

More than Blinky Lights: Projects and Best Practices in School Area Safety

Oregon Active Transportation Summit 2026



Speakers



Gary Obery
ODOT



Jeri Stroupe
PBOT



Julia Klaus
Alta Planning + Design



Maura Paxton
Alta Planning + Design



Megan Ramey
Hood River County

Agenda

- Introduction (5 mins)
- Exploring ODOT's Guide to School Area Safety (10 mins)
- Program Overview: City of Portland (10 mins)
- Program Overview: Hood River County (10 mins)
- Education Programs for School Area Safety (10 mins)
- Questions and Discussion (15 mins)



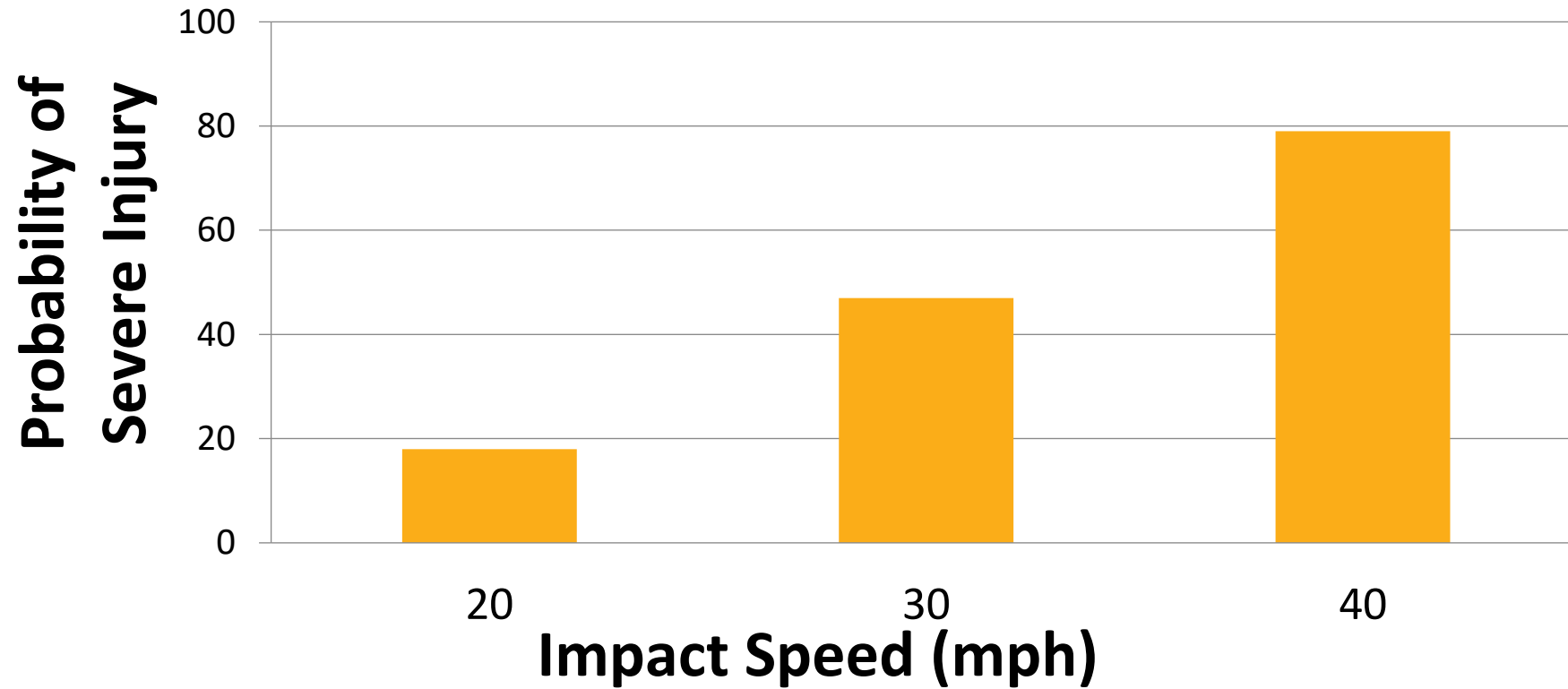
School Areas

- **School Areas:** General vicinity of the school.
 - **School Zones:** Defined section of roadway around the school with unique legal standing.
 - **School Speed Zones:** A section of roadway in a school zone with reduced speed limits



Pedestrian Crashes

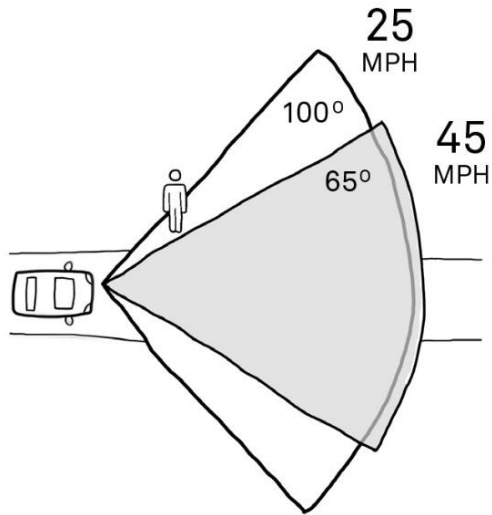
Why is going slow so important?*



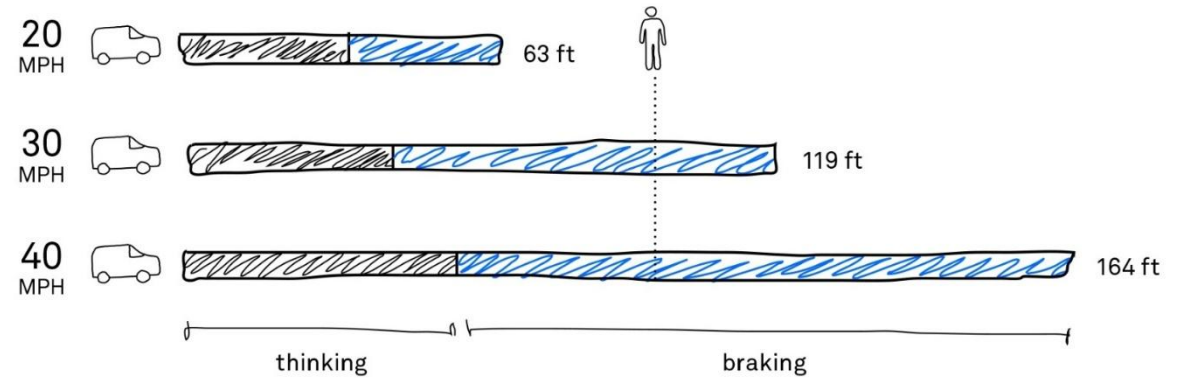
*Tefft, Brian. *Impact Speed and a Pedestrian's Risk of Severe Injury or Death*. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 2011.

Pedestrian Crashes

Why is going slow so important?



Drivers at high speeds have a narrower field of vision



Drivers at high speeds travel further before they can react and have a higher braking distance

Exploring The Guide to School Area Safety

School Area Safety in Practice



A Guide to School Area Safety



- Updated in 2025
- Laws, Rules, and Standards About School Areas
- Safety Design Toolbox
- Traffic Control Elements
- School Zone Safety Resources

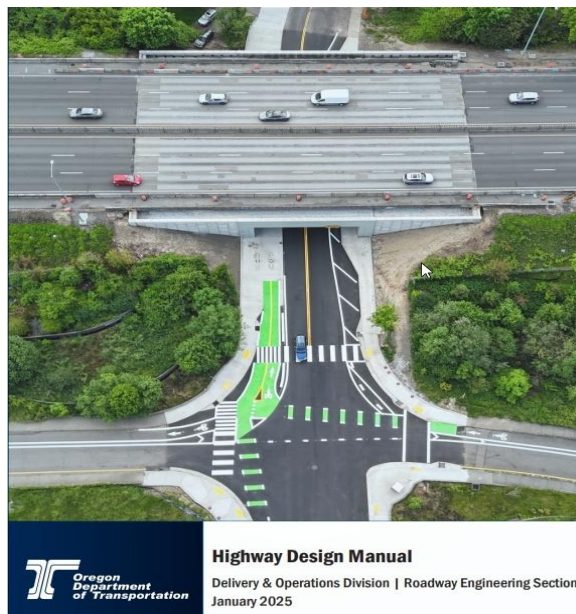
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

A Guide to School Area Safety



Laws, Rules, and Standards

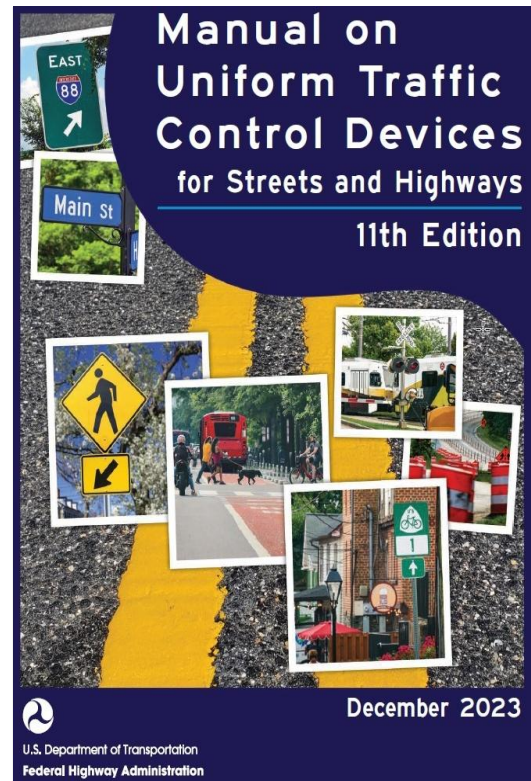
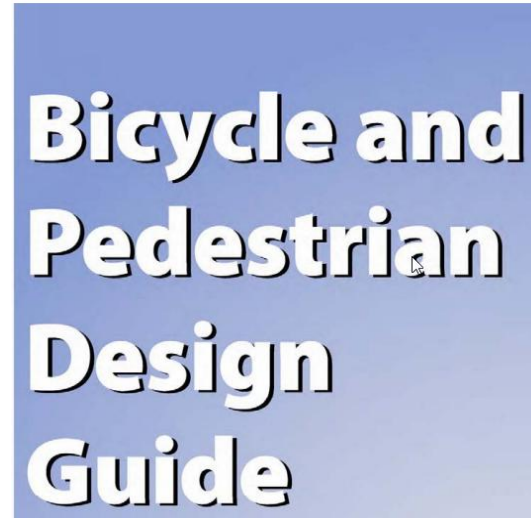
- **Laws:** A statute, also known as an Oregon Revised Statute (ORS).
- **Rules:** Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) are regulations created by state agencies; provide guidance for how ORSs are carried out.
- **Guideline or Standard:** Required, recommended, and optional practices as adopted by road authority.



Highway Design Manual
 Delivery & Operations Division | Roadway Engineering Section
 January 2025



Sign Policy & Guidelines
 Delivery & Operations Division | Traffic Section
 January 2026



December 2023
 U.S. Department of Transportation
 Federal Highway Administration

School Zones + School Speed Zones

ORS 801.462 – School Zone

- Segment adjacent to school grounds “marked by signs”
- A crosswalk that is not adjacent to school grounds and “marked by signs”

ORS 811.235

Notice of school zone must be **plainly indicated by traffic control devices** conforming with standards adopted by Oregon Transportation Commission.

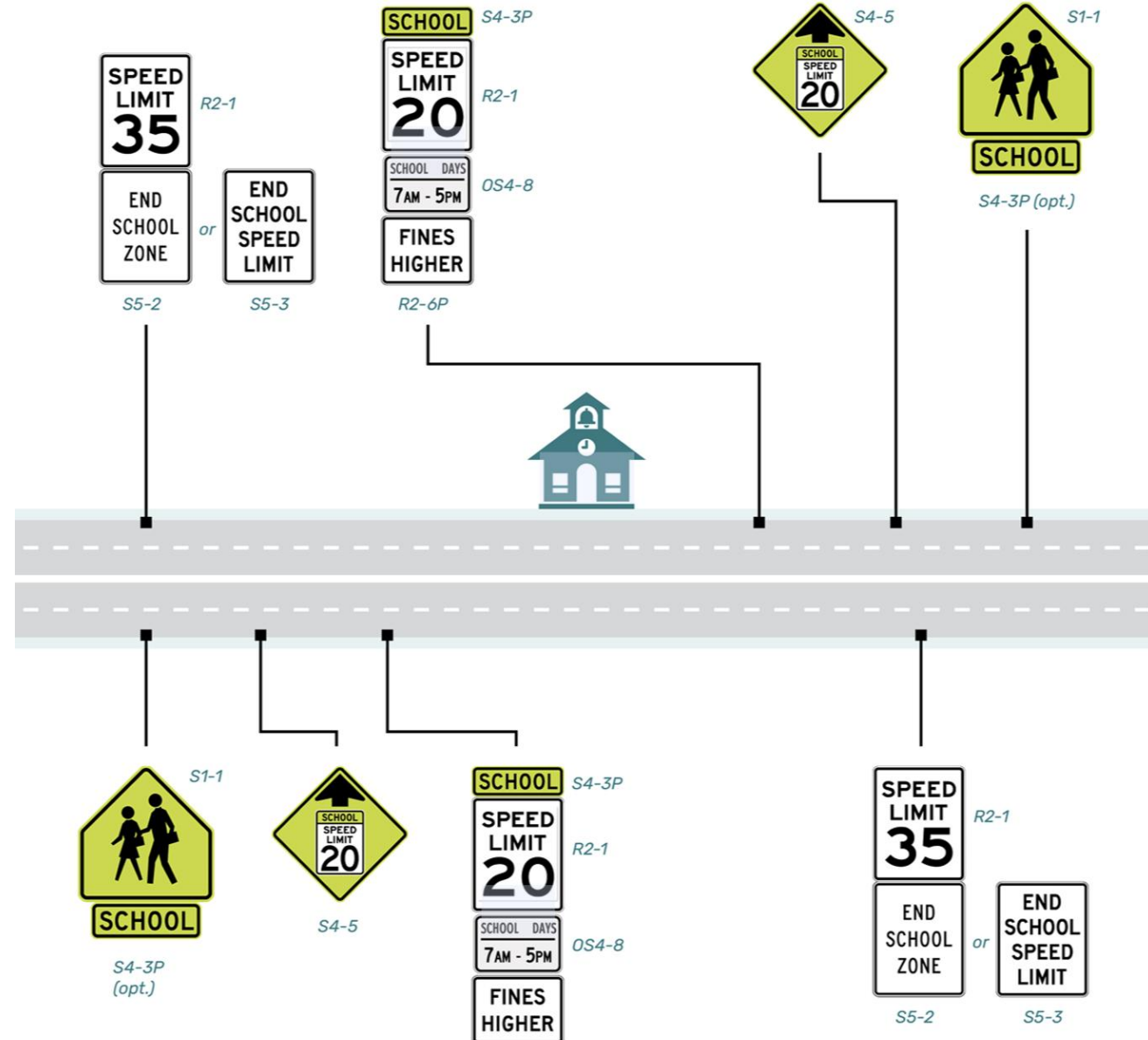
ORS 811.111(1)(e) – School Speed Zone

Adjacent to school grounds:

1. Flashing light; or
2. 7 AM – 5 PM on days when school is in session.

At a crosswalk away from school grounds:

1. Flashing light; or
2. Children are Present



School Speed Zones



	Typically Appropriate (All)	Requires Justification (Any)	Is Discouraged (Any)
Education Facilities	Public or private elementary, middle, or high school.	Public early childhood elementary program.	Public early childhood, elementary, middle, or high school when conditions outlined below.
Roadway Location	Road is adjacent to the school grounds.	On a section of road not adjacent to school.	--
Marked Crossing Conditions	Do not have a signal or STOP sign protection.	Protected by a signal or STOP sign.	--
Speed Conditions	Posted Speed limit is < 40 mph	--	Posted speed limit is > 45mph
Existing Student and Family Travel Behavior	--	Few students are observed walking nearby. SRTS routes do not cross the roadway.	Students and families have other (preferred) options for traveling to and from school.

Signs and Signals

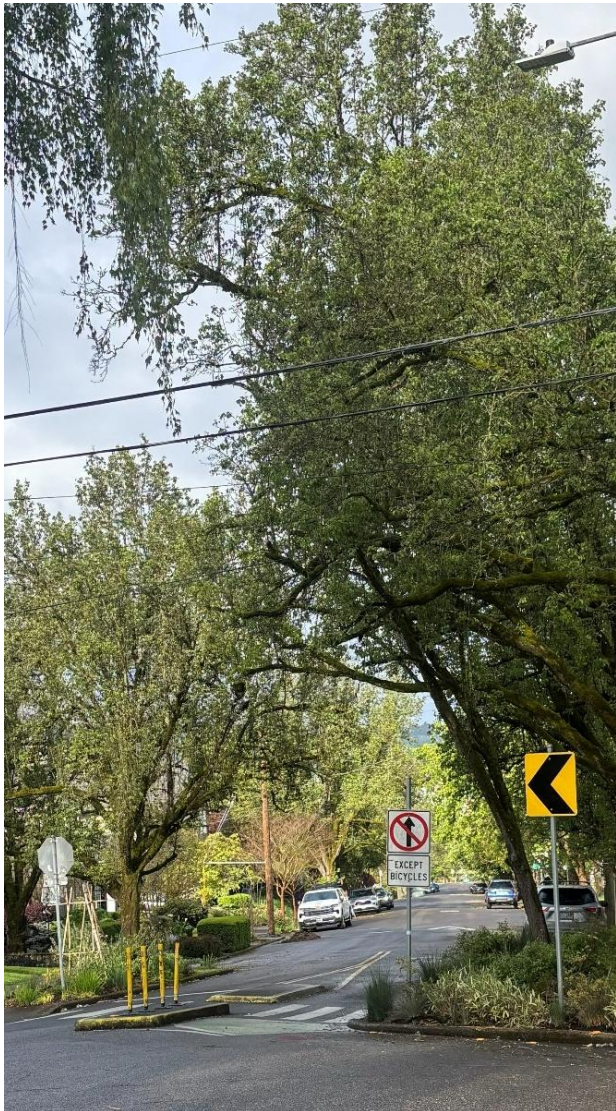




Visible Crosswalks



Traffic Calming



More Traffic Calming



Bike Lanes



Circulation



ODOS SRTS Technical Assistance

ODOT SRTS Technical Assistance funding is open!

- Planning Technical Assistance
- Project Refinement Program
- Traffic Garden Technical Assistance

Applications close on Monday, April 27 at
11:59pm.



Learn more and apply!
oregonsaferoutes.org/funding

School Area Safety in Practice: City of Portland

*Jeri Stroupe (she/her), SRTS Infrastructure Coordinator
Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT)*

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program at PBOT

School & School District Coordination & Communications



Education

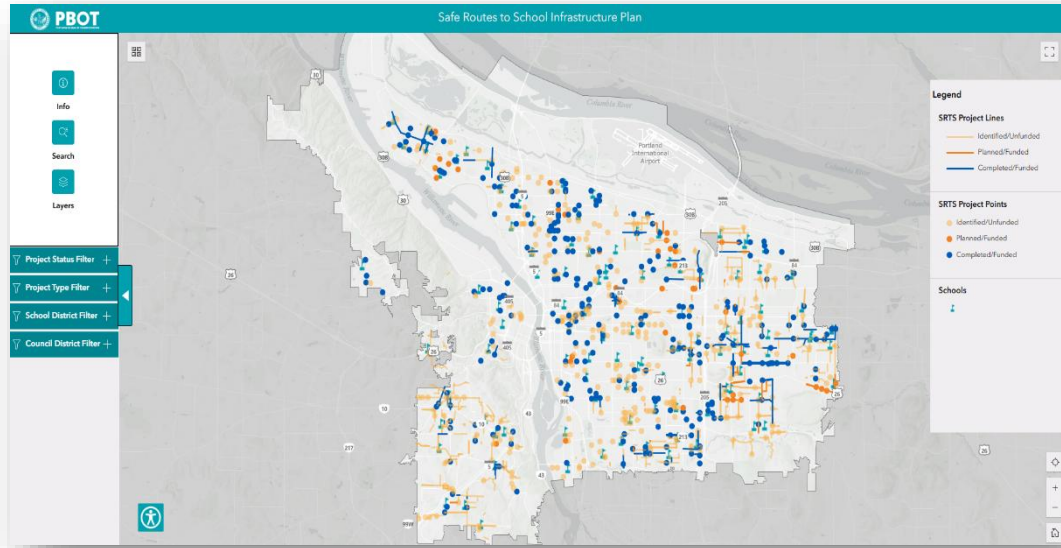


Engagement



Infrastructure

PBOT's SRTS Infrastructure Plan – Established in 2017



Construct walkway



Shared use path



Mark/update crosswalk



SRTS Infrastructure Plan

Our long-term investment strategy =
priority network + project list

bit.ly/SRTSinfrastructure

Crossing improvement



Traffic calming



Signalized intersection update



Area action plans vs. a priority network

**Abernethy Elementary School
Safe Routes to School Draft Problem and Solutions Summary
June 2008 Update**

Introduction
The Portland Office of Transportation (PDOT) initiated a Safe Routes to School (SR2S) engineering review for Abernethy Elementary School with a walkabout on December 6, 2005. At that meeting the concerns of school representatives, parents and students were described and a walking tour around the school and on adjacent streets and school travel routes was conducted. Abernethy Elementary School is located in an urban environment surrounded by a fairly complete grid system of streets curb and sidewalk. The neighborhood is a traditional single-family residence area with commercial uses on higher classified streets at busier intersections.

Figure 1. Area Map

SE 11th and 12th Avenues to the west, Hawthorne Boulevard to the north, SE 20th Avenue to the east and SE Division Street to the south represent the major barriers to students walking or riding their bikes to Abernethy Elementary School. SE 11th and 12th Avenues are a one-way couplet classified as Major City Traffic streets. The primary purpose of a Major City Traffic street is movement of auto traffic. Hawthorne Boulevard is classified as a District Collector street. District Collector is the first level of arterial street where the needs of auto traffic typically take precedence over the needs of pedestrians. SE 20th Avenue is classified as a Local Service street.

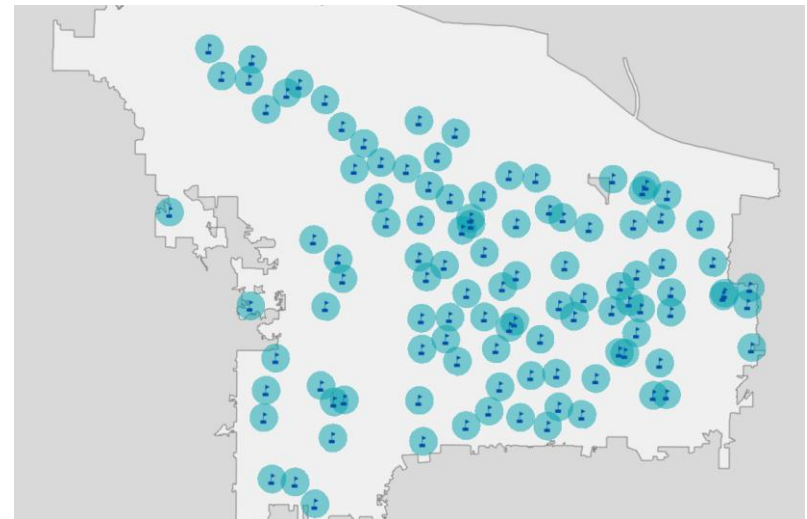
Priority Project Recommendations June 2008

Project	Cost	Status
Divide children pick-up locations	NA	?
3 curb ramps with parking restriction on east side	\$4,000	DONE
4 curb ramps with parking restriction on Hickory	\$4,200	DONE
Rebuild bus zone flooded sidewalk	\$1,000	DONE
Marked crosswalk with curb ramp and alley entry rebuild	\$5,000	DONE
Item - School Team Approved and Prioritized		
Red crosswalk = ramps as needed	\$4,000 =	
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way and on-site loading zone	\$5,000	Historic tree, lack of support
waits a more wholesale engineering process prior to big city traffic calming		
two-way operations	\$1,000	
two-way operations	\$1,000	
5 Speed Tables*	Up to \$10,000	
Red Crosswalk	\$2,000	
Red Crosswalk	\$2,500	
Red Crosswalk	\$8,000	
Speed Tables*	Up to \$10,000	
Speed Bumps*	\$8,000	
extensions	\$15,000	
if median	\$20,000	
sign	\$8,000	
single parking	\$2,000	
retention	\$40,000	
shelter	\$5,000	

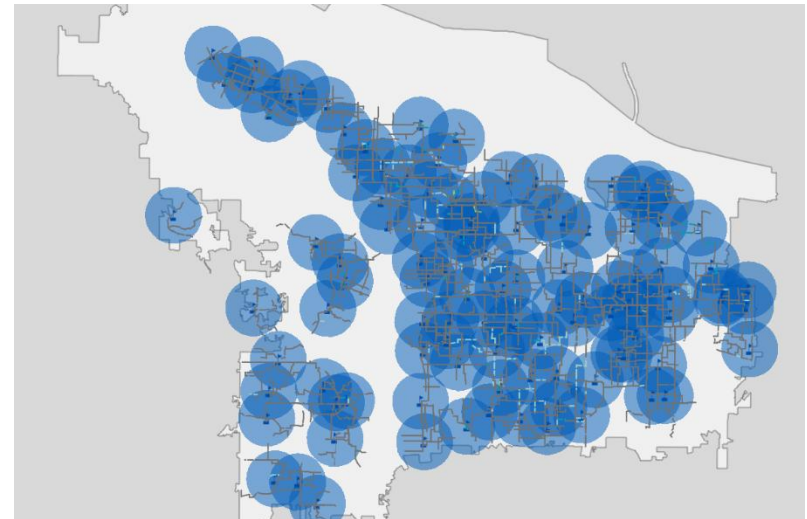
to coordinate with other projects: defining how much residents benefit, so the school could offer only the 40% portion. 20% of it would be up to the school how much to invest regardless of funding.

- 10-40 pages per school
- \$200K - \$3.5M (2006 USD)

½-mile buffer



1-mile buffer



Recently completed projects on the SRTS priority network



SE Cooper St & SE 62nd Ave at
Lane Middle School



NE 77th Ave & NE Alameda St at
McDaniel High School

Programmatic SRTS infrastructure (1 of 3)

Vision clearance



Completed at 18 of 100+ schools

Bike Bus Wayfinding Pilot



Tested pavement markings & signage at 5 schools

Circulation support



E.g., traffic operations, crosswalks, school zone signage

Programmatic SRTS infrastructure (2 of 3)

Speed reader boards



8 temporary SRBs for 6-month installations

Signal upgrades



Leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs) and no turn on red (NTOR); bike bus signal phasing

School zone review



Consistent school zone signs and flashing beacons

Programmatic SRTS infrastructure (3 of 3)

School Streets Pilot



Local access and school bus only block next to 5 schools (2021-2024)

Evaluation findings:

- (+) School and family support for concept
- (+) Kept bus zones clear
- (+) Help build school zone awareness
- (-) Inconsistent application
- (-) Labor intensive for schools
- (-) “Signs flimsy and too small”–Principals
- (-) No significant impact to walking/biking

A holistic approach to SRTS infrastructure



Infrastructure Plan

SRTS priority network & project list

Capital Projects

Project development, design, delivery

School Circulation

Safety investments next to schools

Wayfinding & Skills

Support to learn to travel safely

Infrastructure Program

Holistic approach to safety improvements and funding

School Area Safety in Practice: Hood River County

School Streets Pilot Program



Megan Ramey

Safe Routes to School
Manager
Hood River County School
District

2 Secrets of



1. Cheap Quick Builds

Success



2. Kids in the Street

School Street

- **Cost:** \$400
- **Funding:** ODOT Education Grant
- **Duration:** series of pilots for 1-day, 1-month and 1 school year



WHY a School Street?

- Give biking and walking families a safe entrance
- Reduce anxiety and noise / air pollution from vehicles
- Increase open space for students
- Increase walking and biking to school



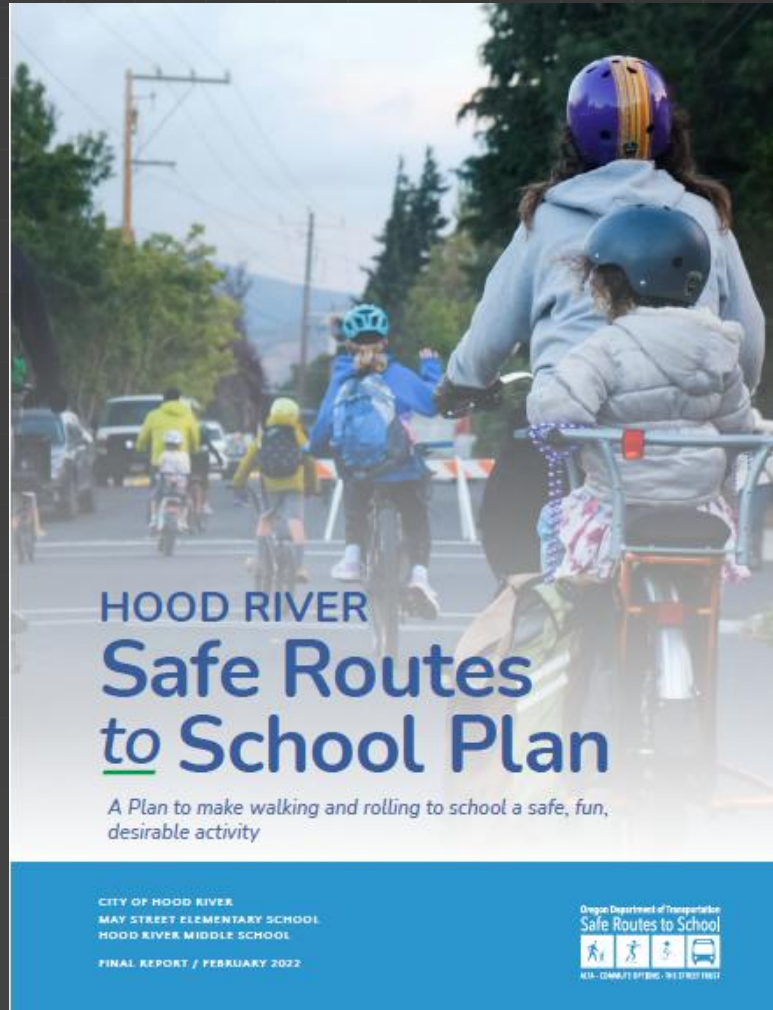
4 – single day pilots



ENGAGEMENT:

- School admin
- Notices to 12 neighbors
- Barricade dads

City of Hood River Safe Routes to School Plan



RECOMMENDATION 1

“Close 9th St and June St between Pine St and 8th St to through traffic and unauthorized vehicle drop off during student arrival and dismissal.”

Approved by City Council, May 2022

1 month long pilot, May 2024
9 month pilot, Sept '24 - May '25



Venmo to the coolest 5th
grader teacher, Mr.
Campbell, for moving the
barriers 2X per day

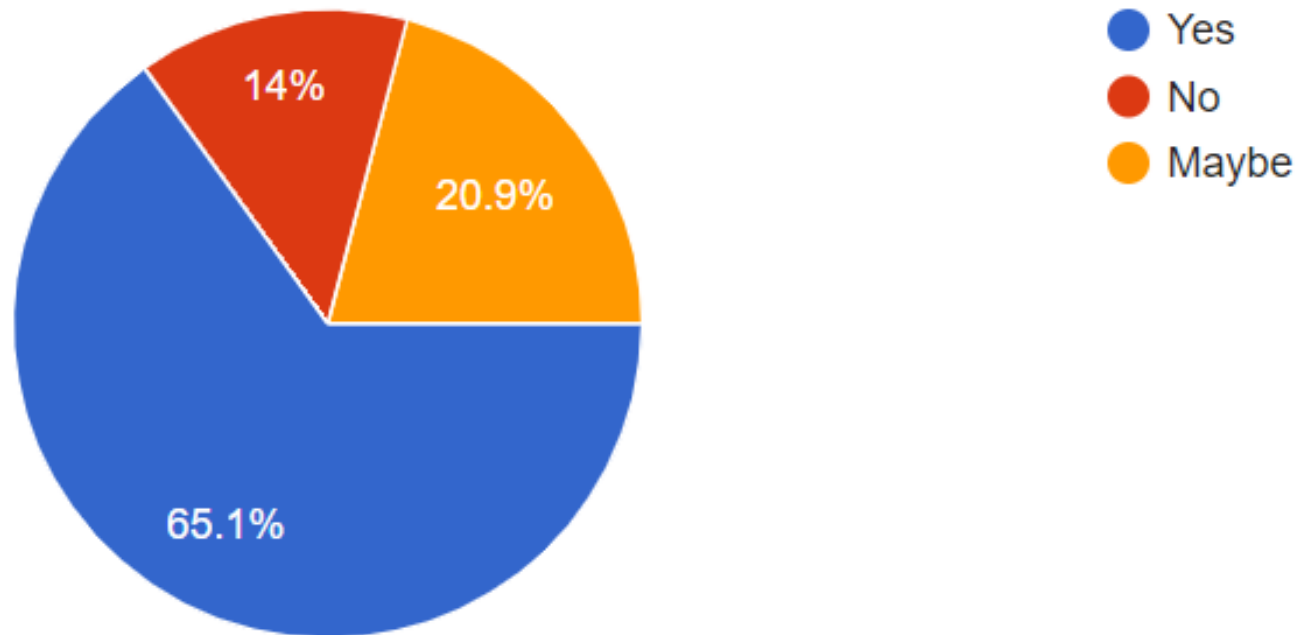
“You’re doing God’s Work”



Survey - 45 responses

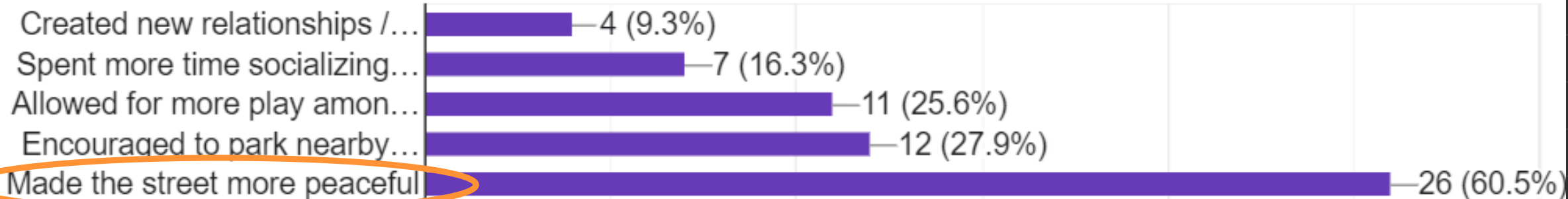
Would you like to see School Streets continue in the future?

43 responses

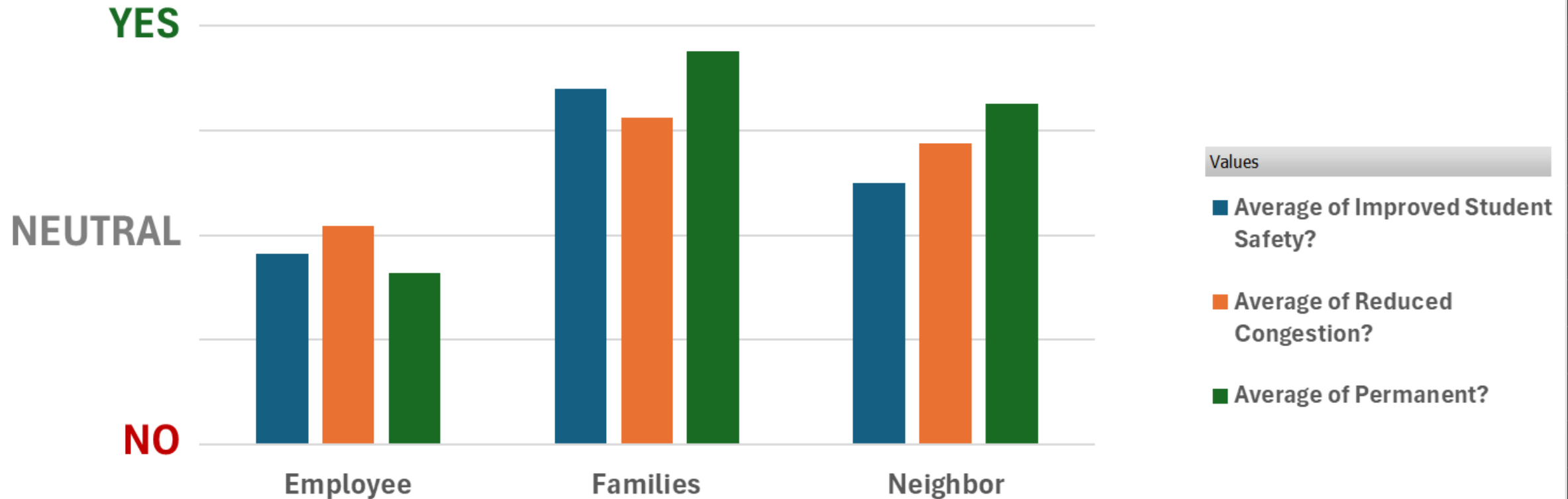


In which ways, if any, has your relationship with this space and community changed since the closure of the street? Check all that apply.

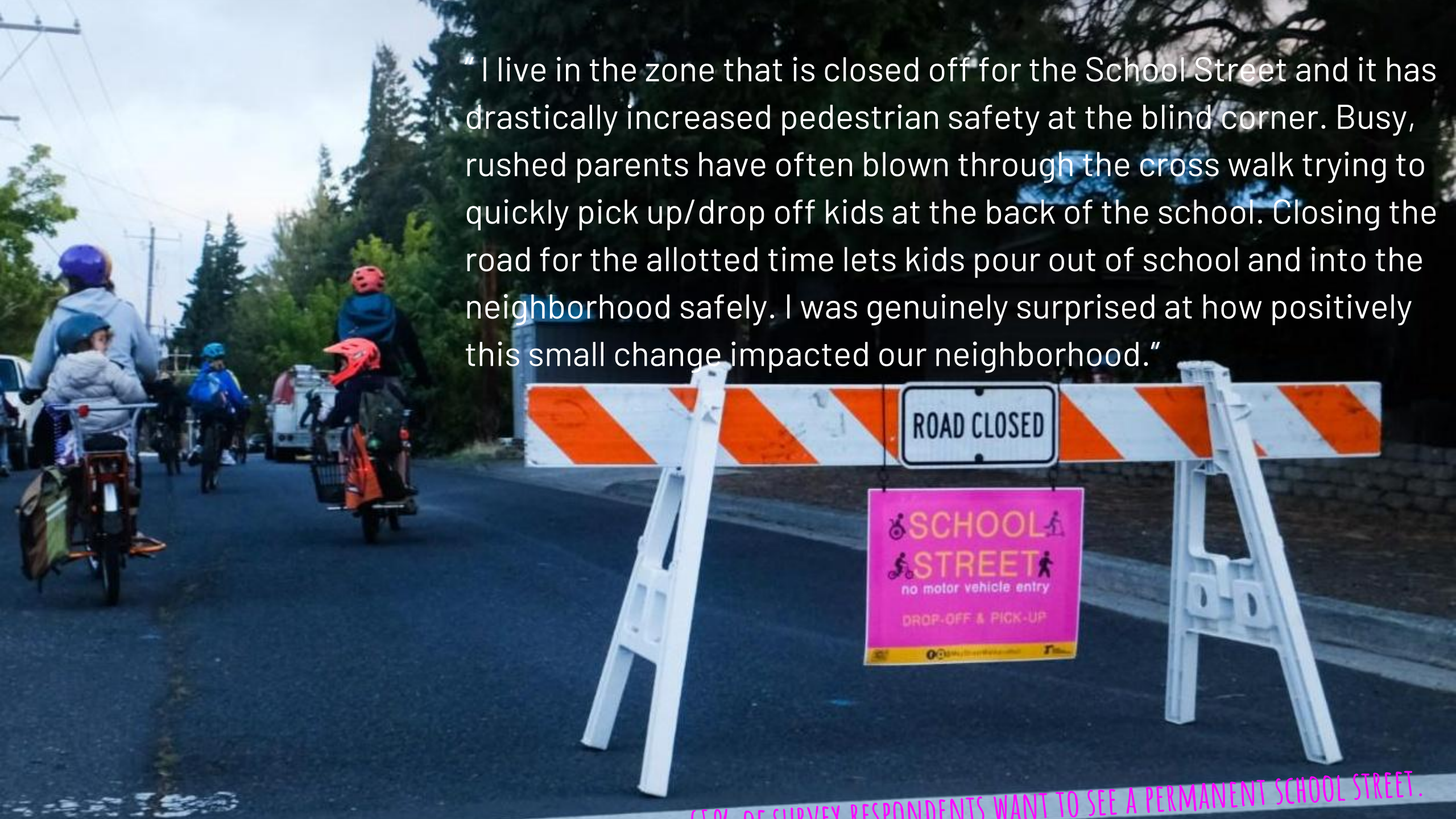
43 responses



How did 3 groups feel about the School Street?



“ I live in the zone that is closed off for the School Street and it has drastically increased pedestrian safety at the blind corner. Busy, rushed parents have often blown through the cross walk trying to quickly pick up/drop off kids at the back of the school. Closing the road for the allotted time lets kids pour out of school and into the neighborhood safely. I was genuinely surprised at how positively this small change impacted our neighborhood.”



87% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS WANT TO SEE A PERMANENT SCHOOL STREET.

Design Inspiration for Permanent

Modeled on
Seattle's Healthy
Streets, Hood
River's Public Works
liked the permeable
design that allowed
plowing.



Permanently Installed August 2025!





Public Perception

Neighbor in the beginning:
“what are we trying to do, be
a bike town?”

Same neighbor now emails
me when she sees parents
driving through the School
Street.

Key Takeaways

- Pilots work to gain public trust and support
- Neighbors can be your strongest allies
- Parents who drive also love School Streets
- School Streets function as a living lab for bike skills
- You will be surprised by the users!



In-person Engagement

Nothing beats being physically present during arrival and dismissal for the first 2 weeks of a pilot or permanent installation.

You'll dispel myths and capture moments.

STORIES > data



Get Started

1. Pitch the Principal
2. Draft a current / desired circulation map
3. Ask City for help / process / materials
4. Pick a meaningful date for pilot
5. Engage neighbors / leave flyers
6. Recruit volunteers for barricades and intercept surveys
7. Collect stories





WALK & ROLL
HOOD RIVER COUNTY SCHOOLS

[About](#) [Schools](#) [Contact](#) [Free Bikes](#)

www.walkandrollhoodrivercounty.com

Bluesky @bikabout.com

Instagram @hoodriverwalkandroll

Safe Routes to School



School Area Safety in Practice: Education Programs

*Julia Klaus she/her, Safe Routes to School Specialist
Alta Planning + Design*

3 Roles of Education in School Area Safety



Behavior Change
(skills + knowledge)



Environmental Activation
(changing how a space is used)



Culture Building
(making it fun, visible, and social)



Walk + Roll Curricula | For Delivery in PE

Jump Start Pedestrian & Bike Safety and Learn to Ride

- Provided by Cycle Oregon & ODOT
- Hands-on, skill-based learning
- Practice real-world scenarios in a safe setting
- Builds confidence + muscle memory
- Learn to ride → removes a major access barrier
- Bikes at school = HIGH interest from students
- Train-the-Trainer events and Bike Fleets offered at no cost to schools & Districts



Visit the [Jump Start website](#) to learn more





Walk + Roll Curricula | For Classroom Delivery



On My Way! Walk, Bike, & Roll Safety Education

- Owned by Minnesota DOT
- Teaches safety concepts + decision-making
- Skills taught through highly engaging animated videos, slide decks, & activities
- Very low-prep, easy to scale or simplify
- Consistent messaging across three grade-bands (K-2, 3-5, 6-8)

On My Way! Walk, Bike and Roll Safety Education



Visit the *OMW!* website to learn more



Walk + Roll Curricula | For Delivery in Specials



Schoolwide Coordinated Education in Specials

- Engages every student without impacting teaching minutes of core subjects
- Allows for multiple entry points for learners
- Generates excitement before Walk + Roll events
- Takes the burden of Walk + Roll event promotion off classroom teachers and office staff
- Specialists often have more flexibility in curricula

Library

Story Walks



PE

Jump Start Education



Music

Walk + Roll Concert



Tech/STEM

Digital Route Mapping



Art

Intersection Art Design



Environmental Clubs

Environmental Science Lessons





Walk + Roll Curricula | Secondary Programming

Safe Routes for Middle and High School Students

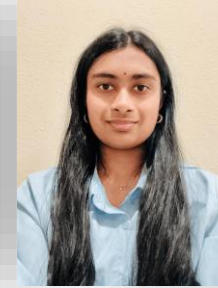
- Focus shifts from learning content to application
- High-level of interest in youth leadership opportunities
- Centering student empowerment leads to increased engagement
- Secondary students can become reliable volunteers and even project leaders
- Youth transportation leadership groups offer insight into perspectives that can be difficult to capture
- An underutilized asset for our Safe Routes Ecosystems



Zayd Faruqui



Dylan Jones



Gayathri Devarpu



Micah King



Blake Greenwell



School Streets



School Streets Around the World



Turning Schoolfronts Into Community Hubs

- School-front street closure
- Reduces traffic conflicts + improves visibility
- Creates space for walking, rolling, and connection
- Easily scalable from pilot to permanent
- Visible + engaging for families
- Disperses drop-off, avoiding choke-points
- Facilitates conversation and engagement
- Leads to improved air quality around school



Alternate Drop Off Locations

- Drop & Walk from a nearby park or community center
- Walk Your Grade (park blocks away by grade level)
- Cocoa for Carpools (make it fun + rewarding)
- Reduces congestion at the school entrance
- Encourages short, manageable walks
- A little distance creates a lot more safety
- Locate drop points along safe infrastructure routes
- Provide loaner umbrellas for rainy months
- Ask safety questions & get responses using chalk





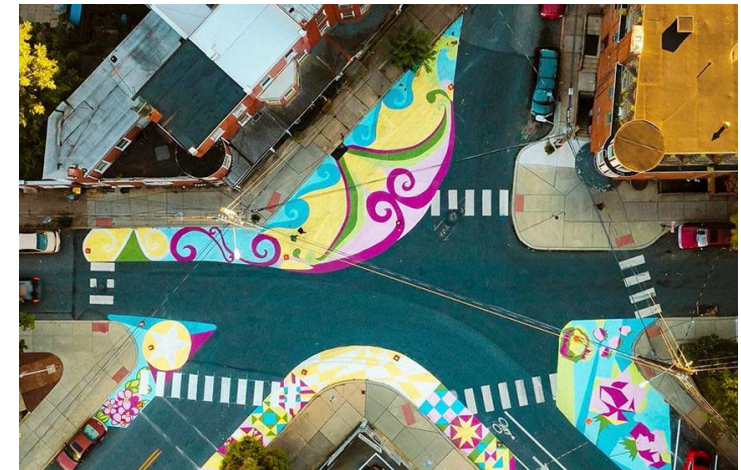
Asphalt Art

You Knew It Was Beautiful, But Did You Know It Was Safer?

- Colorful murals at intersections, in school zones, and school-fronts
- Community-designed art increases awareness + shared ownership
- Implementation options:
 - Durable: traffic paint (1–3 years), thermoplastic (3–5+ years)
 - Low-cost: spray chalk + stencils for temporary or pilot projects

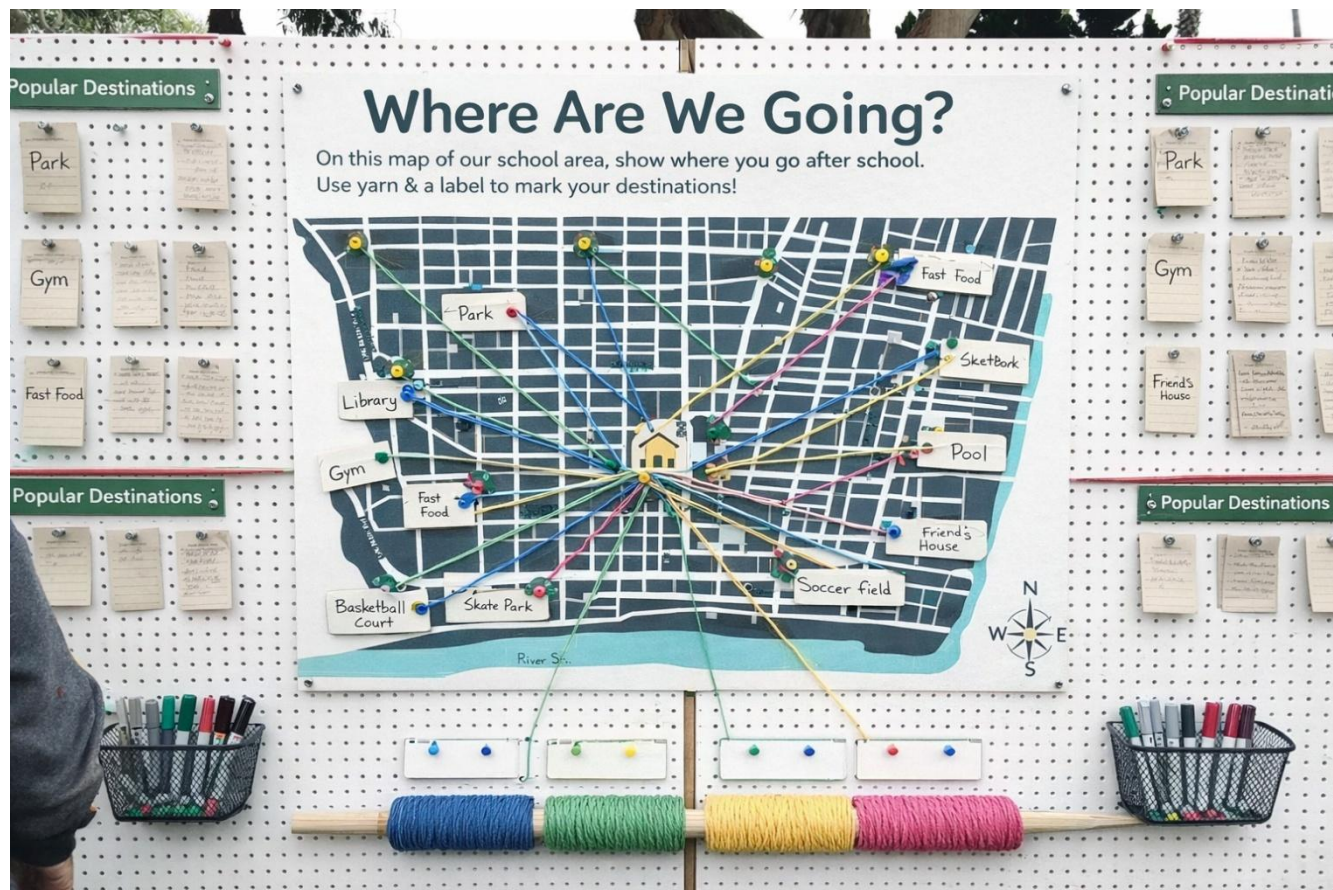
Bloomberg Philanthropies Asphalt Art Safety Study:

- **50% reduction in crashes involving pedestrians or cyclists**
- **27% increase in drivers yielding to pedestrians**
- **17% reduction in total crashes**





Community Engagement



Engagement Activity

Where Are We Going?

On a simple map of the school area, participants use yarn & a label to show where they would like to go after school.

The end result:

A map of popular destinations that students are travelling to, providing data that can be used for safety education and infrastructure recommendations



Walking + Biking Buses

How It Supports School Area Safety:

- Structured group travel with adult support
- Builds routine, visibility, and confidence
- Real-world practice of safety skills

Make To Make it a celebration:

- Music, costumes, bubbles, animals, themes
- Signs, themes, prizes, food
- Guest walkers (teachers, community leaders)





Walk + Roll Events



Excitement turns participation into habit!

- Schoolwide celebrations that make active travel visible + exciting
- Low-barrier entry point for students and families
- Reinforce safety through:
 - Bike rodeos + community rides
 - Assemblies + specials integration
 - Route-based participation
- **Make it memorable:**
 - Welcoming committee + “red carpet” arrival
 - Music, themes, and student-led energy
 - Inclusive, equity-centered planning
 - Builds momentum that extends beyond a single day

Thank you!