

**.Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee**  
**John Stanford Center, room 2750**  
**July 19, 2019 Minutes**

**STSC Attendees**

- ✓ Richard Staudt (SPS)
- ✓ Mary Ellen Russell, Chair (parent volunteer)
- ✓ Margaret McCauley (pedestrian safety advocate)
- ✓ Kevin O'Neill (SPD)
- James Wells (Metro)
- ✓ Mitchell Lloyd (SDOT)
- ✓ Marilyn Firman (citizen-at-large)
- ✓ Lee Bruch (citizen-at-large)
- Yvonne Carpenter (SPS transportation crossing guard manager)
- ✓ Charlie Simpson

**Other Presenters/Public**

- ✓ Dongho Chang, SDOT
- ✓ Steven Richard, supervisor for SPS routing coordinators

**WSDOT Aurora Corridor Assessment, Dongho Chang (SDOT)**

When SDOT placed the ped & bike signal at 92<sup>nd</sup> & Aurora it was the 1<sup>st</sup> in the state on a state highway without the warrants (i.e. collisions or high demand). Signal turned on August 27, 2017. One requirement to get permission was to report on collision trends due to WSDOT's concern that they might increase. 3 years prior there had been 12 collisions. The 2 years after there have been 0 collisions. From 88<sup>th</sup> to 94<sup>th</sup> during the 16 months before and after total collisions were down by 26%, injury collisions reduced by 40%, ped & bike collisions both reduced.

This gives SDOT a framework to permit additional traffic signals, such as on SR 522 in Lake City. This will also provide a template for crossings of highways throughout the state.

This project reduced car access at 92<sup>nd</sup> and Aurora by adding a center median so that cars cannot cross 92<sup>nd</sup> at Aurora. This was instrumental to the success of the project, making it very easy to cross for bikes and peds. SDOT plans to continue this approach at additional locations.

There is a large paving project currently underway from Battery St Tunnel to 145<sup>th</sup> St along Aurora. This will include curb ramps, but not other pedestrian amenities. SDOT is in early process of pursuing making ped improvements along Aurora similar to the improvements in Shoreline north of 145<sup>th</sup> St.

90<sup>th</sup> & Aurora is high on SDOT's priority list for future ped improvements.

Kevin brought up past difficulty in getting permission to put school crossing/ school alert signage along Aurora. Dongho said getting signage approved is very difficult, in part because anything done along

Aurora is a blueprint for the entire state. WSDOT is very conservative, very focused on data to back up decisions. That is why data from 92<sup>nd</sup> & Aurora is so important.

Likely future changes at 90<sup>th</sup> would include leading pedestrian intervals on the light to avoid conflicts with peds and cars turning right on red.

SDOT has a policy that in urban villages peds shouldn't have to push the button & wait for the ped signal. 85<sup>th</sup>-95<sup>th</sup> are newly part of an urban village, so the pedestrian button at 85<sup>th</sup> & Aurora may be changed to an automatic ped signal. SDOT is taking another look at this issue city wide.

### **Public comment**

None.

### **Recruitment update**

Charlie Simpson is joining the committee. Charlie is a student at UW getting a Master of Urban Planning, and employed at Alta Planning and Design. Welcome Charlie!

Rachel Osias has resigned. We will miss her and hope to keep working with her in her position at Cascade Bicycle Club.

**Action:** \_Get the word out about open position

### **June 14, 2019 Minutes: Approved**

SPD lost their traffic analyst. Kevin has been trying to find a way to get info about high collision intersections near schools.

**Action:** \_Kevin will send high collision intersection info near schools to Mary Ellen when it becomes available.

Mitchell: SDOT installs crosswalk striping in advance of schools opening depending on the specific project manager. Some prefer to get out ahead of issues, others prefer to wait for data.

**Action\_** Mary Ellen will follow up with Ashley Rhead and Brian Dougherty about getting crosswalks installed prior to QAES opening.

SDOT's policy used to be to wait for counts prior to making improvements, but STSC understands that current policy is for doing improvements in advance, Mitchell agrees. However, Safe Routes to School budget is already allocated for the year, and smaller than it was due to fund being raided.

Sometimes things can happen more dynamically if there is a project nearby with a contractor already on board where scope of work could be expanded to include an extra crosswalk. SDOT also has its own crews who can install crosswalks.

Street Use division handles SIP process, often doesn't coordinate with Ashley (Safe Routes to School), so Safe Routes to school often doesn't plan in advance for improvements.

Kevin brought up the fact that stakeholders are involved in design process for schools, asked whether there is a liability for the City in opening schools without crosswalks in place given the extended design and outreach process. When Mary Ellen and Margaret met with Mike O'Brien he brought up the high cost of lawsuits to the City from unsafe infrastructure.

Lee suggested following up with SDCI regarding locations of school entrances and paths. However, this might be better addressed with SPS capital projects.

**ACTION\_** Mary Ellen & Margaret will follow-up with O'Brien to discuss enforcement concerns with allocating funds to Vision Zero rather than Safe Routes to School.

### **Crossing Guard Update/s**

Yvonne: "New guard at Thornton Creek: Guard is filling the open AM spot at 40th & 77th and the PM post at 40th & 80th

I am assigning the guard at TOPS also to new location at Montlake 24th & McGraw giving her two posts locations

Lost a guard at Viewlands at 3rd Ave NW & NW 107th

Lost a guard at Arbor Heights 35th Ave SW & SW 104th St

Relocation of Daniel Bagley to John Marshall next year left me with 2 guards displaced so I got creative and relocated them to two very much needed posts at:

Viewlands at 3rd Ave NW & NW 107th

Greenwood at N 80th St & 1st Ave NW

I have 3 new applicants that just got fingerprinted and I'm waiting for them to clear to get trained hopefully for Olympic View, Madrona and Wing Luke/Van Asselt.

At this time, I have : 69 regular guards and 3 substitutes"

Yvonne recommended long-serving guards for SDOT to profile on their blog.

**ACTION\_** Mary Ellen & Margaret will follow-up with Elliot Helmbrecht on SDOT outreach and getting change to state formula changed to include crossing guard costs.

**Emerson Elementary** – Steven Richard

SPS routing coordinator Stephen Jones recently retired, Steven is training replacement bus coordinators. For the replacement he is working on Emerson Elementary routing. There is a bus at Emerson that has 1 stop .5 miles from the school within the walk zone, meaning that this bus is unreimbursed by the state. The school says this was because at one time there was no crossing guard at Rainier. Yvonne says there has been one there for 2 years, although the school was hoping to move the guard because they aren't crossing many kids. Steven would like the backing of STSC to remove this bus. Currently about 50 kids are using this bus, it could be a good opportunity for a walking school bus.

Mitchell said it could be possible to connect with community organizations that partner with SDOT to form a walking school bus.

**ACTION\_** Mitchell will approach Ashley about finding the right community group and help make the connection to get a walking school bus started for this. Margaret will do SDOT grant paperwork if needed.

The School Traffic Safety Committee officially recommends that this bus route be eliminated. Rainier and Seward Park Ave S will retain its adult crossing guard to support these students walking to school.

**ACTION\_** Mary Ellen will send info to Steven Richard about locations where the Walk Boundary Subcommittee felt an additional guard could open the walk boundary further and reduce the number of bused kids.

### **SDOT Safe Routes to School Racial Equity Analysis Report** – Mitchell Lloyd

The draft is available, SDOT will still be incorporating comments from report partners.

Report findings include that active transportation has a host of benefits for students including reduction in obesity, reduced respiratory disease, improved concentration and ability to learn, reduced stress and anxiety. Walking 1 mile is 2/3 of the recommended daily activity for kids.

**ACTION\_** Richard remembers that there used to be input to this committee by the Childhood Obesity Committee, will reach out to Victor Colman at copcwa.org to renew that contact.

This project took SDOT approximately 2 years to complete, and will heavily influence the next 5 year Safe Routes to School Action Plan process beginning at the end of this year.

This survey was taken by students in and out of the walk zone, and whether a responder was located in a walk zone was not recorded.

The survey shows people of color more strongly influenced by concerns of crime/harassment issues than white respondents even though the rates of actually experiencing these issues are broadly similar.

Distances to schools are self reported based on peoples' estimates, not reflective of actual percentages of where students are located throughout the district.

The police department has Safe placards in many businesses, firehouses, hospitals. One recommendation is to connect those Safe places to Safe Routes to School.

Jim Ritter at SPD coordinates the Safe Zones. They tend to be stable over time, which would make them features that could be added to walk zone maps.

**ACTION\_**Kevin will get information on Safe Zone locations and pass it to Richard.

Many of the responses about barriers to active transport involved concerns about crime and/or bullying/harassment. SDOT has a lot of experience building things, not as much around social issues. SDOT is working to strengthen partnerships with community organizations to address these concerns. It would be great to have a representative of one of these neighborhood groups on the committee.

**ACTION\_**Mitchell will put out the word about the committee opening to his contacts at community groups.

One interesting thing SDOT found is that many afterschool groups pick up kids from school and walk them to their facilities, but will not allow other students to walk along with them because they don't want to accept liability for these kids.

Is there some way that schools could formally partner with after school organizations to make walking school bus routes led by organization employees?

**ACTION\_**Richard will ask transportation if there is any history of a collaboration along these lines, and how it might get started.

Mitchell said SDOT is also considering developing yard signs saying 'this is a safe route to school' to put in peoples' yards to help foster a sense of safety.

**ACTION\_**Richard will reach out to staff/students at Franklin High School about joining STSC for 2 years, possibly to get credit in Social Justice curriculum, or to count toward community service hours.

### **Director's Rule Change updates – moved to August meeting.**

The next meeting will be August 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **Future Topics:**

- Crossing guard recruitment – push in July/August for next school year
- More info about funding for walking school buses at John Muir, how we can expand that to other schools (August)
- School staff training as crossing guards for backup
- End of year speed camera update with year over year comparison, (August)
- Pilot project for school road closure
- Look through walk boundary decision spreadsheet for intersections that SDOT should review for improvements.
- Possible to find funding for walking school bus leaders/ bus train leaders to have a paid position similar to crossing guards. In lower income portions of the City, where crossing guards are easier to recruit, this might be attractive position.
- Bus stop paddle funds – 2<sup>nd</sup> year accounting (August)