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PRESENTERS

Mary Ellen Russell, PLA, Parent Volunteer and Committee Chairperson

Margaret McCauley, PE, Parent Volunteer

Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee Annual Report

What is the School Traffic Safety Committee?

- created by Ordinance in 1975.
- 11 members including:
 - Seattle Public Schools (SPS)
 - Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
 - Seattle Police Department (SPD)
 - King County Metro
- 5 volunteer positions filled by pedestrian advocates, bicycle advocates, parents, grandparents, and neighbors
- All meetings are open to the public. Please come and join us!



What does the Committee do?

- Mechanism for any community member to raise school traffic safety issues and receive support to get their concerns addressed
- Recommends new school crosswalk locations and crossing guard assignments using intersection safety data provided by SDOT
- Reviews traffic circulation plans for new and renovated school buildings
- Updates elementary school walk boundary maps
- Works to improve crossing guard recruitment
- Connects SDOT, SPD, King County Metro, and SPS to improve collaboration on traffic safety issues



Seattle
Department of
Transportation



SEATTLE
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS



King County
METRO

We'll Get You There





Why are we
here today?

We report to you.



Top Needs for School Traffic Safety in 2019

- Active transportation support for students in Seattle Public Schools
- Fill in 756,307 feet of missing sidewalk within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of schools
- Get crossing guard vacancy rate from 39% to zero
- Push WA State OSPI funding formula to include crossing guards and other non-bus transportation support
- Ensure requirements for street improvements at schools are focused on enhancing student safety



Students need support for
active transportation

60% of SPS students do not receive busing.

These students get to school without organizational support.

Students and families navigate streets with **heavy and increasing traffic** and frequent gaps in sidewalk infrastructure.

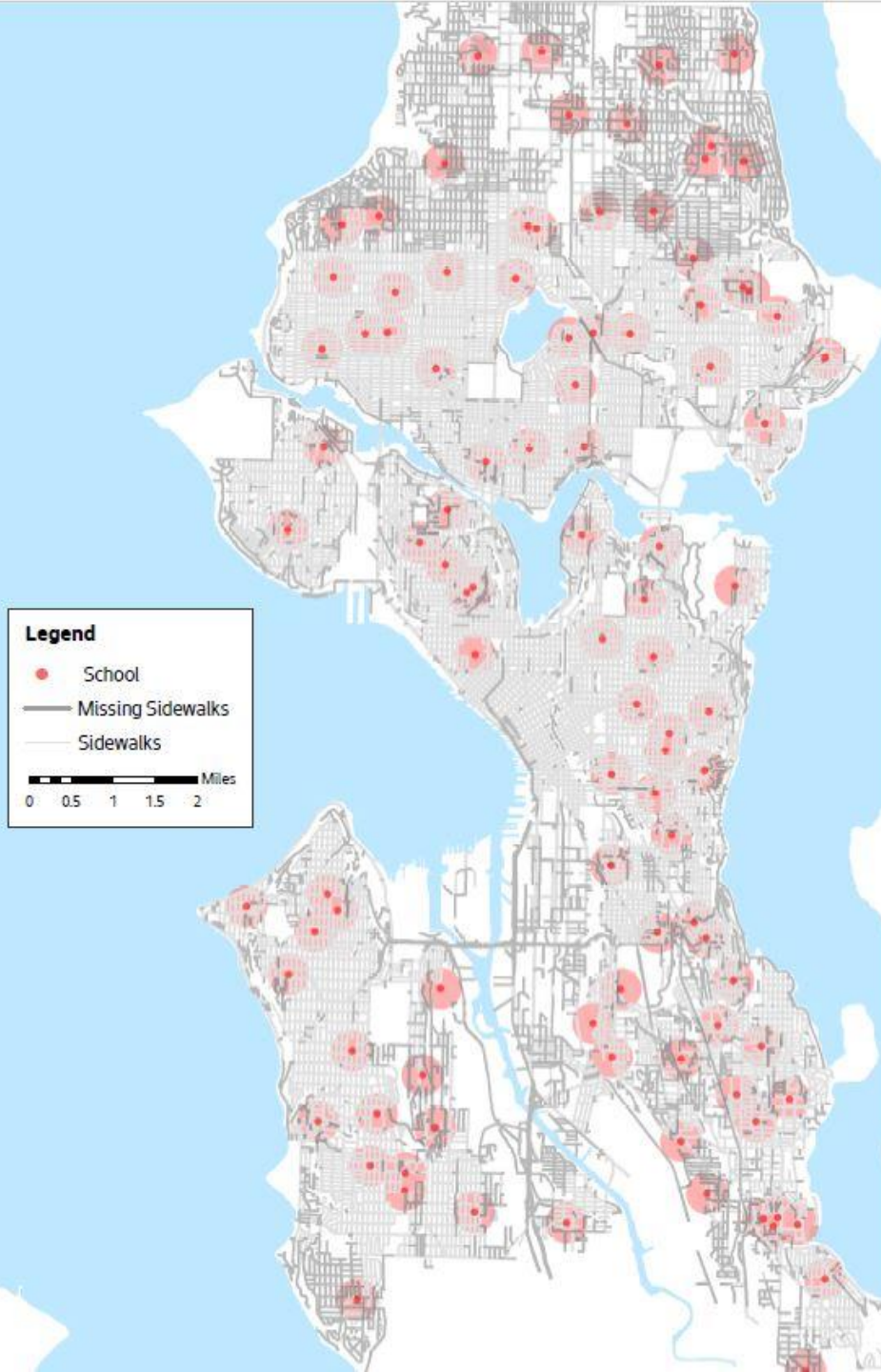
The City Has a Deep Backlog of Needed Pedestrian Safety Improvements

As shown in this map, as of March, 2019, there are:

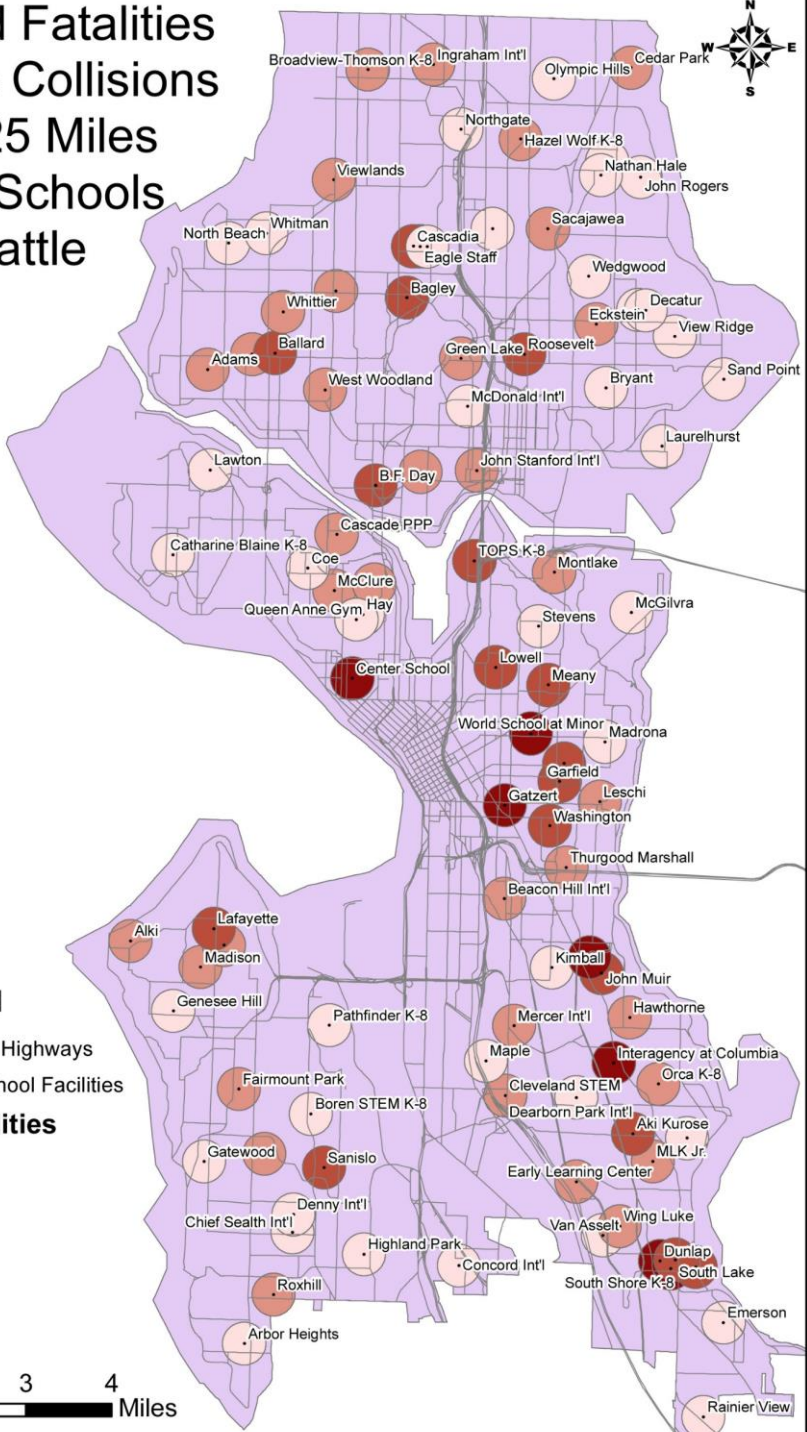
- 756,307 feet of missing sidewalk within ¼ mile of schools in the city
- 2,457 block faces missing sidewalks within ¼ mile of schools in the city

At current construction rates, SDOT estimates that it would take 1,000 years to construct sidewalks and curb ramps throughout the City.

In November 2018, the City passed a budget revision to **transfer red-light camera funds away from the Safe Routes to School** program into the general fund.



Injuries and Fatalities from Traffic Collisions within 0.25 Miles of Public Schools in Seattle



Every Year Students Are Struck By Cars

In March a student at Robert Eagle Staff Middle School was struck while crossing at a designated crosswalk.

- The student is recovering well from a broken leg.
- The car was fortunately only travelling 5-10 mph.
- Had the car been travelling faster, the injury would likely have been much worse.

Making Vision Zero a reality for children walking to school requires a continued commitment to funding the Safe Routes to School program.

Source: Charlie Simpson

Vicious/ Virtuous Cycle

Reasons parents and students feel that walking to school is not safe:

- Traffic
- Crime
- Few other students also walking

Families with means often choose to drive students to school.

This creates a **vicious cycle of increased traffic** which spurs more families to drive kids to school.

Disadvantaged families have fewer choices to get their children to school safely.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)



Vicious/ Virtuous Cycle

Schools with strong PTAs have been able to promote walking, biking, and carpooling to school

Volunteer support falls apart as knowledgeable parents follow their kids to new schools

PTA support for active transportation is haphazard and not equitable.



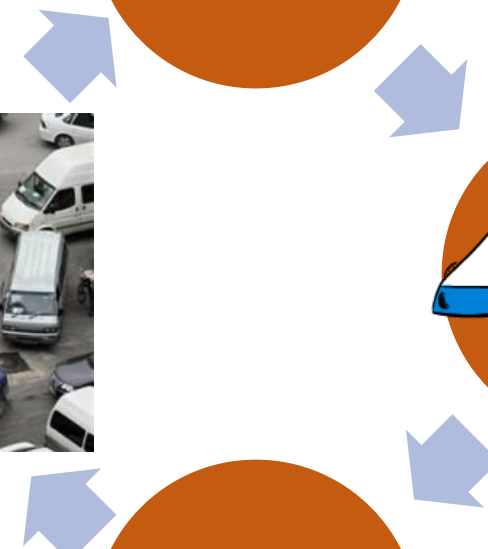
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Traffic Safety Concern



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Increased traffic + air pollution



Vicious/ Virtuous Cycle

Hiring a district-wide **Active Transportation Coordinator** would help students walk, bike, and car-pool to school.

As more students walk, bike, and car pool to school

roads become less congested at drop-off and pickup

The presence of other students and parents on streets increases the feeling of safety

This creates a **virtuous cycle of increased active transportation** which spurs more families to choose walking, biking, and carpooling.



Vicious/ Virtuous Cycle

Active transportation has multiple benefits:

- Walking and biking increases students' ability to focus on school work, improving classroom performance by as much as **half a grade level**.
- Reduced congestion around schools.
- Reduced air pollution around schools reduces respiratory ailments.
- Kids benefit from increased time spent outside.
- Lifetime health benefits to active commuting include reductions in obesity and heart disease.



King County School Pool: a missed opportunity

- King County School Pool is a free resource that helps families form carpools and walking/biking groups for school drop-off and pick up.
- Pooling reduces traffic around schools and saves families time and money.
- School Pool is used in Redmond, Bellevue, Kirkland, Kenmore, and Issaquah.
- Because of privacy laws, families at SPS need the school district to provide support to sign up.

How did you get to school this month?
 How many walk and roll trips did you take to school this month? Fill in one square for each non-drive alone trip, using the below letters to represent the type of trip you took
 W=Walk
 R=Roll (Bike, Scooter, Wheelchair, etc)
 B=Bus (School or Metro bus)
 C=Carpool with friends

Each 2 mile round trip walk or roll commute keeps about 7.5 lbs of pollutants out of the air

A one mile walk to school trip generates 1/3 of a youth's recommended daily physical activity

As much as 20-30% of local morning traffic is caused by driving students to school

Students that commute to school with a friend have an average of 75 minutes or more of additional social time each week

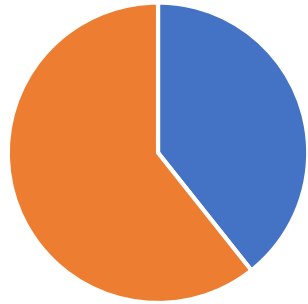
Reward Coupon

Name: _____
 Grade: _____
 School: _____
 Email Address: _____
(valid email required to receive prize)

Add the total number of trips by each type:

Walk total _____ Bus total _____
 Roll total (Bike, Scooter, Wheelchair, etc) _____ Carpool total _____

Crossing Guards as of September 2018



- 46 locations need guards
- 71 filled

Crossing Guards: A 39% Vacancy Rate in a critical safety position

SPS staff resources are inadequate for the size, difficulty, and importance of the crossing guard program.

SPD has helped STSC improve crossing guard recruitment.

State law requires OSPI to reimburse schools for crossing guard costs.

OSPI's transportation funding formula does not account for crossing guards. Only bus costs are directly reimbursed.

Walk Boundary Maps

In 2018 the School Traffic Safety Committee completed a review of all elementary school Walk Boundary Maps.

Walk Boundary Maps determine which families are assigned busing.

SDOT uses a rubric to grade intersections to help ensure decisions are consistent.

Families are assigned busing if:

- They live greater than 1 mile from their assigned school.
- They live less than 1 mile away, but busy roads or intersections make walking unsafe.
- The student has special medical needs.

Revised Walk Boundary Maps will take effect for the 2019-2020 school year.



Walk Boundaries & Buses

In the fall of 2018, a shortage of qualified bus drivers resulted in bus route delays of up to 3 hours.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of SPS transportation staff, the number of chronically understaffed routes has been reduced to less than 1%.

Further gains could be made by supporting the crossing guard program with increased staff.

A crossing guard at the double headed arrow would move the area shaded in orange from bus service to being able to walk, reducing the need for busing. This is one of many examples.



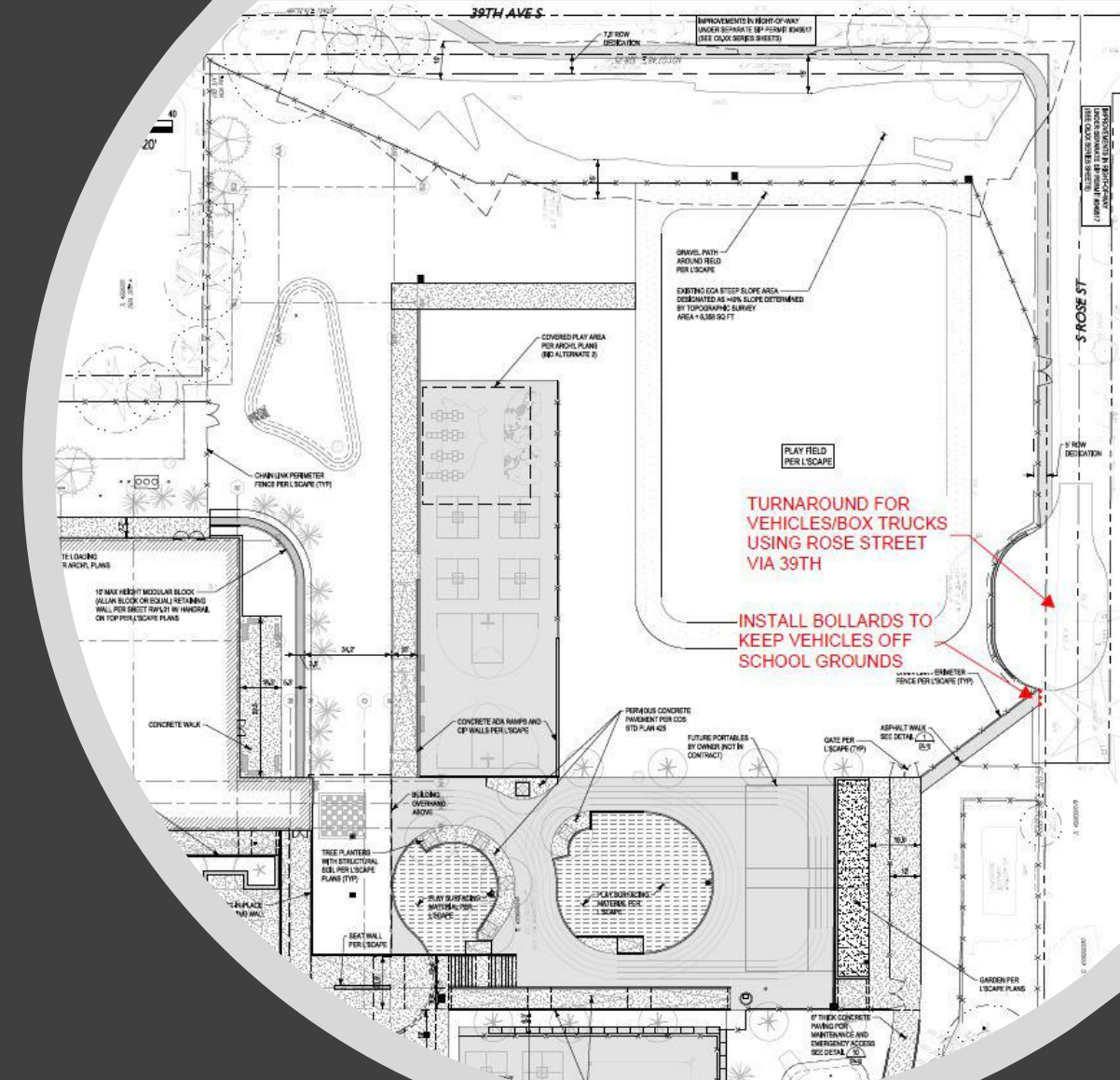
School Zone Speed Cameras

- SPD tallies # tickets issued by school speed zone cameras
- In 2017 the School Traffic Safety Committee began tracking trends over time.
- Ask to City: use the data and funds from these cameras to fix the safety problems they reveal.
- Greatest number of tickets are issued on southbound 15th Ave S at Mercer Middle School, with 826.6 average tickets. SDOT has cancelled a safety project for this intersection requested by the school.

Location	YY	Month	Avg	Change from Avg	2018-19												2017-18		
	Change	Rank	Rank		Avg	Sept 18	June 18	May 18	April 18	Mar 18	Feb 18	Jan 18	Dec 17	Nov 17	Oct 17	Sep 17	Jun 17	Feb 17	Feb 16
Holy Family Elementary School																			
EB SW Roxbury St																			
# Violations	30%	13	19	142.7	27%	181	71	184	168	155	126	154	65	106	161	139	98	148	242
6-10 over				100.9		129	43	132	117	112	87	107	53	78	113	102	71	106	163
11-15 over				36.0		45	23	46	46	37	35	36	11	28	39	33	22	37	66
16-20 over				5.6		7	5	6	4	6	4	11	1	0	8	4	5	5	12
>21 over				0.2		0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
WB SW Roxbury St																			
# Violations	-97%	26	13	175.1	-96%	7	90	147	195	252	150	192	62	180	256	261	168	223	269
6-10 over				124.6		5	65	107	148	175	117	145	46	143	189	172	111	150	171
11-15 over				41.3		1	24	35	40	66	30	42	16	39	54	74	45	62	50
16-20 over				6.4		1	1	5	6	11	3	5	0	6	11	12	12	11	5
>21 over				0.5		0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	0

City Code & School Construction

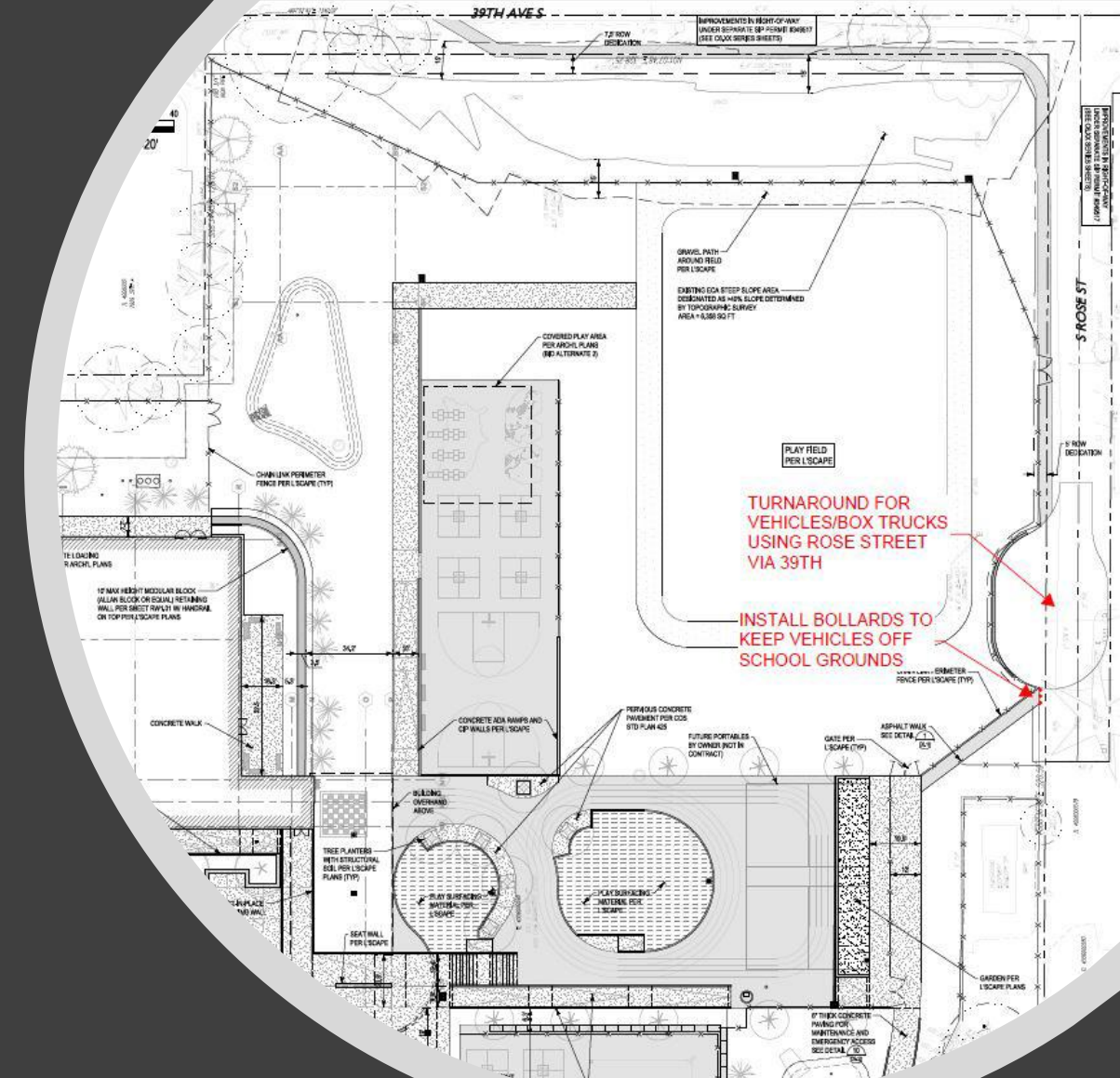
- When schools are built or renovated SPS is required to build street improvements.
- SDOT states that required improvements are limited to street trees and pedestrian amenities.
- STSC observed SDOT require improvements for commercial box trucks are Wing Luke School.
- \$ to improve turning for commercial vehicles delivering packages came from funds for school facilities.



Ex: Wing Luke Elementary. SDOT box truck turnaround (not for school) taking playground space. After multiple STSC requests, SDOT revised, still hampering school ability to optimize its traffic and security

City Code & School Construction

- STSC applauds the recent passage of CB 119398, improving focus on multi-modal transportation in the City's requirements for traffic studies.
- The current Director's Rule on traffic studies focuses on peak hour commuting capacity.
- STSC suggests the new Director's Rule shift traffic study requirements for school projects to focus on the distinct traffic concerns of families and school children.



Ex: Wing Luke Elementary. SDOT box truck turnaround (not for school) taking playground space. After multiple STSC requests, SDOT revised, still hampering school ability to optimize its traffic and security

What can City Council do to help?

- Work jointly with SPS on active transportation support for students in Seattle Public Schools
- Prioritize filling in 756,307 feet of missing sidewalk within ¼ mile of schools
- Collaborate with SPS to recruit crossing guards
- Push WA State OSPI funding formula to include crossing guards and other non-bus transport support
- Ensure requirements for street improvements at schools are focused on enhancing student safety





We appreciate the opportunity to serve on this Committee and to bring what we have learned to your attention.

Background

- Total of 26 cameras currently active
- 1 pair of cameras was deactivated in 2018 because the school relocated (Roxhill Elementary)
- School zone cameras are intended to reduce the speed of vehicles to reduce the possibility of a collision, as well as the severity if there is a collision.
- 13 schools are under consideration this year for new camera installations expected in 2020



2018 SRTS Safety Projects

- Camera revenue provided funding for more than 50 school safety projects in 2018
- Traffic calming in school zones
- Crosswalk improvements
- New sidewalks and walkways



New sidewalk on SW Orchard St near Sanislo Elementary School