

Transportation Equity Agenda

Funding Strategic Implementation of Workgroup Recommendations Councilmember O'Brien

Seattle Department of Transportation has a Transportation Equity Program. The Transportation Equity Program provides safe, environmentally sustainable, accessible, and affordable transportation options that support communities of color, low-income communities, immigrant and refugee communities, people with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, LGBTQ people, women and girls, youth, and seniors to thrive in place in vibrant and healthy communities, and mitigate racial disparities and the effects of displacement.

The program has convened a Transportation Equity Workgroup with community stakeholders. The workgroup has learned about the functions of the department and is in the process of developing an agenda with recommendations that will guide the department to implement and operationalize equity. This agenda is set to be completed in Q2 of 2020.

Our office would like to ensure that this program is staffed and resourced at an appropriate level.

Areas of focus for the workgroup include, but are not limited to the following:

Affordability, Housing & Displacement

- Transportation and housing are intimately linked issues. As housing prices rise, our city faces growing displacement. As people move farther away, their transportation needs increase. These challenges will require interdepartmental solutions that connect transportation and housing.
- Currently the Transportation Equity Program houses the ORCA opportunity program, providing free ORCA cards to youth and eligible people in the SHA program. The Transportation Equity Workgroup has identified the need to reach more vulnerable populations with transit passes and additional mobility options.

Community Engagement

- Currently there is an ambassador model that works well to connect the department with many different communities. The work group has a desire to move beyond the liaison model and resource community-based organizations to strategize and lead culturally competent outreach around transportation issues and projects.

Transit Access

- Currently our transit system best supports 9-5 commuters, travelling downtown. The workgroup has identified a greater need for neighborhood level access via transit.
- Frequency, reliability and off-peak transit service are just as important, if not more so than free transit passes at increasing access to transportation.

Transparency

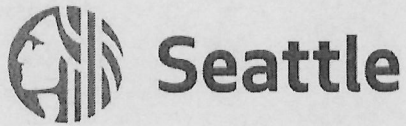
- To ensure that there is accountability for agenda implementation we advise keeping the work group members on to provide oversight of the implementation and hold the department accountable.

Safety

- In addition to building and engineering safer street design, the work group has also identified the need to design of public spaces to ensure people feel welcome and safe. One example of this are lighting and benches near bus stops.

Funding for this program includes hiring a strategic advisor to oversee implementation of the agenda and provide funding for recommendations that are not budget neutral, for example helping resource community organizations for community outreach.

While the exact recommendations of the workgroup have not been developed, our office believes in this model of engagement and wants to see that the recommendations for the group are implemented on a department wide scale. Recently SDOT added Equity to its core values and added an Office of Equity. These are great steps to take and this Council Budget Action encourage SDOT to continue to build on this work.



School Traffic Safety Committee

October 15, 2019

To Seattle City Council Members:

Bruce Harrell, Sally Bagshaw, Lorena Gonzalez, Lisa Herbold, Debora Juarez, Teresa Mosqueda, Mike O'Brien, Abel Pacheco, and Kshama Sawant

Regarding: Supporting Safe Routes to School and Active Transportation for students in the 2020 Seattle City Budget

The School Traffic Safety Committee (STSC), a commission appointed by City Council to work with Seattle Department of Transportation, Seattle Public Schools, Seattle Police Department, and members of the community to improve traffic safety for kids and families throughout the city, urges City Council members to support Safe Routes to School in the 2020 City Budget.

The School Traffic Safety Committee strongly supports two requests in the 2020 City Budget:

Restore revenue from red light traffic cameras to the Safe Routes to School program and Fund an Active Transportation Coordinator.

In 2018, revenue from red light traffic cameras was siphoned off into the general fund, a move that was out of step with the City's Vision Zero commitment, and out of touch with the reality that many families struggle to get their children safely to and from school through streets with aging or missing sidewalks and increasing traffic. The Safe Routes to School program provides critical safety infrastructure to help children at schools across Seattle walk to class safely. **Restoring revenue from red light traffic cameras to the Safe Routes to School program** is an important step to make Seattle's streets safer for kids and families.

Half of the students in Seattle Public Schools do not receive busing. These kids are expected to make their own way to school each day through streets that are increasingly congested and often dangerous. Many parents who have the means to do so make the decision to drive their kids to school every day, resulting in heavy traffic around Seattle schools. This leaves those kids whose families do not have the option to drive, disproportionately low-income kids and people of color, in even more dangerous conditions.

An Active Transportation Coordinator is needed support families and students walking and biking to school. This coordinator will help to improve programs such as the School Crossing Guard program, which currently has vacancies in one of three positions, and Walking School Bus and Biking School Bus programs, which are inequitably spread around the city.

Funding an Active Transportation Coordinator will have multiple benefits for families and communities in Seattle. More kids walking and biking reduces traffic, making the streets around schools safer for all kids on the street. More walking and biking also reduces air pollution around schools, making a tangible



difference for students with asthma and other respiratory ailments. And studies show that walking and biking to school increases students' ability to learn at school.

On behalf of the School Traffic Safety Committee, I am encouraged to see the leadership coming from City Council members supporting pedestrian safety. Restoring revenue from red light traffic cameras to the Safe Routes to School program and Funding an Active Transportation Coordinator are investments in Seattle's children and future. Please vote to include these items in the 2020 budget!

Thank you for your work making our streets safer for kids and families.

On behalf of School Traffic Safety Committee volunteers,

Mary Ellen Russell, PLA
Chairperson, School Traffic Safety Committee
stsc@seattle.gov

Active Transportation Coordinator

Funding a position at Seattle Public Schools

58% of students in the Seattle Public Schools District live within the school walk zone and are not served by school bus routes, yet only 30% of them walk and bike. Particularly in schools with dangerous streets nearby, many parents who have the means to do so make the decision to drive their kids to school every day. The increase in vehicle traffic around the school leaves those kids who do not have the option, disproportionately low-income kids and people of color, in even more dangerous conditions.

Currently walk and bike to school programs are championed by parent volunteers. When students leave a school, those programs evaporate. There is also an inequity in schools where parents have the time and resources to support walking and biking to school programs.

An active transportation coordinator would help leverage safe routes to school infrastructure by providing human infrastructure, like encouragement and crossing guards that support families getting to school safely.

King County School Pool is a resource that SPS is currently not utilizing. This tool can help coordinate walking and biking school buses through parents. This role could figure out how to deploy this tool and provide another option for busy families.

One in Three schools have a vacant crossing guard position. This can greatly reduce the walkshed of a school. Especially when there is a high-speed arterial near the school.

A huge part of our AM peak congestion is caused by school drop off. Getting children to school is often cited as a major reason why adults drive along to work. By improving safety and accessibility for walking and biking to school, we also open the door for more parents to commute to their jobs via transit, walking or biking.

This position is supported by the School Traffic Safety Commission, members of the Seattle Public School Board, Seattle Neighborhood Greenways and has been included in the MASS Transportation Package.

There is a model for this structure through the ORCA Opportunity Program, where the City grants funding for a coordinator who can distribute ORCA cards to students.

To monitor impacts of this role there would be an annual joint report back annually. Assess funding and impact of the role in 5 years to assess if the program was successful at increasing percentage of students walking and biking to school across the district.