Transportation, land use, & community impacts of the PPS “Rightsizing” plan

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Sunnyside Environmental School PTSA and Bike Bus

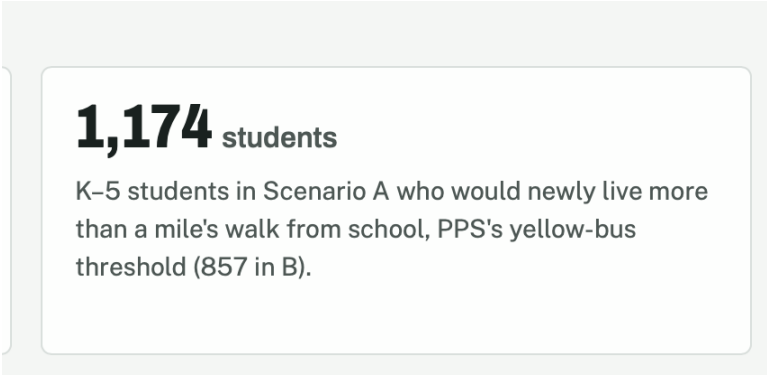
What is the PPS “Rightsizing” plan?

- Proposal to close 11-14 schools in Portland and change programs and redraw boundaries at many more.
- Around 8,000 students (⅓ of students in PPS) will change schools.

This presentation focuses on concerns and unanswered questions around land use, transportation & community impacts related to this process.

School closures will impact transportation for students, families, and Portland communities.

- Larger boundaries = longer commutes to school.
- Concentrating Dual Language Immersion (DLI) into “hubs” = further commutes for bilingual students in particular.
- More cars on the street = more traffic, more congestion, more crashes.
- More traffic directly adjacent to schools, which in turn makes it more dangerous and unappealing to walk or bike to school.
- More driving to school = more exhaust and pollution into children’s lungs.
- Families without cars, low-income families, and those already facing transportation challenges will be disproportionately impacted.



https://chrisloer.github.io/pps-closures/

Increasing distance to school goes against Portland's own goals and policies.

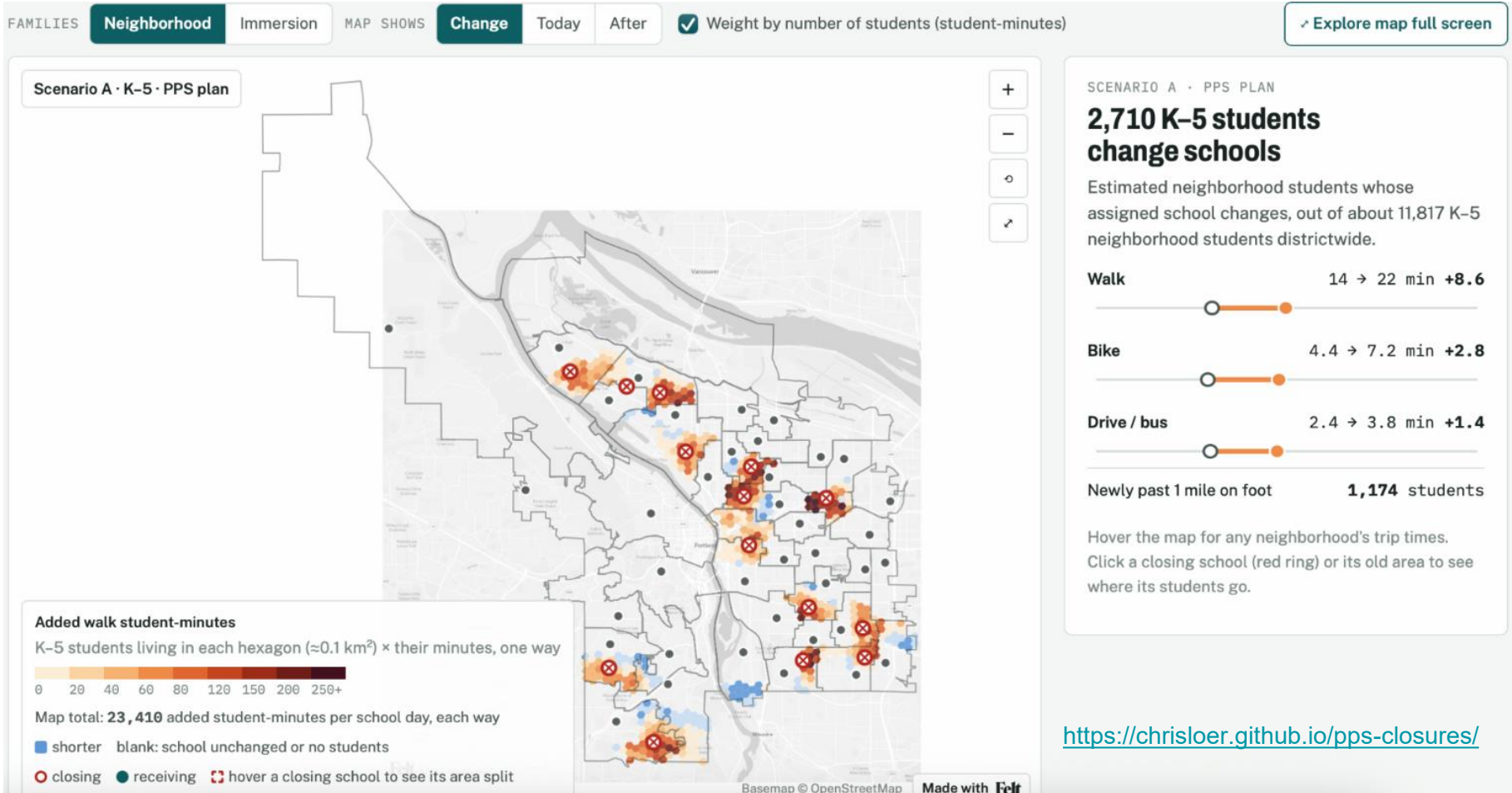
- Vision Zero
- Safe Routes to School
- PPS's own Climate Policy:
  - Goal 1.4: PPS will minimize greenhouse gas emissions from student and staff transportation, including transitioning to electric or low-emission vehicles.
- **Safe Routes to School, Bike Buses, and Walking School Buses only work**







Averages don’t tell the whole story.



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For some students, travel time would increase dramatically: Example of Rose City Park

Rose City Park +19.1 min

The largest added walk among K–5 closures (Scenario A under PPS's plan, to Scott). The share walking more than a mile goes from 0% to 85%.

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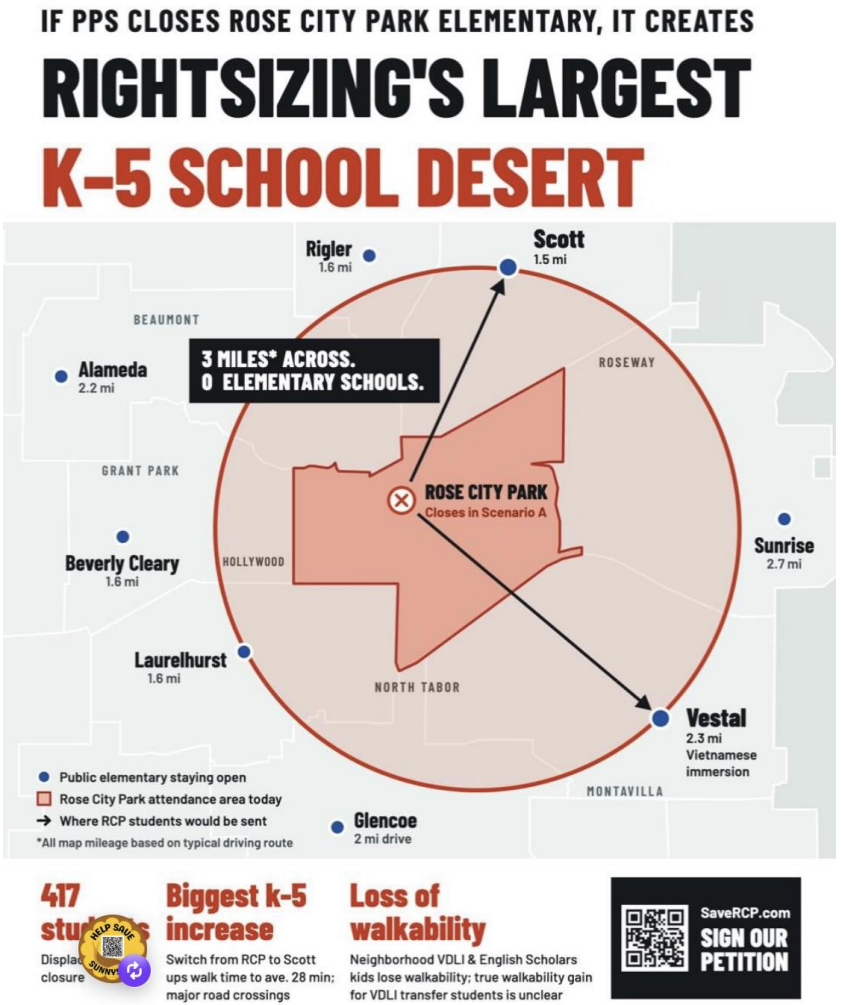

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Nuances and details matter: Example of Sunnyside Environmental School K-8

- Sunnyside not technically closing, but switching from a blended neighborhood/focus K-8 to a “neighborhood” K-5.
- **Community impacts:** Loss of significant amounts of student community service & engagement.
- **Transportation impacts:** % of students within 1 mile of Sunnyside school would drop from 96.8% to 65.5%, reducing bikeability and walkability: more traffic, more cars, fewer kids walking and biking.
- **Long term:** Enrollment projected to decline, sending SES into a doom spiral, risk of future closure.

SUNNYSIDE ENVIRONMENTAL

ENROLLMENT, PROGRAMS & MAPS

How many students are expected?

School year	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32
No changes	484	481	474	478	475
Options A and B	376	343	317	281	235

No changes



Options A and B



Some of the questions that PPS has not yet answered:

- **Transportation questions:**
  - Across PPS, in each scenario, how will transportation patterns shift due to increased numbers of students living more than 1 mile from school?
  - Will there be a shift in SOV trips and/or congestion around schools? What is the anticipated traffic impact of parents who will drive their students to school instead of walking or biking? What is the impact of more buses in the neighborhoods every day?
  - Will there be impacts to demand for school buses or TriMet buses? What costs will accrue to the School District and/or TriMet, and how will the District pay for these additional costs?
  - What is the environmental impact of these additional car and bus trips?
  - What is the safety impact? Will there be additional crashes based on travel changes? What about safety directly near schools?
  - What are the equity impacts? Who will be disproportionately impacted?
- **Land use & community impact questions:**
  - What is the impact of closed school buildings on property values, local businesses, neighborhood safety? How will PPS prevent closed buildings from becoming a nuisance or hazard? What will this cost?
  - Which schools and surrounding rights-of-way have already been heavily invested in by the City (Transportation, Water & Sewer, Parks, and other bureaus)? (Question posed by D2 Councilor Ryan)
  - What are other community impacts of closed school buildings & loss of community hubs?

“walking and biking... That's a luxury and a privilege that not every student has.” – School Board Member Michelle DePasse, Oct 6, 2026.

Walking and biking to school should not be a luxury or a “nice-to-have privilege.”

The transportation and land use impacts of school closures need to be thoroughly considered before decisions are made on PPS's scenarios.

Putting more students in cars for longer trips has consequences for the city's Vision Zero goals, climate goals, and congestion management.

Closing school buildings impacts communities and neighborhoods.

THE ASK: SE Uplift LUTC should ask City Council, PBOT, and PPS for transportation and land use impact studies on the different scenarios, including the no-change scenario.