SUNNYSIDE Neighborhood News

November 2026

SUNNYSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
SunnysidePortland.org board@sunnysideportland.org

News from the President

By Chris Waldmann, SNA President

Happy November Sunnyside! As you read this, darkness has probably already fallen with the change of clocks to standard time. I'm going to say something controversial, so I ask for a little "latitude". Standard time is better in this part of the country! I'm an early riser and the thought of a nearly 9 a.m. sunrise gives me the S.A.D. I know that some of you agree with me, whether as a morning person, a parent of children whose school day starts at 8 or 8:30 a.m. or maybe just a lover of natural rhythms. The federal administration is pushing HARD for legislation to allow states to implement full-time daylight savings. I hope that doesn't happen, but if it does, I hope you'll join me in saying NO to this in these northern latitudes. Fun fact, Portland is just as far north as Montreal, Canada!

On to the (more current) news…

I hear from neighbors all the time that there isn't enough parking close to their homes. We live in an older, denser neighborhood; many homes were built with either tiny driveways or none at all. I love living a mostly car-free life in our walkable, transit-heavy area, but I know that most of us have at least one car. Parking can be tough, especially with the influx of new neighbors into apartment buildings without garages, and with two major retail and nightlife corridors running through Sunnyside. Unfortunately, this situation is probably not going to get meaningfully better until we move away from car dependency in this city, state and country. Changes are coming that could bring a whole new round of development to the area with the Inner Eastside Zoning Project (more below). Plus, construction costs make it so expensive to build parking for new apartment buildings! So, what can we do now to mitigate the issue?

The city has a program to create Area Parking Permit Zones. The program is a community-driven approach to help neighborhood residents and businesses better deal with the influx of out-of-area drivers using parking spaces for long periods during certain parts of the day. For most of the current zones, this is during the day, however certain zones like around the Moda Center and in Goose Hollow have different or extended times to compensate for the large sports venues in those areas. In Sunnyside, with our evening thoroughfares full of bars and restaurants, rather than office workers, maybe it makes sense to have these restrictions in the evening? Usually, the restriction is 2 hour parking for people without permits. Residents and employees of area businesses can purchase annual permits to park their cars within the neighborhood as they normally would, without a time limit. (Currently permits cost $110 in most zones).

Is this program right for our neighborhood? Do we even qualify per the city rules? Is there will in the neighborhood to pay $100 per year for a permit? We are going to address those questions at our November 11th General Meeting with a presentation from PBOT staff with time for questions and comments, so please join us and learn more!

Big zoning changes may be on the way. The Inner Eastside Zoning Project, if successful, would enable much more in-neighborhood residential development with increased density, provide for a wider variety of housing types, and improve housing affordability in some of Portland's most desirable close-in neighborhoods (like Sunnyside). The project arose from a campaign by Portland Neighbors Welcome called Inner Eastside for All that had a motto of "4 Floors and a Corner Store" to encourage smaller scale developments within residential areas rather than concentrate all new housing development along commercial corridors. We all know, and I know I love, the various courtyard-style apartment developments in Buckman and Sunnyside that were built in the 1st half of the 20th century and look at this initiative as an updated model, encouraging smaller developers to build 6-10 unit buildings that are integrated into the neighborhood fabric. I have many questions on implementation and whether the right incentives will be in place to make this a success for both new and current residents. As a first step, the city is conducting a survey to better understand Inner Eastside issues and our priorities (tinyurl.com/3a82jc83). We will have more on this in the coming months, so stay tuned and come to our Land Use & Transportation Committee meetings on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. at SE Uplift.

Happy Thanksgiving and I look forward to seeing you around the hood!

Upcoming SNA Meetings

Visit Sunnysideportland.org.
for location details and agendas

November

General: Nov. 11th, 7-8:30 p.m.
Board: Nov. 11th, 8:30-9 p.m.
LUTC: Nov. 18th, 7-8 p.m.

December

Board: Dec. 9th, 7-8:30 p.m.
LUTC: Dec. 16th, 7-8 p.m.

Pedestrian Fatality on Belmont

By Conor Lirot, SNA LUTC Chair

On Saturday September 5th around 8 p.m, 25-year-old Simon Williamson was struck and killed by an automobile near 36th Avenue and Belmont. Social media posts suggest that Simon was new to Portland, was a non-driver, and moved to Sunnyside to be within walking distance of friends. He stepped out of his apartment less than a block away to get groceries at the time of the incident, according to his sister.

I am also somewhat new to Portland, a non-driver, and live close to Belmont. I urge our neighborhood to come together and push the city to transform Belmont into a safer, more pedestrian-friendly corridor. I am also expecting a newborn child in the coming months, and it disturbs me that this fatality occurred just steps away from our very own Sunnyside Environmental School. The extra-wide street, worn and faded crosswalks, dim overhead lighting, and fast drivers mean that pedestrians—many of us Sunnysiders—must literally gamble with their lives to cross the street.

Many Sunnysiders, such as Carlos Nuñez, have already taken action by submitting a request on PBOT's website (portland.gov/transportation/823-safe) to add flashers at 36th and 37th on Belmont. Please join in this action—the more neighbors who report this traffic safety concern, the better. The SNA Land Use & Transportation Committee is working on a letter to the city demanding safer conditions on Belmont. If you'd like to get involved, please email lutc@sunnysideportland.org.

Our Neighborhood School Is at a Crossroads

By Hanna Neuschwander, SES Parent

Portland Public Schools is weighing its biggest round of school changes in a generation. On October 6, the district presented two "rightsizing" scenarios that would close up to 14 schools and redraw 38 of boundaries across the city. The PPS board is expected to vote in December, with changes starting in Fall 2027.

Sunnyside Environmental School (SES) isn't on the closure list. But both scenarios would turn it into a K-5 school, ending its middle grades and the environmental program that has defined it for over 30 years. The district's own projections show enrollment at the school falling to about 235 students by 2031—even with the inclusion of former Buckman students—well below its target of 360. That could leave SES vulnerable to full closure later, and the neighborhood with a large vacant building.

This is something every neighbor and business owner should care about, even if you don't have kids attending the school.

Sunnyside is one of only 12 PPS schools with growing enrollment, and far more families apply than there are seats. With births in our area down 35% in a decade, having a school that families compete to get into helps keep young families here.

It's also a true walking school. Today, 96.8% of students live within a mile. Under the proposals, that drops to 65.5%: That means more cars crowding Sunnyside streets and fewer customers walking to local businesses.

Sunnyside students invest in their own school and in our community, too. Last year, kindergarteners through 8th graders spent a combined 7,000 learning in, and tending to, the school's living garden classroom. Middle schoolers spent about 1,285 hours restoring local land and water with groups like SOLVE and Friends of Mt. Tabor Park. And the school serves kids who struggle with traditional classroom learning; many families say it's why they stayed in Portland schools.

Sunnyside families are asking PPS to slow down and make a plan that works for students, families and neighborhoods. Neighbors can learn more and sign the school's community letter at save.sesptsa.org, and share your views with the school board before December.

Sunnyside Tails: Honey

By Erika Bolstad, SNA Member-at-Large

MJ Johnson has almost always had a dog—usually a big one. A few years ago, she was between pups and unsure if she should welcome another at her age, then in her early 70s. Maybe it was time for a smaller dog? She visited the Oregon Dog Rescue in search of a just-right companion. That's where she met Honey, a year-old tan-and-white chihuahua mix who needed a home.

Now four, Honey is "absolutely the most extroverted dog I've ever owned, and I'm 76 so I've had a few," said Johnson, who has lived in Sunnyside since 1995, and who grew up in the Richmond neighborhood.

Honey loves her walks with Johnson, who finds that her dog's fame has spread far and wide in the neighborhood. "People will say: 'Is that Honey?' and I won't have a clue who these people are," she said.



Honey with MJ Johnson and her grandson, Henry.

At 18 pounds of snuggable sweetness, Honey delights in jumping in visitors' laps for a cuddle. Everyone on Johnson's street knows Honey, who pokes her head through the lattice fence to greet both people and dogs walking by. "She has a huge fan club," Johnson said. Honey even has a special squeal for delivery drivers, who she knows come bearing treats. (UPS driver Stefan is her favorite.)

"She is an absolute joy," Johnson said. "A little barky when you're across the street but nobody's perfect."

If you'd like to nominate a neighborhood pet for a future Sunnyside Tail feature, email newsletter@sunnysideportland.org.

Tech Tips

By Meg Orton, SNA Member-at-Large

Let's Rethink Addictive Tech This Holiday Season

Do you wish you knew more about safer, healthier tech options for kids? Are you trying to delay purchasing a smartphone, but still need a way for your child to communicate with friends and family? Are you tired of wrestling with parental controls that never really work? There are better tech options for kids and teens out there, but so few parents know about them.

Since 2007, Big Tech has been engineering their products—smartphones, apps, etc.—to be addictive, which ultimately makes them more money. This is why parenting around tech has become so much more difficult in the last 20 years. But we don't have to accept this business model. There are lots of small tech companies creating

products that allow kids and teens to use tech as a tool without the worry that it will take over their lives.

So how do you choose tech for kids that does only what we need it to do, nothing more? When our kids get old enough to walk around the neighborhood themselves and want to connect independently with friends outside of school, we often consider getting them a phone. When we think *phone*, we usually think *smartphone*, and smartphones are SO much more than a phone. They're super computers in our pockets full of addictive apps, opportunities for endless scrolling, and portals to every corner of the Internet. Getting our child a smartphone for communication means we're choosing tech that does way more than we need it to; all those extra things can become a battle. The phone feature rarely causes problems, it's always another function like texting, social media, gaming, YouTube, porn, or gambling that becomes addictive.

Likewise, when our kids need a device for homework we often get them a laptop, only to find that parental controls are hard to set up—and easy to get around. Then we're stuck policing our kids while they try to do homework on a device with YouTube just one click away.

Luckily, there are products out there that make tech easier for parents to manage and are healthier for kids. These products were often created by parents who didn't like the all-or-nothing choice. They couldn't find a better option to the addictive tech that monetizes kids' attention at the expense of a healthy childhood, so they decided to make one.

There are wonderful new wifi landline phones just for kids – Tin Can, MyPhone, Waffle and Ring Ring Club. These phones bring back the joy of talking on the phone and the independence of kids making plans themselves. No screen, no Internet, just a friend at the other end of the line. When kids get a little older, WaffleGo is a screen-free option to keep them safe while they're out-and-about.

By middle school, tweens often need a device with more capability, but they're not yet ready for the responsibility of a fully-loaded smartphone. Starter phones like Gabb, Troomi and Pinwheel are healthier alternatives because parents get to choose what goes on them. These phones are like learner's permits so parents can introduce tech intentionally.

Kids often have a grandparent wanting to get them an iPad as a holiday gift, even while their parents don't feel ready for tech battles. A much healthier, non-addictive alternative to the iPad is Daylight Computer's new *Daylight Kids*. It has a blue-light-free screen, robust parental controls, and is designed to foster self-regulation, not iPad meltdowns. For teens, the original *Daylight Computer* is a healthier, less distracting option for homework.

What about cameras and music? Companies like Camp Snap and Paper Shoot offer kids a screen-free camera experience, while Mighty Player and Kite bring back the joy of listening to music on a screenless device.

We don't have to accept Big Tech's business model for our families anymore. Let's rethink addictive technology this holiday season!

Want to see some of these alternatives up-close? Stop by the Alternative Device Fair December 5th, from 2–5 p.m. at St. David of Wales Episcopal Church (2800 SE Harrison). Co-hosted by Mindful Media (mindful-media.net**) and Oregon Unplugged (**orunplugged.org**), we'll be raffling off several alternative devices so come put your name in the hat!**

News From Sunnyside Environmental School

By Sarah Rubin, SES parent

November brings a quieter rhythm to Sunnyside Environmental School, but there's still plenty happening around campus.

We Need Your Voice

As Hanna wrote in "Our Neighborhood School Is at a Crossroads", please consider signing a community letter to keep Sunnyside K-8 with our environmental focus (save.sesptsa.org). You can write to the PPS board and legislators (savepdxschools.org/take-action) and tell the Governor (bit.ly/write-governor-PAT). Sign up for PAT's Listserv at bit.ly/PATCommunityList to stay informed.

The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon — Nov 13

Join us on Friday, November 13th, for the Grade 6–8 musical production of The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon, presented in partnership with the PTSA and Portland Drama Club! This year's production has just one performance at 6:30 p.m. Come cheer on our student performers and enjoy an evening of theater in the neighborhood. Concessions and ticket sales support Portland Drama Club's drama scholarship fund, helping ensure that all interested students can participate in this wonderful program.

Support SES and Show Your Sunnyside Spirit

We'll be selling Sunnyside shirts during our Friday fundraiser in the outdoor classroom. Our community fundraisers help support garden-based education, music, and field study opportunities for SES students.

Have questions about SES? Email SunnysideEnvironmentalNews@gmail.com

Sponsor This Newsletter!

By Sunnyside News Staff

Do you own or manage a business in Sunnyside? Have a big event to share in the next couple of months? Looking to get the word out about all the great things you do? This newsletter reaches over 3000+ households and is widely read. Sponsorships are available for as little as $50 per month for an annual plan and are fully tax-deductible! Email newsletter@sunnysideportland.org.

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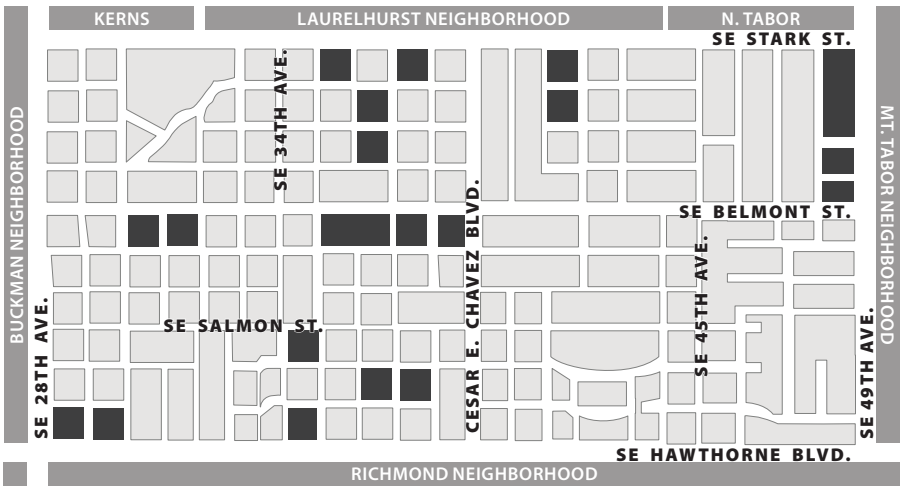
Any opinions expressed, unless specified, are not necessarily those of the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association or its board. **Sunnyside residents are welcome to submit articles for consideration that concern neighborhood issues, by emailing newsletter@sunnysideportland.org. Deadlines are the 15th of the month prior.** Many wonderful volunteer Sunnyside residents distribute the Neighborhood News.



Sunnyside Neighborhood 'Gap Map'

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