Have to check with Diane on status

Commented [GU8R7]: Did you hear back from Diane/others on the status of the youth involvement?

Commented [RB9R7]: Brooke provided update that looking like will go forward with SYEP. Need to update.



- New schools in developing walk or bike programs, including Broadview-Thomson, Beacon Hill International, and Bailey Gatzert



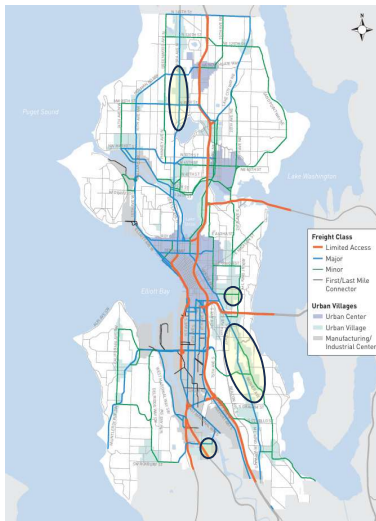
*Broadview Thompson Crossing Guard. Photo Credit: SDOT*

- The Safe Routes to School coordinator also ensures that maps of crossing guard vacant/filled positions are up to date and shareable for use in conjunction with the SDOT walk maps, facilitating this routine yet important inter-agency data flow and collaboration.
  - A new Crossing Guard Appreciation Day was instituted at two schools in spring 2025 and there will hopefully be even more next year!
  - The committee has helped SPS identify high priority crossing guard posts based on school site walk zone reviews. This has been and will continue to be helpful in our guard recruitment efforts to make sure we are prioritizing recruitment at those locations, among our other vacant posts.
- **King County Metro and SDOT coordination:** SDOT staff heard from Mercer Middle School students that sometimes they get stuck in the rain waiting for Route 50 bus after school. SDOT reached out to King County Metro's representative on the School Traffic Safety Committee who was able to assess the data and need and got a bus shelter with a bench installed in time for Mercer Middle School students to return to their new building. King County Metro also got involved in reviewing bus stop locations to see if there is opportunity to improve pedestrian and transit rider safety on S Jackson Street adjacent to Washington Middle School.
- **SDOT coordination with private and public schools:** The School Streets program continued to expand as additional private and public schools requested SDOT approval and support for traffic calming measures in their immediate vicinity. The city now has 20 School Street (more than ever!), including a recent addition at Kimball Elementary. SDOT also coordinates with schools around their bus and passenger load zones, school zone signage, school traffic safety cameras, and ADA parking.

Commented [RB10]: Noa - was ingraham this year or last year?

## Cross-board collaboration

The STSC is seeking to establish working relationships with other modal boards as we believe that information sharing and joint advocacy on transportation projects can be beneficial and amplify impact. We reached out to Freight Board in May and presented some mutual areas of interest around transportation corridors that are used both by freight and children crossing to schools.



SDOT Freight Routes Map with Areas of Concern for School Crossings Indicated

Often attendance boundaries for SPS school sites line up with major freight routes as those arterials also define neighborhood areas. For example, we don't have any elementary school walk zones currently crossing Lake City Way NE or 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NW. However, we do have several schools with walk zones, that cross major freight routes. We identified four corridors of mutual concern:

- Aurora Ave N at 92<sup>nd</sup>, 85<sup>th</sup>, 80<sup>th</sup> in North Seattle where we have students from Bagley Elementary, Cascadia Elementary, and Robert Eagle Staff Middle School crossing
- MLK Jr Way S in SE Seattle for students from Aki Kurose Middle School, Washington Middle School and Franklin High School
- Rainier Ave S in SE Seattle which runs near Hamlin Robinson School, MLK Jr, John Muir, Graham Hill, & Dunlap elementaries, South Shore K-8, Washington and Aki Kurose Middle Schools, Franklin and Rainer Beach High Schools
- 14<sup>th</sup> Ave S in South Park, Concord Elementary attendance zone

We also discussed other areas where freight and school traffic come together – one particularly painful example is S Weller Street and 20<sup>th</sup> Place S (Washington Middle School/ Franz Bakery) where the STSC has advocated for a Freight and Bus Only Access to reduce conflicts with passenger vehicles, school buses, pedestrians and cyclists.

The two boards agreed that it's in the mutual interest of the groups we represent that children should be able to safely cross intersections to get to school and to help drivers avoid pedestrian accidents while keeping freight moving. We continue to seek examples where we can work together for improvements that benefit all modes of transportation and will be joining the freight board to review the 14<sup>th</sup> Ave S Reimagined Project in South Park in January 2026.



Commented [RB11]: Find all SSTC and fix to STSC

## Working with the City to update codes and regulations

The STSC works with SPS and SDOT to address school site-specific concerns, work that allows SDOT to evaluate current policies and update them as needed. As part of this work we are also able to identify trends or opportunities across projects and advocate for systematic improvements. A key example is needed improvements in school land use code updates.

Since 2022, STSC and the SPS capital project team have been working with the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) to update outdated city codes that cost taxpayers millions of dollars annually. City of Seattle code [Chapter 23.51B](#) (on public schools in residential areas) and [Chapter 23.54](#) (on parking requirements) are outdated remnants that reflect car-centric thinking that is simply not applicable to our urban schools today.

To comply with the code as written, schools will have to pave yards and playgrounds to provide parking and cannot update HVAC systems on school roofs due to height limits, among other limitations.

This requires SPS to apply for “special departures”, a process that not only adds time and costs to the projects but also allows anyone to further delay the process by paying a small fee to challenge the outcome in court. This challenge system has been abused by a small number of individuals to delay school construction.

STSC has been supporting SPS staff in their work with SDCI to draft code revisions that will better reflect the City’s interests, planning best practices, and SPS’s needs. This May the SDCI and Department of Neighborhoods finally submitted their recommendations for final legislation to the council. However, as of November 2025, the Land Use Committee has yet to take up the proposed recommendations.

We urge prompt action by the Land Use Committee and Council to enact these long overdue and badly needed code changes.

## Advocacy efforts

The committee regularly writes letters to advocate for changes that would benefit Seattle schools and the safety of the children who attend them. Below are some letters that the committee sent during the past year, which can be found on the new [STSC correspondence webpage](#):

1. Support for proposed [Land Use Code changes](#) for public school construction
2. Advocacy for Land Use Committee action adopting public school code changes

## Reducing crossing guard vacancy rates

### Investigating funding issues

Per [RCW 28A.160.160](#), the state must fund “transportation services” for students living within the walk area or one mile of their school, comprised of: the coordination of walk-to-school programs, the funding of crossing guards, and matching funds for local and state transportation projects intended to mitigate hazardous walking conditions.

Despite this clear language and legislative mandate, state funding has not been provided in recent enacted operating budgets. Seattle Public Schools and other districts throughout the state are thus required to cover crossing guard wages using local revenue, fundraising, and other means; ask community members to volunteer their time as crossing guards; or simply allow positions to remain vacant, thus putting their students in danger.

### Monitoring vacancies

STSC evaluates safety conditions for elementary school walk zones and determines which intersections require crossing guards to allow young students to cross safely.

**In July 2024, almost 55% of all crossing guard posts were vacant. As of November 2025, only 39 % of the current 94 crossing guard posts are vacant - a significant reduction in vacancies!**

Open positions have been reduced both by hiring and through SDOT improvements at certain intersections, making crossing guards at those locations no longer necessary. SPS is also prioritizing recruiting based on walk zone intersection review data.

SPS now has a [live map](#) that you can visit to see current vacant and filled crossing guard posts in Seattle.



*SPS Crossing Guard Map and Crossing Guard Advertisement*

## School Traffic Safety Committee objectives for 2026 and beyond

1. Adopt rolling annual review of SPS school walk zone boundaries at hazardous intersections.
2. Add youth representation to STSC committee meetings, discussions, and work.
3. Continue to reduce crossing guard vacancies.
4. Work with other city modal boards on transportation projects to advocate for shared objectives.
5. Continue outreach with WSDOT to resolve traffic problems that cross City and State authority.

6. Continue to explore how to make Seattleites aware of STSC as a resource and venue.
7. Advocate for institutionalizing Safe Routes to School as part of the School Board Policy 3405 on Student Wellness and encourage schools to adopt Safe Routes to School as part of their Comprehensive Site Improvement Plans.
8. Review and analyze automated enforcement and stop bus paddle camera data.
9. Members will attend advocacy events, talks, site visits, walks, etc. in their geographic and/or interest areas.
10. Maintain and grow partnerships with other committees, advocacy groups, nonprofits, advisory boards, and more in the community, so that we can amplify the work and do more together.

## What we need from our partners to be successful

### Seattle Public Schools


1. Reduce crossing guard vacancy rate to zero
2. Maintain ongoing process for walk zone reviews to keep them up to date
3. Promote walking/biking to school by institutionalizing Safe Routes to School as a part of School Board Policy 3405 on Student Wellness and encourage schools to adopt Safe Routes to School as a part of their Comprehensive Site Improvement Plans.
4. Continue to build out systems for people to get involved – in traffic safety at their school and in their neighborhood, showcasing volunteer opportunities, support for people who want to create walk and bike groups - and make doing so feel safe and supportive.



Walk group to Dunlap Elementary. Photo credit: SDOT.

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## City of Seattle and Seattle Police Department

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1. Make available traffic enforcement patrols, based on community request around unsafe driving behavior, to protect kids, crossing guards, and drivers. Continue to seek long-term physical intersection changes to drive ongoing safety.
  2. Support the school construction code change over the finish line! SDCI has been working for over two years on a code update that will cut unnecessary red tape and streamline school construction permits only to have the proposal not be taken up by the Land Use Committee. Getting this code change finalized will save taxpayers more than \$2.5 million a year in school construction budgets.
  3. Focus on joint SDOT/WSDOT responses to unsafe traffic near freeways. In the past, these traffic issues have been dismissed by both SDOT and WSDOT separately. Build on existing collaboration to create comprehensive responses to dangerous traffic near freeway on- and off-ramps.

## WA State Legislature & King County Metro

1. Fund school crossing guards as required by current state law.
2. Prioritize transportation funding for public transit, Safe Routes to Schools, and walking and rolling infrastructure over increasing car infrastructure.
3. Continue to Invest in Vision Zero.
4. Focus on joint SDOT/WSDOT responses to unsafe traffic near freeways. In the past these traffic issues have been dismissed by both SDOT and WSDOT separately. Build collaboration to create comprehensive responses to dangerous traffic near freeway on- and off-ramps.
5. Support Metro's ongoing adjustment of routes and stops to accommodate students.

## Public support for systemic change and culture shifts in safety

1. Promote bike buses and other non-car activity in the streets to help change driver behavior and expectations.
2. Emphasize walking, biking, rolling as part of the transportation experience (transportation isn't just cars) and emphasize the joy in those other non-car ways of moving around.
3. Participate in the cultural shift and visibility of these other movement types in addition to helping with engineering, road safety, and other physical aspects of safety.