

With proper forethought, schools can do very much for the community, more than the all-important function of educating children. The elementary school, particularly, is one of the keystones in the arch to better social and physical environment for urban homes. Creation and maintenance of good neighborhood environment in any city is a difficult task, demanding the whole-hearted participation and co-operation of all local governmental agencies, as well as the real estate profession and the State Department of Transportation. Most large cities have failed -- in truth, never tried -- and are only now partially waking up to their sorry plights. The underlying cause of this deterioration is an accumulation of public decisions -- or lack of them -- in the name of economy and expediency coupled with an almost universal attitude by public agencies that their responsibility for community well-being stops within the narrow confines of their particular single-purpose function.

Added to its function of education, the public elementary school is an important device for creating and maintaining an environment favorable to good home living. The school is basically a service element to a group of homes. Inside a city, no cleavage in the form of a heavy traffic arterial, industrial district, business strip, or topographic barrier should separate the school from any section of the residential group it serves. The school attendance district boundary should be placed at these cleavages, barriers and separators. The pupil capacity of the school should be scaled to the size of the residential group it serves. No more classrooms should be built than are necessary to do this.

The houses located on the opposite side of traffic barriers from the school served by them are certainly at a disadvantage. For this reason, their total environment as a place to live is not the best. This factor is reflected in their lower market values relative to houses of similar age and quality, but better situated with respect to the school serving them. Assessed values are likewise affected. A consistent policy of locating and controlling the size of schools, integrated with total community development, can be beneficial not only in the human sense, but financially to the district itself. Lloyd T. Keefe

Partnering for Better Planning and Lower Cost

School districts need to partner with local and state government agencies and neighborhood groups to coordinate planning, and lower construction and maintenance costs by sharing resources and facilities. School districts should be cautious partnering with corporations and other private groups. A public / private partnership, which starts as mutually beneficial, may change in character as the private and public entities change over time and their respective goals change. In addition, public / private relationships may be complicated by a private partner's business ties to other companies such as construction or real estate, for example. Avoid conflicts of interest and assure the public support and oversight necessary for long-term fundamental institutions, such as public school facilities, by partnering with all appropriate public institutions.

Acknowledgments:

Compiled from public sources, for more information:

Planning for Schools & Liveable Communities
The Oregon School Siting Handbook, 2005
www.oregon.gov/LCD/TGM/docs/schoolsitinghandbook.pdf

Land for Schools
Prepared for School District No.1 Multnomah County
By Portland City Planning Commission
Lloyd T. Keefe, Planning Director
Amo De Bernardis, Assistant Superintendent

Why Johnny Can't Walk to School
www.nationaltrust.org/issues/downloads/schools_why_johnny.pdf
www.NeighborhoodSchoolsAlliance.org

True Public Process

Portland Public Schools is proposing spending billions on new school construction and they will be asking for your input. With such massive cost and livability implications, assure you are given the time and information necessary to make your input count.

Look to the Sellwood Bridge Project (www.sellwoodbridge.org) as an example of the proper way to engage the public on a large-scale capital project. Since this bridge project is just a fraction of the expense and complexity of the PPS schools "reshaping" project, no less a method should be used to engage the public.

Do not be rushed into a decision without complete information.

Support Portland's Neighborhood School Plan

Maintain and Reopen Our:

- Schools to which more children can walk or bike
- Schools designed to fit growing neighborhoods, with room for art, music, computers and PE
- Well sited schools, adjacent to parks, with playfields meeting Oregon's State School Acreage Standards
- Schools damaged by the PPS Open Transfer Policy



Clarendon School is one of the youngest public schools in Portland. Schools such as Clarendon sit empty while children are bused across town to larger schools. Sited next to a large park, away from major arterials, Clarendon is a safe, healthy school and should be remodeled and reopened.

Support Portland's existing, neglected Neighborhood School facilities and planning standards. Maintaining and remodeling classic bricks and mortar schools costs less than siting new big-box schools.

school capacity standards

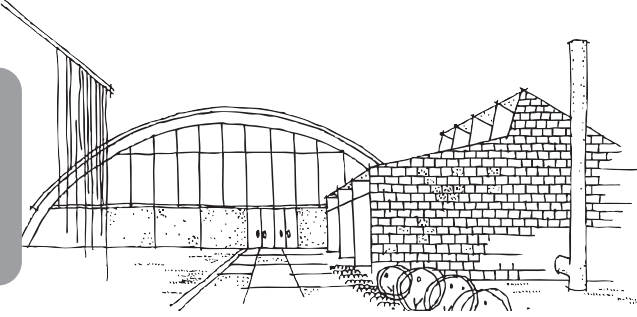
The optimum capacity for an elementary school is the number of classrooms necessary to house the students residing within the residential neighborhood as bounded by major traffic arterials or other barriers.

School capacity planning based on a neighborhood's maximum potential pupil population, supports a school environment most conducive to learning by reducing unnecessary disruption from: school boundary shifts, overcrowded schools or substandard temporary portable classrooms. In addition, excess classroom space will find productive use as a community space supporting enrichment activities and community partner activities such as neighborhood meetings, preschool classes and special or vocational education. These activities support community livability and strengthen bonds among residents of all ages.

Maximum potential pupil density is based upon birth trends and current residential zoning, taking into consideration the projected rate of housing in-fill.

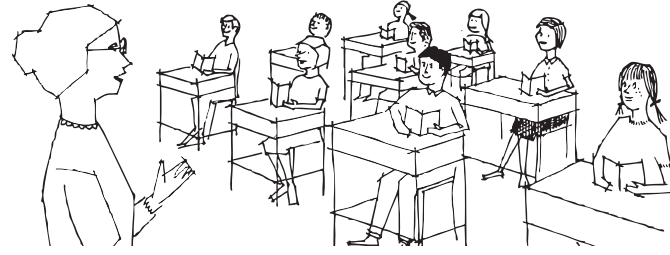
There is a preponderance of opinion and evidence that for good educational opportunity, for the exercise of effective discipline, for the achievement of teamwork between the teachers and the parents in educating children and bringing about proper personality development, elementary schools should not be permitted to exceed in capacity more than 3 classrooms per grade. Lloyd T. Keefe

minimum
1
CLASSROOM
PER GRADE



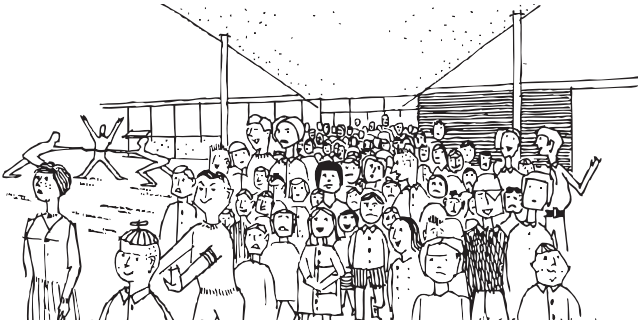
Schools of lesser capacity cannot justify special purpose facilities, but may share facilities with other public partners.

desirable
2
CLASSROOMS
PER GRADE



Provides a moderate-sized educational facility, which affords a school environment most conducive to learning.

maximum
3
CLASSROOMS
PER GRADE



Schools of greater capacity are more difficult to administer.

school boundary and siting standards

Divide elementary school attendance areas at heavy traffic streets, and other natural barriers, so children can walk and bike safely to elementary school and the park.

Excerpts from:
Planning for Schools & Liveable Communities
The Oregon School Siting Handbook, 2005

The School Site Takes Full Advantage of Existing Resources

School sites close to existing infrastructure reduce the need for new facilities. In short, by making good use of existing resources, schools can reduce their physical and financial impact on the community and the environment. Integrating well-designed schools into existing or proposed neighborhoods efficiently uses streets, sidewalks and other infrastructure. Preserving historic school buildings helps maintain neighborhood identity and treasured community landmarks, and reusing existing buildings reduces land consumption. School sites that are close to existing playfields or open space provide students with exercise opportunities and access to natural resources.

Transportation Choices

A well-sited school gives school children more transportation choices. This is good for children and good for the community for several reasons: (1) greater accessibility reinforces schools as community focal points; (2) reducing the number of cars on the road decreases traffic congestion and air pollution; (3) opportunities for daily exercise encourage children to develop healthy lifestyles; and (4) children acquire life skills and habits that incorporate a variety of transportation options.

School Siting Principals

Public schools should be located and dimensioned to serve multiple community purposes.

Elementary schools should be located next to and developed with neighborhood parks:

- Provides year around recreation facilities for adults and children
- Eliminates duplication of equipment and buildings
- Saves tax money

Elementary schools should be located in the centers of school neighborhoods which are bounded by traffic arterials or other hazardous or natural barriers.

Pupil capacity should be scaled to the size of the school neighborhood, and no school should exceed three classrooms per grade.

Sites should be of sufficient size to accommodate all school activities without encroaching upon rightful space and quiet of bordering homes.