

# Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee

## Meeting held online

### November 19, 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 Jeanne Suleiman, KC Metro (customer relationship manager in mobility division)
- X Robin Schwartz – (New Member pending final authorization)

#### Other attendees

- Venu Nemani –(SDOT)
- Sam Zimbabwe – (SDOT Director)
- Vivian Maritz – School Board Member –elect

#### SDOT Presentation:

Venu Nemani and Sam Zimbabwe from SDOT discussed Vision Zero and attempts to bring pedestrian deaths down. Most of the programs are meeting levy commitments except for permanent sidewalks. There have been 30 traffic fatalities in Seattle so far this year. 19 have been pedestrians and 4 bikers. Of these there have been 8 hit and run fatalities which makes finding the cause of these accidents difficult. This is far above average with the previous years' averaging about 3 hit and runs per year. So far SDOT has lowered the speed limit to 25 on most arterials; put a hardened center line on Rainier Ave. and raised medians in other areas. They are piloting what works and attempting to engineer countermeasures. They are researching Aurora which remains the deadliest area in Seattle and are getting data on the speed reduction efficacy everywhere.

SDOT has also re-marked 2,500 crosswalks in the last year, built 1,600 curb ramps, started permanent treatments on Stay Healthy Streets, and free ORCA passes are now available to all SPS students through August with ongoing evaluation of whether/how to make this permanent, The City is also looking at expanding free transit to everyone under 18.

When asked about collecting data instead of the police Sam Z said there is already close cooperation with SPD on this and didn't seem to think it would be a problem to get data.

Venu Nemani is the new City Traffic Engineer. He has been a traffic engineer at SDOT for 11 years. He says he is "passionate in developing active transportation options and promoting vision zero".

### **School Bus Update**

Hunter Maltais reported that on 10/18 there were 142 suspended bus routes. Of those 50 were resumed by 10/25 and 17 more will begin after Thanksgiving. Bus routes are scheduled to maximize ridership although it doesn't always look that way. Low ridership routes are being migrated to Zoom drivers. Routes are being prioritized for resumption by the % of free/reduced lunch eligible students using them, however each route is paired with a 2nd route in the other tier based on what is logistically convenient and these bonus routes are not selected based on equity, just based on what works best for transportation. The goal is to provide good service and maximize the number of students served.

SPS hopes to restore all routes in the next 2 months. They have been able to restore service faster than expected. If First Student drivers currently using exemption aren't continued that will slow the speed of restoring routes.

On Monday interviews begin for SRTS coordinator. The MOU is not signed by SPS but is being routed.

### **Public Comment**

No comment.

### **Last Month's Minutes**

October meeting minutes approved.

**ACTION:** Margaret McCauley wrote a letter to the City Council members to request Data Collection about crashes be transferred from Seattle Police to SDOT. This letter went in draft to Jennie who revised it and sent it back to Margaret who will send it. There is a need for information about street conditions around crashes like MASS coalition prioritizes Data Collection in Portland.

**Walking Biking Curriculum:** There is a pause on this. Ashley R. told Jennie Meulenberg that a Survey and reporting is essential, and this had been authorized.

**ACTION:** The timing was unclear, and Jennie M. will ask Ashley R, to follow up with Richard Staudt to clarify.

**School Patrol Stipend:** Jennie discovered that School Patrol Staff can be funded from SDOT grants. This might be a good announcement for the Active Transportation Coordinator to make when they come on board next month. Richard's understanding is that hourly staff can't manage school patrol, needs to be teacher/admin/para. But if money went straight from SDOT to PTA then stipend could go to a parent. Parent could definitely do walking school bus with stipend.

**ACTION:** Richard will follow up on whether SPS would allow a parent to lead school patrol.

### **Crossing Guard Update:**

Yvonne Carpenter reported a loss of one crossing guard at Sand Point and two new guards starting today. One starts at South Shore and Dunlap and one at Bailey-Gatzert. There are 58 active guards, 41

open positions and when all are filled about 120 posts all together. Some are vacant now because of school closures.

**ACTION:** To make a map showing all the guard positions Yvonne will forward information to Jennie who will look into the possibility of SDOT making the map. MaryEllen can maintain it once it is created.

**Active Transportation Coordinator:** Interview of 4-5 candidates is on Monday. Reviews by Hunter are on Tuesday and Hiring on Wednesday. Hopefully, he/she will come on board soon after Thanksgiving. The MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) is still in process.

**ACTION:** Jennie will keep tabs on 4-way stop sat Lawton, Madison, John Hay, and loop in committee this winter as finalized. Check in again. (This item was missed at the meeting.)

**School Pool:** Julie Burrell and Jason Halvorson are the active Metro coordinators of school pool. Jeanne brought a letter from Julie about the plan. Richard Staudt believed that the only need for verification is that the driver was connected to the school and otherwise it was parents' responsibility to check on suitability.

**ACTION:** Richard Staudt will follow up with Jason Halvorson on next steps for making School Pool available to SPS families.

**School Board Member Visit:** Vivian Maritz, newly elected school board member visited. She left contact information and asked

**ACTION:** Mary Ellen will connect with Director Maritz to discuss to discuss STSC's work. Ms. Maritz plans to take a special interest in Transportation.

#### **24<sup>th</sup> and S. Irving**

Margaret brought forward Principal's concern. This is a classic spot for speed bumps.

**ACTION:** Jennie will refer 24th and S. Irving to SDOT for analysis.

#### **Jennie Meulenberg Report:**

##### **14<sup>th</sup> and Henderson:**

There is a lot of speeding and running the red light here. There's an apartment building east of the intersection and about 20 kids who cross to get to school. There is a project in the works to re-channelize 14th and make it 1 lane in each direction. This would be installed after the W Seattle bridge is opened next summer. There's also a project to put in a half-signal at Dallas across 14th. That would be a 2023 installation. There is a KC project south that would extend the Green River Trail that may narrow the approach to the intersection at the S. Score is 13, was 15 when evaluated in 2018. (Speed limit has been reduced.) SDOT has already upgraded signage and installed a leading pedestrian interval at the signal.

This doesn't qualify for a crossing guard based on the intersection score. The intersection scoring rubric that SDOT has uses includes ped collisions but does not include vehicle or bike collisions. This seems like

an oversight for intersections like this one where vehicle collisions put pedestrians in danger. **Future meeting topic:** Intersection grading rubric criteria.

**ACTION:** Jennie will find out who to approach at KC to ask about including a narrowing of intersection as part of their project near 14th and Henderson and look into whether anyone at SDOT is working on this.

**SW Genesee St and 19th Ave SW, Pathfinder**

Score at this intersection is 14 due to vegetation & sign blocking visibility. A crossing guard or School Patrol would both be appropriate here.

**ACTION:** Jennie will check if additional signage is possible at SW Genesee and 19th Ave SW, follow up on getting marked crosswalk installed (which is needed before a crossing guard per state law).

**ACTION:** Richard will check with operations about putting in speed hump on Pathfinder driveway.

**ACTION:** Mary Ellen will respond to Chris that School Patrol or crossing guard would be appropriate here.

**51<sup>st</sup> St and S Graham St:** Score is a 10, (considered good for crossing unaided). Majority of students live within walking distance. Closing all of S Graham looks like it works. Circle back on stipend for school patrol/walking school bus for parent.

**ACTION:** Mary Ellen will contact about using SDOT mini-grant to fund staff or parent leading a walking school bus.

**Stone Way and 41<sup>st</sup>:**

SDOT score is a 10. SDOT SRTS team is looking at this intersection for minor civil improvements, 22-23 install.

**ACTION:** Mary Ellen will get back in touch with Dr. Jhavari to update about Stone Way and 41st.

**Walk Boundary Subcommittee**

Richard will ask Hunter about using control room for Walk Boundary committee starting in January.

**ACTION:** Mary Ellen will send June, July, August, and September meeting minutes to Jennie.

**Jennie Meulenberg: Business Report.**

1. Robin Schwarz has been approved by the Major's office and needs approval by the Transportation committee which meets December 1<sup>st</sup>.
2. Charlie Simpson resignation gives another open position.
3. SDOT legal team discovered we have no By-laws. If no one can find them we will need to schedule them on next year's agenda.
4. We need to tighten up meeting rules. A quorum must be present to make a decision. Any action taken must be taken at a meeting with a quorum.
5. Walk map update: Jennie looking into Vehicle Collisions as criteria as well.

6. Seattle Transportation Plan and Comprehensive Plan update on agenda in December.

Future Topics

- 4-way stops (December)
- Walk Boundary Subcommittee
- Seattle's climate change planning for transportation
- Annual calendar lookahead
- Bus Stop Paddle Funds 2019-2020, 20-21, and going forward
- Possible grants to buy electric white fleet vehicles (Mary Ellen to research)
- Writing committee by-laws
- Seattle Transportation Plan and Comprehensive Plan Updates from SDOT (December, 10-10:30)
- Intersection grading rubric criteria

**Next Meeting date: December 17, 2021**