Proximity Assignment Simulation:

Berkeley had a system of neighborhood schools before integration in the 60's. Berkeley's housing patterns at that time were geographically segregated causing the de facto segregation mentioned earlier. For example in 1960 Malcolm X was 99% non-white, while Cragmont was 94% white.

Our School District eliminated proximity as a preference factor in school assignment when the controlled choice plan was implemented in 1995.

However, many parents value proximity of elementary school to a child's home and many do take it into account when selecting first, second and third priorities under the current controlled choice system. Proximity allows a child to walk to school and to build friendships within the child's neighborhood. Theoretically, if all of our elementary schools were optimally located, a proximity assignment system could reduce the number of children who need school transportation.

Because of the interest in proximity, the Student Assignment Committee thought it worthwhile to review Berkeley's housing patterns and to consider an assignment simulation that would take proximity into account.

We reviewed city housing patterns by race using the 2000 census data. We noted that the cities Black population was still primarily located in the flats with the heaviest density in south/central Berkeley. The White population is spread out more but has heavier density in North and East Berkeley.

We then ran an assignment simulation based on a preference for children within a quarter mile of school and reviewed the outcomes.

[PUT UP SIMULATION MAP HERE -- But Check with Bruce: which map do we use? one says Kindergarten only but the numbers look too high]

1) We noted that many children in the city would not be served by such an assignment system because they live more than a quarter mile from an elementary school. Based on our review of demographic data we noted that the most impacted areas were in the flatlands where there is a high density of children and only two elementary schools. Some areas in the north hills were also impacted although there are fewer children living in these areas.

2) We also noted that drawing a rough quarter mile radius around each elementary school had capacity implications depending on density of children living in the neighborhood. For example only 67 kids lived within a quarter mile of Cragmont while over 400 lived in the Rosa Parks neighborhood.

3) We reviewed then reviewed the Racial Outcomes of our rough proximity simulation. We noted that resultant racial composition at only a few of the schools, such as Le Conte and Washington reflected the K-5 composition of the whole district. Under this simulation Cragmont would have 0% blacks and Malcolm X 8% whites.

Based upon our review of the proximity assignment simulation we decided not to pursue the inclusion of a proximity factor in a proposed assignment plan.

Nancy Notes:
  Closed Hill schools: Cragmont primary, Hillside Primary, Hillside,
  Closed Flatland schools: Franklin and Longfellow
  Issue of Transportation costs not covered. Note that currently this does not appear to be a Budget issue because we receive desegregation funds from the state. Even if we had a proximity plan we would still have to bus children because they are not close to an elementary school.
  It is difficult to do a credible "apples to oranges" review of racial trends since 1960 because of changes in definition such as "non-white".

	1960 % white	1960 % non-white*	Proximity Assignment white	Proximity Assignment non-white
The "Flats":				
Malcolm X (Lincoln)	1%	99%	9%	91%
Rosa Parks (Columbus)	33%	67%	12%	88%
Longfellow	5%	95%	Middle School	Middle School
Franklin	33%	67%	Closed	Closed
Franklin Primary	27%	73%	Closed	Closed
The "Foothills":				
Jefferson	66%	34%	50%	50%
Whittier Arts	89%	11%	41%	59%
Washington	61%	39%	36%	64%
Thousand Oaks	98%	2%	58%	42%
LeConte	59%	41%	42%	58%
The "Hills":				
Cragmont	94%	6%	81%	19%
Oxford	97%	3%	75%	25%
Emerson	97%	3%	55%	45%
John Muir	98%	2%	70%	30%
Cragmont Primary	96%	4%	Closed	Closed
Hillside	97%	3%	Closed	Closed
Hillside Primary	97%	3%	Closed	Closed

*In 1960 "white" includes "Chicanos", other minorities were mostly "orientals" - note
that these dated terms are from the reference source: *Never a Dull Moment* by Carol Sibley