BEST PRACTICES GUIDE TO SITING SCHOOL FACILITIES

Authored by the Volusia County School District in cooperation with the Florida Department of Community Affairs

April 2004

The Volusia County School District acknowledges Saralee L. Morrissey, AICP, Director of Site Acquisition and Intergovernmental Coordination**,** for her contribution and management of this project, and contributors Suzanne S. Konchan, AICP, Konchan Consulting LLC and Tom Harowski, AICP, City of New Smyrna Beach Director of Development Services.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Historically schools have been a significant cornerstone in a community's development, often the focal point for activities. Many important contributions are made by schools in the United States, clearly the most important of which is public education available to all children. From this early mission, schools have meant specific physical facilities dedicated to education. From the early days of the single room "little red schoolhouse" to the 21st century of multistoried, multi-roomed, multi-use school, communities have invested in facilities to accomplish the goal of educating our children.

As the population of Florida and its school age children grow, the pressure on school districts to locate and construct new schools is intense. The purpose of this Guide is to recognize the benefits that will flow to citizens and students in Florida if local governments and school districts work collaboratively in this effort, acknowledging that there are mutual objectives and goals to accomplish. Specifically, by coordinating planning programs in the arenas of land use, capital improvements and school facilities, communities can strive to achieve the siting and construction of new schools in time and place with growth and residential development.

Planners and facility managers need access to resources, and practical models and procedures. This Guide offers information and suggestions, from simple steps such as sharing population and student enrollment projections, to fully integrated methods to implement collaborative planning, development and operations.

Collaboration between School Districts and local communities can be a road toward better school siting, and creating better communities.

GROWTH AND SCHOOLS

Communities and school districts in Florida have been plagued by the problems associated with rapid population and student growth, including the resultant overcrowding of public schools. For the past two decades, from 1981 to 2001, the State of Florida has experienced a population growth of 6.5 million residents, and a corresponding student growth of more than one (1) million additional public school students. In those 20 years, 1,332 new schools were built. This enrollment growth has resulted in Florida being the Nation's leader in the category of highest students/school ratios in elementary and middle school, and second highest students/school ratio for high schools. (Hawaii is number 1 in high schools.) This trend occurred despite the emerging debate nationwide regarding smaller school and optimum class sizes.

Despite the 1,332 new schools built during this twenty-year period, approximately 30% of the schools in Florida are currently overcapacity. Capacity predictions

indicate that this number will increase significantly under the new class size reduction constitutional amendment approved by Florida voters in November 2002.

In addition to overcrowded school facilities, many communities in Florida face additional problems associated with high rates of growth. Impacts often take the form of congested roadways, strained water or sewer facilities and other inadequate public resources. Competing priorities for local, state and federal funding sometimes results in inadequate public services. Unfortunately, financial strain can lead to an actual or perceived competition for resources, at times pitting local government against the local school districts. Within the context of the sometimes difficult and complex task of siting schools, the ability to find economies of efforts and coordinated investments is pivotal.

LINKING SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES- Location, location, location

Most planners can agree that schools can be focal points within a community or neighborhood, and a key component of effective neighborhood and community design. Many schools today are used for much more than educational purpose, including recreational and cultural activities, health and library services, polling centers, as well as general public meeting places.

The dialogue about the location, size and components of schools has exploded in the last decade. In 1999, the then United States Secretary of Education, Richard Riley elevated the issue nationwide when delivering a speech on the development of schools. He called for leadership in the sphere of school development, stating "....Members of School Boards, state legislatures, Governors–we need to get on with the business of building schools that can truly be centers of community and centers of learning."

School officials and educational experts agree that the location of schools as part of stable and well-designed neighborhoods can enhance educational programs, community support, and student achievement. Real estate agents often purport that strong academic and well-maintained schools contribute positively to high real estate values and strong housing demand within specific neighborhoods and communities. Conversely, poor schools can lead to relocation patterns within a community that place added growth pressures in other school zones. Clearly, good school location and good school design contribute to the well being of students and families, and healthy communities.

Despite the attributes of building community-based schools with multiple uses as described above, siting new schools that achieve these goals is challenging. Newer schools are generally larger than their historical ancestors, and the ability to acquire adequate land area often drives schools to the periphery of communities. The

simple issue of land availability can compound into issues such as schools that are not accessible by walkers and bicyclists, and expensive utility and road extensions (itself generating growth in a potentially sprawl-like pattern) to accommodate new school locations.

These issues have propelled school planning into the forefront of Smart Growth effort. At the forefront of the debate are minimum school campus requirements and disincentives to redeveloping existing schools. Although Florida has retained minimum school size standards, the requirements are actually less acreage intensive as many other states. The minimum size standards are often at the core of policy makers' decision matrix. Balancing demolition of existing buildings, especially houses, to assemble adequate campus areas must be weighed against the practicality of moving to sites at the edge of existing development, where larger vacant tracts can be acquired.

BALANCING SIZE AND DEMAND

A companion debate to the school sprawl issue is the issue of optimal school size. Size is a function of both land area and student enrollment. The small school movement originated thirty years ago in New York City, and has emerged as a key policy issue in the arena of school siting and construction throughout the nation. In Florida, the size of schools is primarily a district decision and philosophies vary widely. Given the challenges of providing smaller class sizes and meeting student growth, some district feel forced to build larger campuses to simply meet demand or economize development costs.

Nonetheless, small schools advocates have pointed to studies that credit smaller schools with higher academic achievement, less violent crime, and higher teacher satisfaction. Others involved with the smaller schools discussions have promoted issues more closely aligned with the issues of school siting. Goals such as neighborhood schools within a walkable radius to students often offer other related benefits, such as:

- **Increased pride and cohesion within neighborhoods that have schools,**
- **More appropriate use of in-fill development patterns as opposed to sprawl,**
- **Reduced busing and parking costs, and the corollary,**
- **Improved walking and health benefits.**

The concepts of multi-use campuses, that co-locate other community facilities at schools, offer one way to overcome cost concerns of the smaller school. Conversely, the K-12 Campus approach is another alternative, with independent campuses - or schools within schools- which share common facilities.

The need for capacity to relive overcrowding and respond to projected growth trends is a challenge for school districts. Balancing smaller schools against cost economies of larger campuses is an ongoing issue that suggests school siting in a community context is necessary.

SETTING STRONG DIRECTION

The truth is that many valid alternatives exist, and choosing the right school template is unique to each siting case. Both community planning and educational excellence require strong collaboration and decision-making in this effort. This Guide provides practical approaches and methods for school districts and their local government partners to follow while examining options, setting policies, and selecting new school sites. It will also address the sometimes under-explored option of renovating older schools or redeveloping existing school sites.

The possibility to achieve a quality educational system when local School districts and local governments work together at the policy and planning stages are more likely to, and a renewed and long-lasting sense of ownership in the school system. Moreover, where and how to expand a school network is one of the key components of neighborhood planning.

Clearly, schools should be addressed as part of every community's Comprehensive Plan, through policies, goals and objectives regarding school planning, as required by Chapter 165 and 9J-5. Setting growth and development goals for schools as a matter of policy is one way to promote quality schools with an end in mind. Chapter Four provides model Comprehensive Plan Objectives and Policies which communities may elect to adopt. These recommendations may be used as presented, or used as a framework to customize a specific Comprehensive Plan Element appropriate for your community.

For Counties and municipalities who haven't yet initiated a detailed policy discussion collaboratively with their School District, policy and goal making can offer a productive platform to examine issues such as:

- **Site compatibility with surrounding land uses.**
- **School site size requirements and physical characteristics.**
- **School locations with respect to student population service areas.**
- **Co-location and joint use opportunities between school facilities and community facilities such as parks, playgrounds, stadiums, libraries, health care clinics, day care centers and community centers.**
- **Coordination and safety issues associated with the transportation network including roads, sidewalks, trails and other issues of connectivity.**
- **Schools as a focal point of neighborhoods - sometimes referred to as centeredness of the community school.**
- **Schools as a component of optimum urban design.**
- **Infrastructure and service coordination to school sites, including roadways, sidewalks, utilities, stormwater facilities, storm shelters, fire, police and medical services.**
- **Consistency with Department of Education Rules for educational facilities.**

SHARED SOLUTIONS

Financial limitations and infrastructure capacity are also often-shared constraints for both the school board and local government. Simply said, saving time and money is important for everyone. These guidelines, if applied, will help both arms of local government take advantage of well-planned and coordinated roads, water, sewer, and parks. Similarly, school districts and local governments can improve student access and safety by coordinating the construction of road and sidewalk programs. From a broader planning context, coordination can help reduce pressures that contribute to urban sprawl and become a powerful tool to support existing neighborhoods. Additionally, by coordinating data and sharing information on a regular basis, misunderstandings between agencies can dissipate.

COLLABORATION AS A TOOL TOWARD BUILDING BETTER SCHOOLS AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

In addition to the planning and leadership benefits policy making offers, sound decision making is equally important in each siting decision for a new or redeveloped school. Choosing to renovate or redevelop an existing school site needs to be weighed against the alternatives for relocating a school. Issues ranging from student population changes to minimum facility needs must be considered for each school development project. The ability to co-locate other community facilities may play a key role in the initial assessment, as might neighborhood values such as walkability, environmental concerns, and growth trends.

Schools and local government partners can resolve to address the multitude of competing issues by finding ways to foster communication and coordination. Collaboration processes that incorporate strong technical analysis with inclusive public participation tools offer one of the strongest models. This collaboration model provides school facility managers and local government administrators a roadmap that will ultimately assist elected leaders and interested citizens achieve the best project that can be implemented.

The need for more schools is obviously compelling. However, financial resources are limited and must be allocated wisely. Cost concerns begin at the planning and acquisition process; continue through construction and long term operations. Initial siting choices can substantially affect each of these cost phases.

Facility planners do not have unlimited budgets to acquire sites or implement public participation efforts. A well planned and effective process can save time and resources by helping communities reach sound decisions more quickly, and move projects forward.

Insert into Introduction Section as Pull Out

This Guide recommends planning policies, siting procedures and a collaboration model for siting new schools, and choosing to renovate or redevelop existing schools. Chapters include:

- Best Practices and Procedures for School Site Selection
- A Collaboration Model for School Districts and Local Governments
- Model Comprehensive Plan Objectives and Policies
- Case Studies: New Smyrna Beach High School & Horizon West

Insert into Introduction Section as Pull Out

FLORIDA'S SMALL CLASS SIZE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

[INSERT A 1-2 PARAGRAPH SUMMARY OF CONTENT OF AMENDMENT, INCLUDE VOTER APPROVAL % AND STATISTICAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT IMPACT, IE. HOW MANY NEW CLASSROOMS PROJECTED TO MEET REQUIREMENT. MAYBE POINT TO ISSUES THAT ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN MOST PROMINENT IN CAMPAIGN.]

Insert into Introduction Section as Pull Out

CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES:

- National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities: www.edfacilities.org
- Schools as Centers of Community: A Citizens Guide for Planning and Design: http://www.cefpi.org/pdf/schools.pdf
- Linking School Siting and Land Use Planning
- Before You Dig; Here's What You Need to Know About Selecting a Site for Your New School**.** @ http://www.asbj.com/2001/10/coverstory.html
- Getting the Most from Urban Schools. Education is Essential to a City's Future, but Can Schools Help Shape the City, Too? @ http://www.cudc.kent.edu/Quarterly/Articles/Schools/schools.htm

- A Guide to School Site Selection @ http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/_documents/schools/facilities/site2_a.pdf

- What If.@ http://www.nsbn.org/publications/whatif/

CHAPTER TWO

BEST PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL SITE SELECTION

MAKING A CASE FOR THE SITE SELECTION PROCESSES

Creating school site selection models and matrixes have become prevalent throughout the United States in the past decade. States as geographically dispersed as Alaska, Georgia, North Carolina and California have adopted statewide guides for local school districts in their school siting efforts. In almost every case, these guides address physical site evaluation criteria that should be examined early in a selection process. In some cases, these guides require or suggest coordination efforts between school districts and their local governments.

In Florida, as in most of the United States, the statutory responsibility for supplying school facilities falls to the locally elected school district. This responsibility is an awesome one, given the demands and expectation of parents and communities. However, the task cannot be accomplished without the supporting resources that county and municipal governments are charged to supply, such as roads, water/sewer, emergency services and other infrastructure. With resources from more than one public agency being required, the need to closely coordinate is essential.

The Florida legislature recently examined these issues and adopted FS 163.31777(1) (a) and 1013.33(2), requiring counties and municipalities located within school districts to enter into interlocal agreements with the district school board. The interlocal agreement must establish specific ways in which plans and processes of the school district and the local governments are to be coordinated. Some of the fundamental tenets of these new statutes include:

- A process to share and agree on population and student enrollment projections, and growth and development data;
- A process for determining the need, timing, and responsibility of infrastructure necessary to support school construction;
- Well-coordinated planning through comprehensive plan consistency and capital budget reviews;
- Coordinated reviews of new school sites and/or major renovations of existing schools, and possible closings of schools and surplus properties;
- An examination of joint use or co-location opportunities of facilities;
- An agreed upon procedure for the resolution of disputes; and,
- A process to inform local government of school capacity.

♦

Calls for interlocal coordination are clearly more pronounced today than ever before. In fact, as of 2002 State law mandates it. This Chapter introduces the basic components of intergovernmental coordination, followed by Chapter Three which provides a practical model to *implement* a fully collaborative process. However, even when the attributes of coordination are accepted by both the School District and local government, neither have infinite staff resources, financial capacity nor time. Thus, it is imperative that the technical analysis and intergovernmental/citizen collaboration processes are well designed, and efficient.

There are clearly many methods to selecting good school sites. Fundamentally, establishing a strong technical process that integrates the best information is critical, and will save time and money. Equally important is a coordinated planning process that provides for input from all affected entities and citizens.

Despite best efforts of this Guide, or any individual or entity, no process can guarantee an outcome that is ideal, or even one that pleases all involved and affected parties. A well-designed effort will take into consideration specific issues and affected interests unique to each school siting project. School districts and local governments should custom design the public participation process for each project. In other words, this Guide discourages a one-size-fits-all public, technical or coordination process, and instead suggests that the tools and steps taken should fit the specific issues each project faces. If a small amount of time is invested in early planning of the process, reaching a timely decision is more likely to be accomplished, and projects built sooner.

Getting from a facility plan to occupancy of new schools is in every community's interest. The following steps and factors offer strategies on how to successfully implement projects while building strong bonds between school districts and local government.

CREATING A STRONG FOUNDATION-
COORDINATING DATA AND FACILITY PLANS

The Interlocal agreements now required by State Statute, strive to ensure that the facilities planning for new schools is coordinated with growth trends and

community plans. This critical foundation can ensure that population estimates, enrollment predictions, co-location opportunities and community design goals are coordinated with school facility planning. These tasks have their origin both in the local school district, which in Florida is a countywide agency, and each local planning office.

In its basic form, School Districts initiate a site search when the site acquisition funds have been budgeted in the district's capital budget and generally, though not always, after a new school has been recommended in a district's 5-year educational plant survey. If the school district is purchasing school lands for land banking, in anticipation of future growth, the school may not necessarily be recommended in the educational plant survey.

The determination of need to program the development of a new school, or the renovation/redevelopment of an existing school, involves careful analysis. The Interlocal agreements offer the opportunity to design a framework for ensuring that Schools are planned with the best information currently and collectively known. The agreements should require that local governments compile data reports that summarize build-out populations for all approved development. This data should be coupled with other relevant data resources that could substantially affect student enrollment projections or residential migration trends. For example, birth charts may be available from community service providers, and demographic trends from Universities and the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Capitol Improvement Plans of the local government also have important consequences for schools. The Interlocal Agreement provides a venue for entities to include each other in the development and updates of these plans. Specifically, the Interlocal Agreement may set a goal to improve bikeways or pedestrian links to existing schools through a CIP process, or schedule improvements concurrently as new schools are constructed.

Useful data, however, requires maintenance. For example, schools must be abreast of current comprehensive plan amendments or rezoning actions that could affect school enrollment. The Interlocal Agreement should determine what level of planning request triggers a notification to the School District, perhaps expressed in minimum acreage or density standards. Likewise, the School generally has an Educational Facilities report that has important implications for local governments. Sharing that report, including updates, ensures that data gaps between entities are minimized.

More frequently, advanced school siting is becoming a central dialogue. While landowners and developers are working with local governments, sometimes the early identification of public school sites is left out. Models run for long term community build-out often fail to include new schools in their traffic or build-out assumptions. How to coordinate schools in early planning debates can avert a shortage of optimal school site choices in the future, especially in rapidly growing areas.

SETTING COMMUNITY VALUES AND GOALS

Data and statistics are only a platform from which decisions can be reached. More important is how a community chooses to use the information in a manner that promotes better communities. The school as an asset was almost lost in the planning dialogue, despite years of regulating growth. For example, in the past decade, the discussion of Smart Growth has overcome the nation, including many Florida cities and counties. However, the integration of school planning into that discussion has been almost drowned out by debate over other priorities and regulatory options.

Fortunately, school siting, and its role in community planning, is having a renaissance throughout the nation. Educators, parents and communities as a whole are discussing the link between education and issues such as school size and walkability. Concurrently, communities are having a renewed interest in the traditional neighborhood as a planning model in both new development, and redevelopment of existing neighborhoods. The school is being elevated in the discussion of urban sprawl, traffic mitigation, and community health. Organizations as seemingly diverse as the National Trust for Historic Preservation are weighing into the debate over school siting choices.

Setting community values for school siting cannot be done by either the School District or the Local Government without the support and agreement of the other. Some of the issues that need to be discussed and consensuses reached might include:

- The value of walkable schools
- The importance of the "neighborhood school"
- School siting standards in new community developments
- Co-location of community facilities
- Redevelopment/Renovation of existing schools

The Horizon West Case Study, examined in Chapter Five, is one example of creative value-based planning that evolved from a decision to develop walkable schools. Although the Horizon West plan also sought to solve a host of planning and regional concerns, the end result included a series of new residential neighborhoods that included centered elementary schools. If developed as planned, no residential unit will be constructed more than ½ mile from the nearest neighborhood school. Middle and High School sites are also provided for in the new community plan, in areas more centrally located to serve their larger student populations. As evidenced by this case, leadership in promoting walkable schools can start from the land owner, the local government or the school district.

The importance of intergovernmental coordination, from planning to site selection is clearly critical. Unfortunately, coordination and cooperation can be derailed easily and usually at one of two points. The first is when the staff of one or the other agency resists. The second is when the policy body of one or the other resists. Chapter Three offers suggestions on how to work through such events by creating a framework for collaboration. The effort requires commitment, and offers avenues to address concerns

and reach agreements. It also provides an environment for dialogue that is critical toward working solutions.

From both the local government and school perspective, one simple but sometimes overlooked assignment is an intergovernmental coordinator, whose responsibility it is to create a structure for success. It is recommended that both the school district and local government appoint or designate an employee who can serve as the single point of contact for issues relative to school facilities. As relationships develop, the respective individuals can communicate directly each agency's issues and concerns. With resources and District concurrence, these employees can advocate school issues in appropriate organizational venues. Once established relationships have been formed, the District and local government will be better positioned to solve problems, and anticipate issues early.

EXPLORING ALL OPTIONS: RENOVATING/REDEVELOPING AND CO-LOCATION

In the renewed focus on the neighborhood and walkable schools, saving existing school sites are sometimes overlooked, yet it is often the most effective way to achieve community goals. Siting new schools in existing neighborhoods and urban cores is costly. Not only is an assemblage of adequate land area financially difficult, it often raises serious issues such as displacement of existing houses and businesses. Yet, even though renovating schools seems like an obvious conclusion, rehabilitating older sites presents regulatory and functional hurdles often more challenging than new sites. In Florida, the first design problem is often stormwater regulations, which disallow onsite expansions or redevelopment without land intensive set asides for drainage retention. Fire regulations prohibit uses or classrooms serving grades K-2nd on second floors

However, if design and construction challenges can be overcome, the locations of the most existing schools meet the ideal qualifications for Smart Growth, walkable schools and smaller schools. Although State statutes exempt many renovations of existing schools from the review of local government, in practice it may be unwise for Schools not to share their plans and decision matrix concerning school renovations with local government partners. Redevelopment often affects the utilization of a site or its relationship to its surroundings. Additionally, such projects sometimes require traffic on campus to be re-routed, changes in driveway locations, and changes in drainage and/or student capacity. All of these issues have the potential to affect the operations and/or capital plans of a local government, and need to be closely coordinated.

The most compelling reason to coordinate renovation and/or site redevelopment decisions between schools and local governments is the ability to share joint use facilities. Florida established minimum school size standards to ensure that adequate facilities can be provided to serve student population. Many existing and aging schools are well below these minimums, and are hard-pressed to be renovated and meet the

expectations of a modern school campus. One solution is to identify community support facilities that can be used to also support school needs.

Co-location is the most common description of shared use facilities between schools and other community services. When school campuses are smaller, cities and other civic groups may be needed to fill facility needs. Playing fields and community parks/recreational areas can be managed to serve multiple needs, and offset an otherwise undersized school site. The most common community uses of school facilities (and the reverse) are outdoor athletic fields, gyms and auditoriums. Other uses which lend themselves to joint-use agreements include: public libraries, fire stations, Community College programs (adult education, GED, vocational courses, etc.), parking lots, health clinics, museums, YMCA facilities, elder care, and meals-on-wheels programs.

A school site can also serve as a center for community. Often pegged a "community school" these schools are dedicated to being a public school open to students, families and communities members during and after school throughout the year. The Coalition for Community Schools - a 170-organization coalition - has promoted co-location as its central theme. Community schools in this definition seek to link educational and cultural programs, recreation, job training and other services in a clustered physical location or setting. In New Jersey, more than 30 schools have adopted a one-stop program.

In light of all the possible benefits, the capitol facility plan, as well as each new siting project, should start with a matrix of whether a new site should replace an existing school, or whether rehabilitation an/or expansion is a possibility. This critical first analysis involves many details and concerns, and represents an important initiation of coordinated decision making.

PULL OUT INSERT IN THIS LOCATION

THE CASE FOR RENOVATION AND CO-LOCATION IN SAN DIEGO, CA

In 1998 San Diego, California, voters past Proposition MM which provides financial resources to develop 13 new schools, and repair or rebuild 165 schools in densely populated urban areas. The San Diego City School will use a part of the $1.5 billion dollar bond measure plans to build 13 new schools and rebuild three existing schools by 2006. They have adopted a system for engaging community members in school planning that begins with a 6 month initial community outreach effort. One of the elements of that initial step is to identify joint use opportunities, including proximity to parks or libraries.

In a project called the "San Diego Model School", the San Diego City Schools, the City of San Diego and the city's Housing Authority joined together to develop a 27 acre urban village featuring multi-family housing, retail commercial uses, recreation areas, an elementary school and family services. To assemble an urban site large enough to accommodate the development, an estimated 254 housing units will be demolished. However, 350 new units, a mix of low-income and moderate apartments and condominiums will be constructed in their place. The project is estimated to cost $150 million, including a 700 student elementary school that will relive crowding at three nearby schools.

For more information check out http://www.cgcs.org/urbaneducator/2002/oct2_vol_11_no_6_article_4/oct2_vol_11_no_6_article_4.html

Small neighborhood schools also have many advocates, with mounting evidence that suggests they foster better learning and higher achievement. Other attributes of the neighborhood school include neighborhood cohesion and pride, less sprawl, lower bussing costs, less onsite parking requirements, and healthier children who walk to school.

Sam Passmore authored a study entitled "Education and Smart Growth: Reversing School Sprawl for Better Schools and Communities." His report examined some of the barriers to building a neighborhood school, such as minimum acreage requirements for schools and funding disincentives for renovations. In Pennsylvania, historic preservationists lead the fight to overturn a State policy that denied School District matching construction grants if rehabilitation exceeded 60% of the cost to develop a new school. Pennsylvania recognized that new schools often mean larger sites that were usually only achievable on the City edges. This inadvertent funding policy contributed to older neighborhoods losing their community school asset to outlying areas.

PULL OUT INSERT IN THIS LOCATION:

CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES:

Coalition of Essential Schools: www.essentialschools.org
New Schools/Better Neighborhoods: www.nsbn.org

21st Century School Fund: www.21csf.org

Travel and Environmental Implications of School Siting. United States Environmental Protection Agency Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation: *http://www.epa.gov/livability/school_travel.htm*

Smart Growth School: A Fact Sheet
http://www.nationaltrust.org/issues/schools/schools_smarthgrowth_facts.pdf

Good Schools-Good Neighborhoods: The Impacts of State and Local School Board Policies on the Design and Location of Schools in North Carolina
http://www.unc.edu/depts/curs/goodschoolsreport.pdf

Historic Neighborhood Schools in the Age of Sprawl: Why Johnny Can't Walk to School.Http://www.nationaltrust.org/issues/schoolRpt.pdf

PHYSICAL EDUCATION FACILITIES by Michael Fickes Learning to share school facilities in the 21st century can be a complex undertaking. Who pays for what during the design and construction phase? Which facilities can community members use? When can they use these facilities? Who maintains the facilities?
http://www.peterli.com/archive/spm/532.shtm

COORDINATING THE SEARCH WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND SPECIAL INTERESTS

Prior to formally initiating a new site search, the respective school district staff should meet with the respective staff from the local government(s), including the county, and discuss the impending school site search. If the search is regarding replacement of an existing school, the joint review and coordination should have begun at the earliest contemplation of the facility plan, while options to rehab or redevelop was considered. For new growth areas, the search might begin at the site search level.

Together, the staffs should review the residential growth and development trends in the anticipated area of the site search, discuss the anticipated attendance zones, and review the existing capital improvement budgets for the local government and school district. Some possible sites may be identified at this time, as well infrastructure and environmental issues, community concerns and other relevant issues.

Effective communication and dialogue can ensure that each respective agency is cognizant of the other's issues and identify opportunities. It also can facilitate the development of important partnerships that result in the common interests of each agency's taxpayers and constituencies being most effectively addressed.

The state's Office of Program Policy and Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) recommends that a school district's site selection process be overseen by a "committee" composed of various community interests and representatives. The committee's mission and power must be well defined to avoid unnecessary political posturing during a school site selection process. While specifically designed committees *may* be an appropriate part of a public involvement program, its composition, charge and role must be clearly defined and explained. In fact, committees may be one of multiple forums to seek input, clarify issues and gather comments. No matter how thorough and diligent a committee's efforts may be, they cannot replace the decision-making responsibility of elected officials.

The public process must involve various community interests. To be effective the neighborhood interests, political and community concerns, and relevant physical issues of each project must be identified early. The professional staffs of the school district, county and city representatives, and, when appropriate, staff members from independent special districts within the search area should be responsible for this effort. This staff team is best suited to identify the site search criteria, and simultaneously design a collaborative process that incorporates both technical review and public input.

The school district project coordinator is best positioned to lead this team effort for many reasons. First, the school district is the lead agency whose responsibility and mission it is to provide educational facilities. Given its charge to provide adequate school facilities, the district staff has as its primary objective to oversee and guide the process to a successful conclusion. In this role, the school district coordinator must

ensure time lines are defined, and actions are taken to meet the project schedule. In certain controversial instances the school coordinator may find it helpful to use a third party facilitator or public process specialist in appropriate settings to ensure that the process retains the confidence of all participants. Even when conflict is not necessarily the prime issue, the use of a third part facilitator is an important resource supplement in a detailed and/or complex siting project.

It is also recommended that the growth management or development service staff be the lead department for school siting on behalf of the local government. It would be their responsibility to ensure internal coordination amongst all of the appropriate departments of the local government, including public works and utility functions, growth management, fire and public safety, parks and recreation, library, and any other relevant staff deemed suitable by the local government.

While coordinating efforts among the public sector is crucial, partnerships and interaction with the business and real estate community should also be developed. For example, a notice of the site search and school site's criteria should be sent to the local association of Realtors and/or other real estate development interest groups. This apprises the local real estate community of the search, and enables them to be involved if they choose. Sites can be submitted to the appropriate school district representative by Realtors, developers or owners for consideration.

Chapter Three describes how to merge the combined tasks and ensure compatible efforts. In that Chapter, a step-by-step roadmap for dovetailing site evaluation and public/stakeholder collaboration is described.

SITE EVALUATION PROCESS-
TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

In the face of rising populations and aging facilities, the development and reconstruction of schools are a given. Once a determination of need for a new school is established, the task of selecting the location and coordinating infrastructure begins. By Statute, it is the school district's responsibility to compile a list of potential school sites and initially review them to determine if they meet general school location needs. Eventually, either during or after a satisfactory number of sites have been compiled, the school district coordinator preferably in concert with a technical staff committee, should develop information fact sheets comparing each alternative. Essential in the information is the intended time frame for construction and occupancy of the proposed school.

Assembling a site list starts simplistic in its overall goal, the appropriate determination of an area within the context of school enrollment projections and community planning. This area boundary must be initially established that serves the needs of the target student population, as well as complies with comprehensive planning goals, objectives and policies of the community. Once an overall area has been framed, sites that meet

established criteria can be identified and assessed for development constraints, acquisition availability, walkability, co-location opportunities and other established priorities.

Appendix 'A' provides an Evaluation Criteria Matrix. This matrix can be customized to address school specific issues. The matrix can also establish a ranking and/or weighted value system for criteria priorities established for a project, or a community. As basic as some criteria appear, school siting efforts can turn politically volatile quickly. In the heat of debate, it is crucial that basic evaluation standards are well analyzed and available for review by all affected stakeholders.

Criteria can be categorized by siting factors, construction costs, operational issues/costs, and other topics. Below is a *partial* listing of factors that must be evaluated:

- θ Site acreage
- θ Comprehensive plan goals, objectives and policies
- θ Proximity to population to be served
- θ Proximity to future growth trends
- θ Proximity to existing facilities (fire, police, recreational centers)
- θ Adjacent land uses
- θ Potential design issues
- θ Zoning considerations
- θ Utility service (including capacity needs for fire protection service, potable water, sanitary sewer, electric, gas, and telephone)
- θ Vehicular and transportation issues
- θ Pedestrian and bicycle networks
- θ Drainage and stormwater management
- θ Site hazards (e.g., flood zones)
- θ Noise
- θ Environmental considerations (e.g., wetlands, endangered or threatened species, historic trees)
- θ Proximity to police and fire protection services
- θ Construction cost factors (e.g., soils/foundations, relocation requirements)

As noted above, it may be helpful to apply ranking and weighting factors to each criterion, if a scoring method of evaluation is important. The assignment of values for weighting and ranking may be unique to a community or a neighborhood. If the school district and its local government partners agree this type of ranking would be suited to their community, the criteria should be well defined and agreed upon *prior* to applying the evaluation process.

The matrix analysis should aid in the culling of a large list to a smaller set of viable school site choices. A fuller array of technical analysis may be necessary, including preliminary engineering studies, concurrency checks, environmental/biological assessments, or other call for detailed studies.

By statute, once an alternative analysis has been completed by the School District, an adequate period of time for review and comment needs to be provided. The public process defined at the beginning of each school-siting project may call for the local government to coordinate its own independent review. While the time periods must be adequate and reasonable, the process outlined in Chapter Three ideally strives for a coordinated technical review with engagement by the school and local government staff members in a single process. Depending on the complexity of the evaluation analysis, a specific time line for independent technical comments should be set (for example, 60 days), providing an adequate opportunity for elected and appointed officials to be briefed and provide direction.

The local government staffs and staff from any affected special districts typically return written comments on behalf of their entity to the school district to ensure clarity and transparency. This phase also offers each entity the ability to assess their capital improvement schedules, and ensure that services to the proposed site(s) can be delivered concurrently with the impact of the educational or ancillary facility proposed.

At this point in the process the technical comments must be assessed and additional analysis undertaken if warranted. Throughout the effort, public comments and input from identified interest groups may also be factored into the alternatives assessment. Technical, public, and even political comments of each site can be collectively compared.

The compilations of evaluation criteria, technical review and public input are all factors in the school district's decision to acquire a site. While some sites may have minimal development constraints, they may not be designated in the comprehensive plan as one of the Future Land Use Map categories in which schools is an allowed use. Through strong communication, the alternatives' period offers the Schools an opportunity to engage planners and officials, and citizens, in a discussion about the appropriateness of current land use designations and policies, and future community growth needs. While clearly changing the land use of a local government's comprehensive plan should not be pursued without the support of the local government, a school siting effort may offer the impetus for a local community to reexamine a comprehensive plan or zoning designation in light of school siting goals, and other master planning issues.

PULL OUT INSERT IN THIS LOCATION

A CASE FOR WALKABLE SCHOOLS-
SITING A SCHOOL FOR WALKING AND BIKING

One of the many site characteristics that can be evaluated is the ability of a school site to serve a student enrollment within a two mile radius. Schools built close to students, in walkable neighborhoods, can be

called neighborhood schools. The two-mile limit is the State standard for bussing exclusion in Florida, and reflects in many circles a distance where a large population of students may be likely to walk or ride a bicycle to school.

According to an Environmental Protection Agencies recent report, school proximity clearly affects the likelihood that students will walk or bike to school. Barriers to a safe and high quality walk/bike experience will also impact the travel choice of students. The EPA study noted many interesting and important facts, such as:

- *In 1969, 48% of students walked or biked to school, in 2001 15% walked and only 1% biked.*
- *On average, morning peak hour traffic is 30% higher during the school year.*
- *Auto travel contributes to unhealthy air quality, and overwhelming evidence links polluted air to respiratory ailments in children, including infections and asthma.*

The EPA report linked empirical studies between school location and its relationship on children walking and biking to school, and provided in detail the health implications that traffic generated air pollution has on children's' health. It concludes that school location and the built environment matters, and that neighborhood schools increase walking/biking by 13%, and reduce air pollution emissions by 15%. Many variables will ultimately affect how high a percentage of children will in fact walk or ride a bike, even when the distance is small. Some variables include school centeredness within a neighborhood, proximity to other activity generators (after-school programs, recreation centers, libraries, etc.), and the pedestrian friendliness and safety. Difficult to cross arterial streets or lack of safe sidewalks can prevent students within even 1/4 of a mile from walking to school.

The sometimes under discussed obstacle preventing pedestrian and bicycling increases are parent attitudes and fears. Our perception as a society has grown more concerned about unsupervised children activities, even within our neighborhoods. Whether the actual safety threat is any more statistically pronounced then generations earlier, these common perceptions often prevail. Walkable schools may provide a venue for communities to discuss their own safety programs, and community concerns.

California also actively advocates for walkable schools through their California Safe Routes to School Act. This State statute requires 1/3 of all federal transportation safety funds to be reserved for improvements to bike paths, sidewalks and other pedestrian links around schools. It is estimated that this policy generates $20 Million/annually to these improvements.

PULL OUT INSERT IN THIS LOCATION

WALKABILITY CHECKLIST

Proximity may be the most commonly referenced siting principle for walkable schools, but other barriers can prevent students who live close to their school from walking and riding their bike. Schools and local governments should examine the surrounding neighborhoods, and look for the following impediments that might present challenges to students or concerns for parents.

Is there room to walk?

- T *Do sidewalks end abruptly?*
- T *Are sidewalks cracked, broken or blocked?*
- T *Are sidewalks missing do shoulders or paths exist?*

Can streets be crossed safely?

- T *Are roads too wide to negotiate?*
- T *Do traffic signals allow enough time for children to cross?*
- T *Is a crosswalk or traffic signal needed?*
- T *Are lines of sight blocked by parked cars, trees, bushes?*
- T *Do curb ramps need repair, or are missing?*

Are driver behaviors non-conducive to walking?

- T *Are speed limits observed?*
- T *Do drivers routinely yield to pedestrians?*
- T *Do drivers often speed to make a traffic light, or run the light?*

Is the walking/biking environment pleasant?

- T *Is the area landscaped?*
- T *Are there unleashed or barking dogs?*
- T *Is the area littered or not well lit?*
- T *Are neighborhoods safe and free from drug and crime activities?*

COST CONSIDERATIONS

The school district's evaluation of possible sites must also include a cost analysis. Often in the land use context, public dialogue is less focused on cost considerations. It is, however, an area that the school district will be highly criticized by its general constituents if not carefully considered.

Often a site that is remote, located in a relatively undeveloped area, appears attractive because of its low land value. However, once a full cost analysis is applied, inclusive of costs for site development such as: water and sewer extensions, development of new or extended roads, environmental mitigation, creation of adequate drainage, and importation of fill material, and/or other site preparation costs; the site may no longer appear to be inexpensive.

Some jurisdictions are extending their cost analysis function to include ongoing operational costs. For example, sites located on the periphery of communities often incur ongoing transportation costs for buses, students, teachers and parents in excess of other locations. This broader context is important, and should be even further extended. Because tax dollars also public funds, a full cost analysis of new and rehabilitated sites should include local government costs. Extension of roads, utilities and other services to address a new school location are all resource allocations that should be taken into context.

Energy efficiency and green school construction practices are also growing in popularity. In a handful of states, including Massachusetts, New York, Maryland,

Pennsylvania, and North Carolina, there are calls for all public buildings, such as schools, to meet US Green Building Council LEED system design and energy efficient standards. Although once considered cost prohibitive, current costs to build "green" have dropped to just 2 percent or less of a project's budget. With the building life of 50 years or more, the operational savings in energy costs can amortize those expenses within a matter of a few years.

PULL OUT INSERT IN THIS LOCATION
BUILDING GREEN SCHOOLS

Green building practices currently extend beyond vertical construction design, to site issues and other horizontal construction efforts. Some of the routine design practices that can make a school project deemed "green" include:

- *Installation of native landscaping and utilizing stored water runoff and greywater for irrigation;*
- *Downcast lighting fixtures and other lighting design options that minimize light pollution on adjacent sites;*
- *Use of high-efficiency heating/cooling systems with energy management controls;*
- *Orient building to optimize natural light while blocking excessive heat from the sun;*
- *Include lighting shelves that take sunlight and bounce it into ceiling tiles to provide more lighting while shading classrooms from glare;*
- *Install automatic light sensors that dim electrical lights when enough natural light is present.*

Check out information at HIGH PERFORMANCE SCHOOL BUILDINGS at http://www.sbicouncil.org/workshops/schools.htm

AND http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/high_performance.cfm

BEST EFFORTS/ NO SITES

In hopefully few circumstances, the only developable site with a willing seller may be located in an area that lacks local government support. It is at this point that intense collaboration must occur and the nature of the objections well understood. If implemented effectively, the selection process has identified and accounted for the needs and concerns of the community, as well as the goals and objectives of both the school district and the local government.

In the event that the school district and local government finds themselves in such an undesirable situation, both groups must resolve to find an acceptable solution. While

comprehensive plans and State law provide for conflict resolution procedures, the collaboration model discussed Chapter Three explores practical suggestions toward resolving impasses and moving toward resolution without the formality outlined in statutes. It may also offer a better chance to avoid the undesirable possibilities of litigation.

For example, a collective group might be wise to pose some or all of the following questions:

Is there a site that has not been considered?
Is there a way for the local government to make an alternative site more desirable to the school district?
Have all relevant interests been included in the process?
Is there a way for the school district to make its preferred location more desirable to the local government?
Is there a co-location opportunity that can be addressed at the site?
Could a specific program be offered at the new school that addresses a need of the local government, i.e., a performing arts program if the site is in/near an entertainment district, a health sciences program if the site is near a hospital/medical district?
Can the local government amend its capital improvement plan to extend or expand utilities or roads to an area?
Can the local government share the acquisition cost of another site and take advantage of a co-location opportunity?

RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD

After a site comparison effort is complete, typically an option agreement or contract is pursued with one or more property owners. Upon completion of successful negotiations by staff, the agreement must be brought forward to the school board for approval. The material that is submitted and presented to the board should include the written comments that were received from the local government(s), affected interest groups and individuals. Additionally, the cost analysis should be included. If an extensive public collaboration process has preceded this step, it is likely that Board members will be familiar with the project. In those cases, the process outlined in Chapter Three will have provided for public and multi-agency input in the technical and policy analysis.

If the staff is recommending a site to the board which has one or more unusual development issues or concerns, is contrary to the local government's expressed recommendation, or is otherwise problematic, clear communication must be provided explaining why a site is preferred and the actions needed to overcome identified problems. Well-articulated recommendations, built upon a solid technical analysis and inclusive public participation process, will enable elected officials to support a difficult decision to constituents and other elected officials.

DUE DILIGENCE

Similar to private sector developers, upon approval of the option agreement or contract, the specific site(s) is now ready to be reviewed and evaluated in greater detail. Consultants or other experts should be hired by the school district to review and evaluate the site's developability, addressing the technical and construction impacts of the selection criteria outlined above (e.g., soils, drainage patterns, traffic impact, environmental site assessment, utility requirements, and/or any other particular concern).

Florida Statute 1013.33 states that at least 60 days prior to acquiring or leasing property, the school board will request a finding of consistency with the county or city comprehensive plan. If staff members from the local government have been involved from the onset of the selection process, their ability to respond within the 45 days allowed by statute should be easily met. The county or city must provide the school board with a written statement of whether the proposed site is consistent with the county or city comprehensive plan, including appropriate circumstances and criteria under which the district school board may request an amendment to the comprehensive plan for school siting when applicable. If a land use or zoning change is required and has not already been initiated, then the necessary steps for the appropriate change should begin immediately.

The due diligence period is a defined and final opportunity for the school district to determine the appropriateness of a school site. If carefully orchestrated, the public review should be focused on the results of the final technical analysis performed by specialists. At this final selection phase, public and intergovernmental communication opportunities are limited by time more than any other factor. Well-designed communication tools, public processes and decision triggers enable local leaders to articulate and adhere to these deadlines and critical decision points, and make well-founded school siting decisions.

CHAPTER THREE

Creating Collaboration Models for School Site Selection

The State legislature, local governments, school boards and citizens all have a stake in Florida's quality of education. All interests agree that part of a successful educational system is adequate facilities for teachers to educate, and students to learn. Based on the rate of growth in most of the State, coupled with a voter mandate to reduce class sizes, the demand for new schools is growing also.

As noted in the Model Site Selection chapter, an estimated 1,332 new schools were built between 1981 and 2001. Clearly school districts are in the business of developing new campuses. Schools of varying sizes and locations have been constructed. In some cases, the selection of new sites and development of new schools were uncontroversial. In other cases, communities struggled to make a final site selection. Like many types of growth, neighborhood concerns and adequate services had to be balanced against an increasing student body being served in an ever increasing sea of portable classrooms on overcrowded campuses. Almost every County in the State can cite an example where student enrollment exceeds the design capacity of a school. Adding portable classrooms alone does not necessarily relieve the capacity of core facilities, i.e., crowded cafeterias, media centers or athletic amenities.

School districts are responding and are planning and developing additional campuses. Deciding upon a school site location, when the land has not already been set aside is perhaps the most critical and long-term juncture in the entire process. Location can affect multiple community outcomes, such as drive residential development trends, change flows of traffic, and add demand on an area’s infrastructure. If well sited, schools can provide an anchor of a community by acting as a hub of extra curricular school and neighborhood activities.

For these reasons, school officials must work with local governments to make sure that all interests are considered, and the best school siting decision is reached. However, site selection is only one piece of a much larger interrelationship between local governments and school districts. On literally a daily basis, services from one, impact or overlap into the other. Law enforcement, fire inspectors, librarians and other local and school officials are among the many that have direct responsibilities that are intertwined between municipal and county governments and school districts. Essentially, such investments are taken every day for our kids. Site selection offers one opportunity to collaborate between jurisdictions, but clearly there are numerous other venues where collaborative efforts might result in better communication, and perhaps better decisions.

This chapter examines the question of how best school boards, whose responsibility it is to construct new schools; can work with local governments and communities to arrive at

development decisions. Coordinating site selection with local government partners has been examined in the preceding chapters. As noted in the site selection overview, the Florida legislature calls for coordinated reviews of new school sites. The State also calls for coordination when school districts consider major renovations of existing schools, possible closings of schools, and the assessment of surplus properties. The state also calls for an examination of joint use or co-location opportunities between schools and other public facilities. This Guide provides a process that can assist school and local partners to achieve these important state goals. The steps are described as an outline for a collaborative process. Users should assess if all, or possible a modified series of these steps, would best fit the project or plan that they are responsible.

If all of the fundamental steps are taken, the model should help the school districts work with local governments in a meaningful way, with the goal of inclusiveness, rigorous technical review, and ultimately setting a supportive backdrop for elected leaders to move forward and support decisions that result in well planned schools, neighborhoods and communities.

The significant entities, school districts and local governments, collaboratively, should acknowledge the process of working together. The process can only be successful in its mission if clear and resounding elected support is provided to staff by all entities involved in the process. Cross communication and problem solving will be most critical when political pressures depart in different ways. In those events, this type of model allows the best venue to share data, assess complex issues and proceed with technical analysis.

In summary, state and local laws often cite a mandate for requiring entities to "coordinate" with one another. However, how to achieve design and implement a successful process is sometimes easier legislated, than accomplished. This chapter offers some specific suggestions for schools and local government officials. It is this Guide's goal to offer a model that leads toward successful collaboration and respectful decision-making that builds better communities and the best facilities for children2.

CONFLICT: An Overview

As many public sector professionals will attest, building trustworthy and respectful relationships takes many years. Losing that trust can happen overnight.

Much has been authored about what a conflict is, why it seems so prevalent in our society, and how to mediate conflict and arrive at decisions that allow a project or process to proceed. In fact, conflict has both positive and negative aspects. The negative side of conflict is probably easiest to recognize; such as fighting, distrust, power struggles and inaction. Conflict can also be helpful. It can promote discussion, problem solving and positive action. Some of the most common causes of conflict include:

- Miscommunication
- Misunderstanding of facts

- Power structures or jurisdictional disputes
- Differing values
- Different needs or interest
- Procedural objections or misunderstanding

To achieve a successful collaborative process, all or most of the known concerns are met. It is important to ensure that stakeholders see satisfaction that their interests are met, whether they are procedural, psychological or substantive. [1]

Many decision-making models exist, that range from the traditional public hearing/elected official majority vote model, to full stakeholder consensus/facilitated mediation method systems. This chapter does not intend to recommend, much less dictate, how locally elected leaders wish to structure their decision-making. Instead our goal is to offer the practical steps that can lead to an environment where elected officials can make decisions and move school projects forward while minimizing delays, disputes and political battles.

Despite best efforts, conflicts may develop during a school siting process. In some cases, the disagreements may be based in a misunderstanding of facts. A collaborative team approach can help avoid data-based conflicts, by ensuring that technical assumptions and inputs are understood and appropriate. In other cases, mistrust leads to conflict. To address this issue, teams may need to take extra time to ensure the procedures are fair and open, that past actions are considered in context, and that the purpose of the siting effort is well understood by all affected interests.

Yet in other cases, conflicts may arise because of a true difference in values or opinions. Changing persons, or groups, values may be unrealistic. If this type of conflict arises in a school siting process, care in identifying and understanding the differences may be the best approach. It may eventually become a situation where the healthiest outcome is for the parties to agree to disagree with respect to a specific issue, and then look for areas of agreement. Perhaps through this effort, political pressures can ease long enough for intransigent positions to yield, and compromises identified.

Deciding to locate a new school is an opportunity for communities to come together, make positive choices, and build social capital. As noted in the opening chapter, schools can be focal points within a neighborhood, and a key component of effective neighborhood and community design. Moreover, good school locations and good school design contribute to the well being of students, families, and healthy communities. If this is the shared goal of the school district and local government, and the community is aware of this mission, a successful collaborative process will emerge and become a stimulus for other cooperative

efforts. If a coordinated relationship already exists between the entities, this model will be an obvious way the groups can work together to share responsibility and build excellent community cornerstones.

The Many Ingredients of a Decision – Community Stakeholders

As emphasized throughout this Guide, School Boards are responsible for providing school facilities. They are the key "decision makers" who must, by their own mission, take actions that will result in education facilities being constructed. If they did not move forward and build new schools on new sites, and redevelop existing schools when appropriate, they would be failing in their prescribed duties.

In the same communities, local government officials are charged with their own duties and responsibilities. Among their many missions is to ensure that their community is developed consistently with its Comprehensive Plan. Schools are a cornerstone to well designed and vibrant communities, but can create impacts and conflicts if not well planned. Local governments must acknowledge the role schools serve as community facilities, and help plan for their development.

Common to both school districts and local governments is the citizenry, who comprise the constituency of both groups. Despite roles, responsibilities and authority, interests of the community are clearly best served when policies and decisions are reached collectively. How to design a collaborative process need not be standard. The involvement of community participants, technical advisors and decision makers may vary based on the school, the community or the neighborhood. Some issues to consider include:

- What are the key issues?
- Who are the affected interests or stakeholders?
- What timetable is available?

In this guide the school district staff is identified, at least initially, as the project leaders, who must initiate, oversee and fundamentally manage the site selection process. The school project manager needs to assemble key players who have the ability and authority to help design a decision-making strategy for site selection. As identified in the Site Selection section, usually, the growth management or development services staff of professional planners is the best department to coordinate local government participation. From these two groups, a small working group of school district and local government staff should be convened.

Given the burdens and responsibilities that are already assigned to local government staff, there may or may not be the luxury of having all relevant disciplines and departments actually on the working team. However, if there are key technical representatives that obviously have many overlapping interests, they should be strongly urged to make the group a priority. Otherwise, it must be the responsibility of those who are on the team to share information, and retrieve data. When key decisions are needed, stakeholder s within the local government and school district staff must be aware of the junction, and when necessary be urged to acknowledge agreement. This may be especially important with administrative leaders such as superintendents and managers.

As a first exercise, the group should take the time to analyze what political, technical and social issues are already known. The group may be able to anticipate what controversies or potentially explosive issues could be encountered based on what is already acknowledged. With issues identified (using a flip chart, power point list, or other means), the group may see outreach efforts that might help avoid unhealthy confrontations. Conflicts can occur through unintentional actions or avoidances. For example, one neighborhood group might be renowned for claiming that they are never consulted regarding issues that affect them. If the school decision could potentially impact that group, include them early. Teams might decide to distribute material often to such groups, and schedule meetings that are convenient and accessible to the area.

While later steps specifically involve designing the public process, remember that it is most important to tailor the effort to addresses the issues that most affect your project.

TAILORING A SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY

Successful implementation of public projects happens for many reasons. Unfortunately, many well-developed plans are never implemented. In other projects, the "right" decision is rejected due to political pressures that overwhelm a board or community. The primary goal of this guide is to assist communities by offering a template for designing processes that win the support of your community; build trust between school districts, local governing bodies and citizens; and, ultimately results in the development of well-planned schools.

As critical and long term as school construction projects undoubtedly are, budget nor schedules are limitless. Therefore, the process steps chosen must fit the issues of the project. For example, the use of a "task force" or "Town Hall" meeting may be effective to address issues involving one project, but may be a useless tool in another. Similarly, the kind of committee assembled, and its

responsibility and charge, can either help resolve/prevent a conflict, or foster problems and resentments that not only work against a project, but cause long term distrust.

One group who has devoted considerable research in this area is the Institute for Participatory Management and Planning. They have developed an intricate method for analyzing issues, and helping public agencies create successful consent building strategies. In their Citizen Participation Handbook, they examine more than eighty public participation tools that could be employed in an effort to garner consent for a public project.[2] For example, the Handbook defines as many as ten different types of "Committees" which could be formed to help reach consent. Interestingly, some committees are deemed to be very effective to resolve some issues, while others might actually be counter productive. Since school development needs to be timely and efficient, there is little time to waste unless there is a strong reason to believe that the technique, whether a public process or study, will be a strong tool toward resolving issues and reaching the defined objectives.

Below are nine suggested steps that outline a collaborative school site selection process. School and local government team members are urged to review the overall process together at the onset of each project, and develop agreement of how to proceed. Depending on the complexity, controversy or technical issues unique to each project, some steps may need to expand, while others could be truncated. Customizing the process, based on a thorough and honest examination of issues at the onset, provides the best possible platform for project success.

The Key Collaborative Steps:

- θ Develop a working team consisting of school district and local government staff.
- θ Create agreements amongst the team members about what roles and responsibilities each will play, and commit them to writing.
- ♦ Develop a site selection schedule, including key decision-making points.
- ♦ Decide as a team if the school district project manager can facilitate the working group effectively, or if a neutral third party should be retained for the project to assist the team.
- ♦ Critically examine all the issues known about the school or the neighborhood.
- ♦ List all the affected parties who are known, or believed, to have an interest in the site selection, or the issues identified.

- Compare the two above lists, and determine which groups are most likely to have an interest in each identified issue.
- Identify and prioritize what public involvement processes will best address the issues and affected interests identified.
- Design a public process that dovetails with a rigorous technical analysis.

If the time is invested in completing these above steps at the beginning of the site selection process, it is likely that later delays and pitfalls can be avoided. Some of the above steps may be difficult to address, and the answers tedious to develop. Nonetheless, they can together build a strong structure for a project, and help retain a focus. In this section, each step is explored and explained. Remember, in these steps, cutting corners, not being open and honest (opting instead for political correctness), or avoiding issues is not only unproductive, but also potentially destructive.

1) Develop a team consisting of school district and local government staff.

Choosing an effective team requires a compilation of skills and capacity. As noted in earlier chapters, local government representatives should join members of the school district staff and develop a working committee. Each municipal and county organization varies in terms of titles and expertise. Depending on the size of the local government, the City/County Manager will coordinate either their organizations' efforts, or delegate that responsibility to the Growth Management, Community Development or Development Services Director. Technical experts from engineering, utilities, public works and other departments may be asked to serve, or used as a referral agency during the selection effort. Clearly, the staff members assigned must have the time and commitment to participate.

Once initially convened, the group may want to pause and consider who else should be invited into the working group. Since each community is unique, this Guide cannot dictate the ideal team members for every project. However, the group itself should be asked the question about how large can be to be effective, and who might be recruited based on their knowledge or expertise.

2) Create working agreements amongst the team members about what roles and responsibilities each will play, and commit them to writing.

The task to compile a list of possible school sites and apply a meaning analysis to arrive at a selected site can be onerous. However, before

launching into a review of the technical and development data, take the time to discuss and agree on team roles and responsibilities.

Most staff members participating in the working group will have other pressing responsibilities. In some cases, past events may bring personal baggage in the form of skepticism and mistrust. In hopefully the majority of cases, the staff members have a previous or ongoing working relationship from which to build upon. Whatever the scenario, discussing and crafting a working agreement is essential. It can clarify duties, identify boundaries, draw out expertise, and build on discovered strengths. Identifying relationship roles and technical duties at this early stage will help the working group build a better team, in a short period of time.

One of the teams' first efforts should be one that may initially seem self-evident, but is absolutely crucial; take the time to develop a series of project goals and objectives. This exercise will give the group a common understanding of its charge, and create a reference point as difficult choices or issues are encountered later. In this effort, begin by distributing the Interlocal Agreement. Review the Agreement as a group, as well as any school district policies, relevant Comprehensive Plan policies, capital improvement plans, State or local statutes, or other documents that could have bearing on the project. Ask the group if they are aware of any other policies, plans, studies, or statutes that initially appear relevant. The group should be encouraged to identify other ongoing projects that might impact the school selection effort, and determine what level of coordination, communication or monitoring should be undertaken with that project.

In addition to developing roles within the group, discuss which members will take the responsibility of communicating the group's work to their departments, their organizations' management, decision-makers, the media, and the community. In some instances, that communication needs to be carefully coordinated and come from a single voice that can speak for the group. In terms of reporting back to member organizations, each group member holds a responsibility to share information and bring issues/information back to the group. Take the broadest possible perspective with respect to who needs to know the progress of the group. Review who needs to communicate decisions and bring back information at every meeting, and provide time on each agenda to allow representatives report back their efforts.

3) Develop a site selection schedule, including the identification of key decision-making points.

In some respects, whatever schedule is created at this early stage is subject to drastic modifications. Public process tools and formulas have yet to be discussed, much less defined. Nevertheless, this early effort can begin to define how the process is likely to unfold, and can be used to identify any known or anticipated deadlines that could have an impact on the site selection process. Site identification, an alternatives' analysis, and decision-making steps can be generally identified; creating a common set of understandings for the group. Revisit the schedule at every meeting, and refine steps and deadlines when appropriate. If modified, communicate the new schedule to affected interests and decision makers.

4) Decide as a team if the school district project manager can facilitate the working group effectively, or if a neutral third party should be retained for the project to assist the team.

The school district project manager has an important role and responsibility. The issue addressed here is more of the how to manage meetings and promote an atmosphere of open debate and discussion. The school district project manager should openly discuss with the group when he or she will actively participate in debate and decision-making and perform/present technical information, or when he or she will facilitate dialogue objectively. Most often, the school district project manager can serve as the team leader, and facilitate the team meetings. Strong facilitation skills are essential, with the primary mission of ensuring that all ideas are shared, and difficult issues managed.

Ultimately, whether someone can fulfill a hybrid team facilitator/school district manager role may be an issue of past relationships, and the amount of working trust that exists between the school district staff and the local government staff. If there is, or recently has been, difficulty between jurisdictions, for either political or professional reasons, a school district team leader may be a difficult role to fill. Hiring third party facilitators for even the team role might hold many merits. If conflicts between jurisdictions have involved procedural objections, even a well-trained school district staff leader may find him/herself in a position of over compensating on process decisions.

The obvious pitfall is that ideally a facilitator will remain neutral on technical issues. That may hinder the school district manager from fully participating. It may be possible to use one or two staff members from the school district and/or local government staff who are trained facilitators, but are not needed to fulfill technical roles in this site selection. Again, the level of complexity or

controversy of the project may be a determining factor in arriving at an honest decision. Additionally, staff time to facilitate this team could be substantial. These factors, and others specific to each organization or project, will ultimately play a role in arriving at this decision. Use the initial team meeting to flush out the positions of the participants, and a way to revisit the issue as the meetings progress.

5) Critically examine all the issues known about the school or the neighborhood.

Identifying issues can begin by a simple brainstorming session. As with all such sessions, using a scribe to record ideas and concerns is essential, and no ideas should be debated or rejected, only logged. After all ideas are on the table, the group can organize the issues by themes in any way that seems most logical. Some ideas may now be discussed, and by agreement eliminated. Through discussion, some ideas may become more clearly defined or articulated. Keep a record of this exercise, and be sure that these issues are examined through technical analysis or public dialogue. Do not ignore any of them.

Group issue identification may be spurred by using the site criteria checklist identified in the Site Selection section. That list includes, but is not limited to, comprehensive plan goals, future growth trends, design issues, and vehicular access. Reviewing these topics in this initial brainstorming does not alleviate the importance of a careful site screening for designated sites. It simply provides triggers for early issue identification.

6) List all the affected parties who are known, or believed, to have an interest in the site selection, or the issues identified.

As with the issues identification, this effort can also be done as a group in an open brainstorming session. Be sure to probe local government staff members about social, civic or neighborhood associations that may be less obvious to the school district staff participant. Consider programs or groups whose mission or business involves children (karate schools, tutoring businesses, recreation/sport groups, etc.). Specifically probe the group for stakeholders who might be negatively impacted by the school development.

7) Compare the two lists, and develop a matrix that examines which groups are most likely to have an interest in each identified issue.

Typically, this exercise reveals more process insights about the site selection than any other step. It will help educate the staff committee about what

issues needs to be examined from what perspective, and how community members are likely to bring their views to the process. If done earnestly, it can become a foundation for developing the technical analysis that will need to follow. Considering issues through the eyes of affected interests early, can direct technical studies and anticipate problems.

8) Identify and prioritize what public involvement processes will most effectively address the issues and affected interests identified.

For site selections that can be reasonably expected to generate controversy, soliciting the assistance of a knowledgeable public process expert may be warranted. Consider public input efforts that reach the greatest cross-section of community members, and offer them a meaningful way to share their concerns and ideas. Recognizing the hectic lifestyle many people lead. Asking citizens to join another committee, or attend your open house may not always generate the interests whose consent is needed. In many cases, team members that attend meetings or events where interested parties are already likely to be, will result in better participation. Rotary Clubs, Homeowners Associations, garden clubs, sports leagues, Planning Commissions, and countless other groups will provide the school selection process venues that are already advertised. Some groups can be approached, garnering advocates who are likely to support the school project, and can help identify needs of the community that otherwise might be overlooked.

Similarly, many of these groups already publish regular bulletins, newsletters and similar documents, and they will be happy to share information on the site selection process on behalf of the team. Not only do they already enjoy an organized readership, they will undertake the cost of publishing and distributing the material.

These are only a few ideas that are meant to promote discussion. Before a public tool is selected, the tool should be examined for its ability and effectiveness. If committees are used, for example, consider why and how the group is formed. In most cases, delegating decision-making to a selected panel is counter to developing a collaborative public process. Firstly, the school district board members and elected local government officials should not abdicate their representative responsibility to constituents. Secondly, determining membership will almost always create itself power struggles, and creates a potential for not including an important group or person whose absence could be detrimental.

Instead, in the case of site selection, use committees only if the material is expected to be overly complex, or when there are so many groups, that they

can best be reached through a representative who can critique draft reports, offering comments or posing questions on behalf of their constituency. Unless otherwise created, the group most likely will not be vested with direct decision-making or offering recommendations. In fact, unless absolutely necessary, facilitate the meeting with an object third party and alleviate housekeeping actions that require motions, votes or otherwise create de-facto decision-making bodies.

Instead, committees can be very helpful in flushing our issues, questions and clarifications that may be difficult to get in a quality form in other public process venues. A group or committee may, nonetheless, provide an efficient way to seek thoughtful feedback.

Similar to the analysis of a neutral third-party team leader, choosing a trained facilitator for public meetings or gatherings is also critical. Members of the community may or may not perceive local or school district staff as able to neutrally listen to their concerns without advocating district positions, or becoming defensive about their entity/project. If the team even suspects that issues could arise, extra care and consideration should be given to retaining a trained facilitator for the public meeting(s).

9) Design a public process that dovetails with a rigorous technical analysis.

This step is where the technical substance of the selection process actually begins. Planners, engineers, construction administrators and other staff typically know what studies and technical issues must be examined for a site selection process. The first chapter of this guide identifies a series of site constraints and design issues and that should be examined. Site criteria issues should be evenly and thoroughly examined, such as transportation studies and utility extensions, all of which require careful examination and cost analysis. Environmental constraints, such as wetlands and flood zones must be mapped and disclosed. As a starting point, we recommend the following basic steps:

- Generate a range of alternative sites.
- Assess the impact of each site from both a physical perspective AND from the perspective of the interested parties identified in Step 2.
- Create a full disclosure on the impacts and benefit of the alternatives.

As information is developed, review the above steps and scan the assumptions and issues. Determine if the issues or parties still make sense in light of the

technical data, or if changes or additions are necessary. The staff team should be prepared to undertake unanticipated analysis in order to respond to comments drawn from public feedback. It is possible that key technical assumptions of staff will prove incorrect, and a new direction will need to be assessed.

Most important, release technical information to the public as it is generated. Seek feedback and comments from as many interests as practical. Refine the technical review if warranted, based on public comments or impacts. Basically, the most important tenant is one of discovering technical issues and building public consent concurrently, not sequentially. Also, make sure both school district and local government staffs are involving and briefing elected officials. Their issues and concerns are also stakeholder issues, and should be identified throughout the effort. Since ultimately they will be called to formally issue a decision, they should be apprised of the public comments, and the efforts being taken to seek public views and buy-in.

Comments and critiques from the public should be considered in light of whether they hold true technical concern, are really addressing a perceived procedural problem, or primarily is a value objection that cannot be addressed through a study or meeting.

This technical/public parallel effort is sometimes more time intensive, but should lay a better framework for some of the mandated comment periods outlined in statutes. Moreover, if the selection process results in identifying some sites that are objectionable to many citizens, it is easy to predict that the local government officials will be under intense pressure to object to the site. Better understanding of the objection(s) might result in the school district agreeing to discard an option, or focusing on how changes in a design might be needed to successfully address a concern. As groups are engaged, and issues openly identified and discussed, impasses can generally be avoided and compromises identified.

SUMMARY

School construction is an essential mission of school districts. Having high quality educational facilities should benefit all residents. This may be evident to some, but needs to be articulated and repeated publicly. In fact, this mission needs to be clearly communicated at the onset of every site selection process. It may need to be repeated during and throughout a process.

Collaborative processes offer a method to engage a diverse team of professionals, as well as include members of the community in key decisions that may affect their quality of life. Collaboration also offers a method to promote effective

public debate and idea exchanges. This Guide advocates some fundamental tenants, such as disclosing materials timely; managing the decision-making process transparently; and engaging all affected interests from the onset. It is important to acknowledge that like almost every public decision, a school site selection will in fact create negative impacts on some groups or neighborhood members. If a process is undertaken honestly and openly, even those who may be impacted adversely by a school site selection are likely to understand how the decisions were reached, and why.

If the mission and responsibility of the school district is communicated effectively, coupled with a process as generally defined in this guide, elected officials from both the school district and local government will be the best possible position to choose a site and build new schools.

Insert into Introduction Section as Pull Out

CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES:

- *COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL PLANNING @* http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/community_participation.cfm
- *10 Principles of Authentic Community Engagement. @* http://www.kwfdn.org/ProgramAreas/facilities/10principles.pdf
- *Schools as Centers of Community - A Citizens Guide for Planning & Design from the United States Department of Education @ cefpi.org/pdf/schools.pdf*

CHAPTER FOUR

MODEL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

Objectives and policies can assume a varying content based on the specific needs and characteristics of each jurisdiction. However, there are several specific areas of concentration that need to be addressed to cover the basics of school facility siting as an integrated element within the comprehensive planning process. Each of these areas can form an objective and policy cluster in the local comprehensive plan. The key areas include:

- Plan for schools in conjunction with residential development.
- Provide affirmative guidance on potential school locations by land use category.
- Establish specific location criteria keyed to community needs and school system standards.
- Provide for coordinated school and public facility use.
- Establish a process for coordinating school facility siting.
- In those communities where it has been adopted, include a linkage between school siting and school concurrency.

In the following sections we will explore these areas of concentration in more detail and provide some suggestions of basic language that can be used to help the local planner frame objectives and policies specific to the local jurisdiction.

GOALS

In its effort to include school siting policies in the comprehensive plan, the local jurisdiction should review the structure of their plan and determine whether school siting should be identified as an individual goal or whether the appropriate objectives and policies should be integrated into objectives already established in the plan. How the local plan is structured will be the major determinant in which approach is preferred. If the plan has frequent goal statements it might be most appropriate to create a new goal specific to school siting. If the plan has fewer, broader goal statements, it might be most appropriate to link school siting with objectives on proper land use relationships or placement of public facilities as basic community elements.

In most cases the objectives and policies guiding school siting will be placed in the Future Land Use Element. Objectives and policies related to cooperative processes could be placed in the Intergovernmental Coordination Element. Another alternative is to create a public education facilities element as an optional element to the

comprehensive plan. This alternative has the advantage of placing the goals, objectives and policies for school planning, school siting and coordination in one location. It also provides an opportunity to use the data and analysis aspects of the element to give more depth to discussion of school needs and how the local government views school functions within the overall community context.

PLAN FOR SCHOOLS IN CONJUNCTION WITH RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

If the community wants to have a close relationship between its schools and its residents, it is important to consider school placement as residential developments are being approved. Schools that are in close proximity with housing can encourage more students to walk or bicycle to school and can improve the ability of schools to function as community facilities. If densities are sufficient and the percentage of students in the local population high enough, closely locating schools with residential development can create relatively compact school attendance zones. A close relationship between schools and housing can increase opportunities to use the school site for after school activities. To achieve this end it is necessary to provide opportunities for schools to be built close to existing and developing housing areas.

It is easiest to plan to incorporate elementary schools close to housing because of their generally smaller site size, smaller student populations, more limited community impacts and high potential for students to walk or bicycle to schools. Middle schools and high schools usually have larger student populations drawn from much larger areas, and they have larger site needs that make it harder to find adequate sites close to housing even when these sites are planned along with new residential development.

Objective: Plan for school sites as residential development is being planned.

Policy: Work with School Boards to predict school population growth and logical sites for future schools.

Policy: Include school sites by purchase, dedication or reservation in large-scale residential projects.

Policy: Encourage School Boards to utilize land banking of potential school sites by supporting early acquisition and by providing alternative use options if these sites are ultimately not used for school construction.

Policy: Work with School Boards to develop programs to use smaller school sites to enable a wider range of sites to be considered.

Policy: Encourage the creation of racially and economically integrated neighborhoods to help achieve diversity in local school populations.

PROVIDE AN AFFIRMATIVE GUIDANCE ON SCHOOL LOCATIONS BY LAND USE CATEGORY

One thing the comprehensive plan can do to clearly convey the intent of the community in the placement of schools within its boundaries is to provide a clear statement of those land use categories where schools will be permitted. A clear statement of policy in this regard will lay a solid groundwork for the rest of the siting process by making it clear to landowners and school boards where schools are encouraged.

High schools, and to a lesser extent middle schools and junior high schools, are often more restricted in locations due to the more intensive nature of these facilities. Elementary schools are most often given wide location latitude. They are typically permitted in most residential land use categories while the higher order schools are directed to high-density residential areas and commercial land uses. Policies can be included that direct schools away from industrial land use classifications where students might be exposed to noise, odor, dust and other hazards.

In urbanizing areas it might be appropriate to restrict schools from locating in rural and agricultural areas. This policy approach could direct schools into existing urban areas and reduce the potential for the school location to contribute to urban sprawl pressures. In more rural communities such a policy might be too limiting to the site selection process. However, schools located in rural areas should be designed to serve the needs of students living in these areas and not attract students from adjacent urban or suburban areas.

Objective: Locate schools where they can best serve the needs of the community as educational and public facilities.

Policy: Elementary or middle schools and other similar low intensity schools shall be allowed in residential land use classifications and commercial land use classifications.

Policy: High schools and similar high intensity schools shall be allowed in medium and high density residential classifications, and commercial land use classifications.

Policy: New schools shall not be permitted in coastal high hazard areas or industrial land use classifications.

ESTABLISH SPECIFIC LOCATIONAL CRITERIA KEYED TO COMMUNITY NEEDS AND SCHOOL SYSTEM STANDARDS

The site selection process needs to begin with an evaluation of potential sites that can then be subjected to a go/no go analysis based on a review of social and land use criteria, construction costs and operations and maintenance costs. The comprehensive plan

contributes to this process by helping to define the social and land use criteria. Standards may vary by the type of school being considered, but standards need to address:

- θ Access (both vehicular and pedestrian)
- θ Availability of public services
- θ Buffering of impacts to maintain compatibility with adjacent properties
- θ Location of the site relative to nuisances
- θ Site size sufficient to support the planned school use
- θ Recognition that the site needs to meet State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF)

Objective: Select sites for schools that meet the full range of educational needs while contributing to community's social and physical structure.

Policy: To the maximum extent possible, proposed school sites should be centrally located within intended attendance zones.

Policy: Elementary and middle schools, and other similar low intensity schools, shall have direct access to an arterial or collector road or at least two local roads. High schools and similar high intensity schools shall have direct access from an arterial or collector road and be served by at least one other access.

Policy: A non-vehicular network of sidewalks and bicycle facilities should serve all schools.

Policy: School sites shall be located where essential community services including potable water, sanitary sewer, and fire protection are available at the site or will be available prior to opening the school.

Policy: All schools located in residential land use categories shall be designed to minimize impacts to adjacent neighborhoods through control of site design elements including traffic access, landscaping, buffers, and placement of buildings, parking areas and recreation fields.

Policy: Schools should be located away from industrial land uses, railroads and similar land uses that may create noise, odor, dust and other nuisances.

Policy: Minimum site sizes shall be consistent with the standards established by the local School Board for that type facility. Site size may be modified to achieve joint use, co-location opportunities, urban design goals or other community benefits.

Policy: The State Requirements for Educational Facilities shall constitute the minimum standards for site design.

The sample policies address common impacts that need to be considered in all communities. Individual jurisdictions need to carefully consider any special circumstances that may apply. All jurisdictions need to consider if the location policies should be applied to other educational facilities such as private schools, parochial schools and charter schools.

PROVIDE FOR COORDINATED SCHOOL AND PUBLIC FACILITY USE

There are two aspects to co-location and joint use opportunities. One aspect relates to opportunities for community use of school facilities. Frequently joint use opportunities include public use of auditorium space, gymnasiums, library and recreational fields. Other uses such as day care and computer labs can also be considered. Early consideration of these opportunities in the design is important to integrating public access with the ongoing operational and maintenance aspects of school operation.

The second aspect of joint use is the exploration of opportunities to extend school functions into the surrounding community. Many of the same joint use options noted above can be considered in reverse. School playfields can be provided by public parks. Public libraries can serve as school facilities, and public auditoriums or meeting halls can be used to serve schools needs. These exporting options can be especially helpful when infill sites or renovations are being considered. Where TND-based communities are being proposed, these partnerships can be considered as part of initial design thus allowing a smaller school site and better integration with the surrounding community.

Objective: Maximize the opportunity for cooperative use of schools and other public facilities to avoid duplication of public assets and maximize the integration of school sites into the community fabric.

Policy: Include in the initial site evaluations an analysis of co-location and joint use opportunities.

ESTABLISH A PROCESS FOR COORDINATED SCHOOL FACILITY SITING

In order to make clear the responsibilities of each party in the site selection process it may be useful to formalize an interlocal agreement between the local jurisdiction and the School Board. This policy should address specific actions by each party and when the actions are to occur. This policy may best be placed in the Intergovernmental Coordination Element.

Policy: By (date) formalize the site selection coordination process through the adoption of an interlocal agreement between the local jurisdiction and School Board.

IN THOSE COMMUNITIES WHERE IT HAS BEEN ADOPTED, INCLUDE A LINKAGE BETWEEN SCHOOL SITING AND SCHOOL CONCURRENCY.

CHAPTER FIVE

CASE STUDIES

The previous Chapters examine many facets of school site planning, and coordination with local governments and citizens. In many cases, the time and resource commitment necessary to undertake a full site analysis and collaborative involvement process seem overwhelming. In fact, undertaking a thorough site selection effort is both time consuming and resource intensive. However, the failure to follow these steps can also produce long delays and lead to frustrating political roadblocks.

This chapter describes two projects in Florida. The first is a case study of the site selection process for the New Smyrna Beach High School. In this example, an undersized school on the beach-side of this growing area needed improvement. The School District examined both the possibilities of renovating the existing buildings, and redeveloping the entire site. After valiant efforts, the community reached agreement that the site was not adequate for current program needs, and the location was no longer central to the students it served. Although not pursued, the effort to retain the site was addressed within the general principles of Smart Growth.

Once it was concluded that a new site needed to be acquired, a three year search began. This case explores the real world issues, tangents and politics that affect school siting efforts. The issues of school sprawl, intergovernmental negotiations, and mixed land uses were all present. In the end, mutual consent was reached, New Smyrna High School remained in New Smyrna, and an urban location in proximity to students was acquired.

The second case study is Horizon West, a new planned community in west Orange County. This project examines how school siting was used as a foundation in the design of new neighborhoods. In this case, hundreds of landowners worked collectively to create a new model for urban development in a previously rural area, combining principles of environmental protection, compact development, and walkable elementary schools among the key components of the plan. The result is bourgeoning new area rising from former citrus groves, with walkable neighborhoods planned at a human scale.

SELECTING A NEW HIGH SCHOOL SITE

A Case Study of The Replacement of
New Smyrna Beach High School
New Smyrna Beach, FL.

Aging schools and transitioning populations lead many school districts and local communities toward examining redevelopment options. In some cases, existing school sites are renovated or redeveloped completely with a modernized campus. In other cases, school sites prove inadequate for redevelopment due to size, location, infrastructure or other inadequacies. In New Smyrna Beach, Florida the high school campus is located east of the Intracoastal Waterway, in a beach side community that was the central core of the City for decades. However, the 22- acre campus was incapable of serving the growing enrollment.

The Volusia County School District invested substantial efforts through a Master Plan process before determining the high school should be relocated to a more appropriate site. However, once the decision to search for a new site was reached, it found itself embedded in what proved to be a multi-year, multi-site search. This example emphasizes the importance of school district/local government relationships. It also reflects the concern and difficulty communities face when siting important community facilities, such as a regional high school.

The Master Plan

New Smyrna Beach High School was once located in the core of city activity, on a 22-acre site located on the North Causeway surrounded by water. However, almost 40 years after its initial construction, the site no longer accommodates the array of athletic facilities, parking, or academic facilities that are expected in 21st century high schools. Moreover, the site is no longer central to the student population it serves. Access is severely restricted by a canal bridge that is in poor condition and cannot provide school bus or delivery truck service. Parking is in extremely short supply as the societal change over the last 40 years has seen a large number of high school students drive their own vehicles to school. Students park everywhere and anywhere that they can squeeze a 15-20' vehicle.

During the 60's the focus of real estate development was in the downtown New Smyrna Beach area or on its beach side. By the late 1990's the 1700+ student population lived in a 30 mile radius from the school, extending all the way south to the Volusia/Brevard county line. The majority of students today reside along the U.S. 1 corridor. Many students commute from the suburban residential community of Edgewater, and the small rural fishing community of Oak Hill. In fact, half of the student population lives outside the New Smyrna Beach city limits, including a small student population from the rural agricultural community west of Interstate 95, Samsula. Over 75 percent of students travel from residences west of the Intracoastal Waterway, with only the causeway available to get to the school.

Despite these obvious challenges, the school district embraced a community based public master plan process that involved an array of stakeholders. Nearly two years were invested in meetings with parents, teachers, faculty, students, city officials, nearby residents, along with school district representatives from the facilities and curriculum departments. The consulting architect spent countless hours with his sub-consultants inventorying the buildings, reviewing their condition and comparing them to modern building and curriculum standards. The architect made a valiant attempt to design a parking garage with rooftop tennis courts as one way to accommodate needed facilities. Ultimately, the urban design approach was rejected.

By the end of the process there was no question amongst any of the participants that the existing high school failed to meet the requirements for a 21st century school. The group also concluded that the current site did not lend itself well to rebuilding. In hindsight, the conclusion that a new high school site was warranted appears almost obvious. However, this investment of time proved invaluable as the difficulty and controversy developed over the selection of new site selection. Fortunately, the need for a new campus was clear and indisputable; the two questions that remained at the end of the master plan process was "Where will the next New Smyrna Beach High School be built?" and "What re-use is appropriate for the current school site?"

The Site Search

It was clear from the beginning that this search would not be without its share of interest or politics. After all, if half the students came from locations other than New Smyrna Beach, shouldn't the school's location be considered say, in Edgewater?

Edgewater, a community of approximately 16,000 people is largely residential in nature. It is immediately south of New Smyrna Beach and the shared boundary of the two communities is Tenth Street. For quite some time Edgewater's leadership had been focusing its efforts to become more than residential. Efforts were underway to develop an industrial park and take advantage of the location of Massey Airpark. A site search in 1995 for a new middle school had gotten the attention of elected officials in Edgewater as the City insisted that the site belonged in Edgewater, although the recommendation to the School Board was a site in the far northern neighborhood of Port Orange. For the City of Edgewater, a high school would be an appropriate substitute and certainly help create the image of a larger, more dynamic community.

New Smyrna Beach officials were equally invested in retaining the community facility in its jurisdiction. Once the School Board determined it was going to seek a new site for the high school, the City Commission established a goal of keeping the new high school within the current city limits or within the City's designated annexation area. The City Commission accepted this goal without a formal vote, but it nevertheless guided much of its subsequent decision-making. Against this competing background, the school district formally initiated its site search.

Setting the Boundaries

In reality, finding an 80-acre site with adequate infrastructure, access, minimal environmental constraints, and centrally located to serve the student population was extremely difficult. Despite the jurisdictional competition, in May 1999 the school district embarked on a full site search encompassing all geographic areas that could feasibly accommodate the site needs. The broad search kept all options for the district open and optimized the school district's ability to find a suitable site. The boundaries included SR 442 on the south in Edgewater, Pioneer Trail on the north in New Smyrna Beach, U.S. 1 on the east, and CR 415 west of Interstate 95 near Samsula.

Saralee Morrissey, Director of Site Acquisition and Intergovernmental Coordination for the Volusia County School District, was charged with spearheading the process and finding the site. Morrissey started with individual meetings with key planning staff from each local government. Tom Harowski, New Smyrna Beach Development Services Director, and Lynn Plaskett, the Development Services Director of the City of Edgewater, were both integral to the site selection effort. County planners, longtime advocates and partners of the district, were also involved. Fortunately, the local government staffs that were involved had strong working relationships, seasoned professional experiences, and were well aware of the community interests and politics. They also recognized that a high school was a source of community pride as well as an impact on the surrounding neighborhoods.

Once the boundaries were established, Morrissey also used the media to notify the community that the school district was in search of an 80-acre site for a new high school within the area bounded by CR 415, US 1, SR 442 and Pioneer Trail. Legal advertisements cited adequate street frontage, good access, public utilities service or capability, minimal environmental constraints, and clear title as the key site criteria. The notice was also distributed directly to the New Smyrna Board of Realtors, several individual brokers who handled large tracts, and several landowners that held acreage within the search area.

It didn't take long to come up with several initial sites that appeared on the surface to be workable. Four primary sites were identified. They included:

- 86 acres off of Sugar Mill Drive and Pioneer Trail;
- 80 acres along Mission Road within a large landowners holdings;
- 80 acres on the north side of SR 442, east of the interstate in Edgewater; and,
- 80 acres on an undetermined footprint within a future development area south of SR 44 west of I-95.

The acreage along Mission Road was encumbered by wetland and flood constraints, and the primary access was extremely narrow. The 80-acre tract on the north side of SR 442 near the interstate in Edgewater appeared developable, but was on the extreme south end of the search area. The 80-acre parcel off Sugar Mill Drive was near Pioneer Trail and north of SR 44. It required an assemblage, but appeared achievable. In addition, the owner was a real estate investment group that had enough information that showed the site constraints were not substantial. The access, however, was not ideal. Like Mission Road, Pioneer Trail is very narrow with ditches along both sides. The north/south connector for the site is the high speed Interstate. Was it appropriate to encourage high school students to get to school by using the interstate?

The undetermined 80-acre tract west of I-95 was held by the largest landowner in the region, the O'Reilly Estate. At that time, the estate was actively engaged in negotiations with a south Florida developer who was considering a contract on a large amount of the acreage close to the interstate. That area was under consideration for a city industrial park and golf course residential development. Although the developer had some preliminary data; identifying a developable 80-acre parcel within the 5000 acres tract proved difficult. Adding to the hurdles of this area was a long-standing disagreement amongst the family members of the estate.

A missing link at this stage was a site that bordered the communities of New Smyrna and Edgewater. Harowski initially identified the neighborhood known as Tenth Street as a possible location, as it was in the middle of the majority of the student population and had reasonably good access with county road improvements planned. Unfortunately, Morrissey couldn't find an 80-acre tract in the area except for the City of Edgewater's industrial park. Not only did Lynne Plaskett advise the district that the City had no interest in making its industrial park home to a high school, district staff were not certain that an industrial park made for the best and most compatible use adjacent to a school.

Thus, Morrissey prepared an initial packet on the four primary sites, and distributed it to the County, the City of Edgewater and the City of New Smyrna Beach. Approximately one month later, comments were received from the all three entities. No surprises were contained within the staff comments. Edgewater staff liked the site along SR 442. New Smyrna Beach staff liked the site on Sugar Mill Drive and Pioneer Trail, indicating that the west of the interstate was "premature." County staff had problems with all of the sites citing traffic engineering, environmental resources, and/or growth management concerns.

The City of New Smyrna Beach's initial objective was to discourage sites in Edgewater and focus the search on sites in or near the current New Smyrna Beach city limits. Most, but not all, of the sites conformed to the City's goal. The City staff reviewed the list of candidate sites and provided the School staff with a report on each site. The written report focused on the technical aspects of the site review and what actions would be required to permit development on those sites. The staff also provided a frank verbal assessment of political considerations.

Down and Dirty

The best location from the district's perspective was initially determined to be the Sugar Mill site. Even though the site had potential limitations, the school district staff began to assemble the site. Morrissey began the process of negotiating an option. This process itself took months, due both to the owners' reluctance to sell and the purchase price. After several months of negotiations, an option agreement was reached.

At about this time, pressures mounted from the City of New Smyrna for the school district to shift its efforts. The west side of the interstate within New Smyrna Beach was now the preferred city site.

Although some of the district and city staff questioned whether development in this area was premature, the City formally requested the district pursue a site in the area. The City also presented a proposal to combine the school site with a fire station location, dispatch center and emergency services operations center. These were projects that were under

active development by the City at locations closer to the I-95/SR 44 interchange. Coincidentally, the City was also exploring the replacement of its football stadium (a facility used primarily by the school). Discussions were initiated about co-locating the stadium at a site as well.

Combination of these projects clearly offered an opportunity to create synergy. The school had food facilities and locker rooms that supported the emergency operations and dispatch functions, while the school could potentially use the presence of the dispatch facility to train students in these skills. The close placement of the fire station at the school site would provide quick emergency response despite relative remoteness of the site from other city development.

Although the site was premature from a development/planning perspective, an extensive site search was initiated within the acreage west of Interstate 95.

A Year in Provence?

The site selection process entered a phase that was dominated by political factors as much as technical assessments. The proposal put forward by the City was to consider a site west of I-95 in a location that was removed from other development. From the City's perspective this site had some advantages:

- The proposed location would give the site a feature status on the main road into the City.
- The site would eventually complement planned community development in the area west of I-95.
- The site could be made as large as needed to meet school demands.
- Sale of the site would provide a collateral benefit to a major property owner with whom the City was negotiating on a variety other land development issues.
- As a result of an earlier annexation agreement, the City was obligated to extend water and sewer mains to the proposed site within the time period planned for construction. This agreement resolved the concern about availability of urban services.
- The land cost for this site would be less than for sites closer to the developed areas of the City. This would result in potential savings to the School Board and allow the site to be enlarged to accommodate cooperative uses supported by the City.

The District's renewed negotiations with the O'Reilly Estate began just as the previous prospective developer had abandoned their negotiations. A 100-acre parcel with 1000 feet of frontage along SR 44 was chosen. The site contained higher elevations and only 20 acres of wetlands according to preliminary information. It appeared that the school district would enjoy prime acreage lying nearly two miles west from the interstate and one mile east of CR 415.

The district negotiated an option that gave them a year to decide whether the property was appropriate for a school. The sale price was $500,000 for 100 acres. The option fee was a

nominal $10.00. Thus far a year had elapsed since the new New Smyrna Beach High School site search was initiated. It was July 2000 and due diligence efforts on the newest site were initiated.

During this period the City supported both parties by processing the comprehensive plan amendment to assign the site a development classification that would allow school construction consistent with the other goals, objectives and policies of the comprehensive plan. For much of the diligence period, objections were light. Citizen interest was low. The Department of Community Affairs approved the comprehensive plan amendments ushered through the process by the City.

About ten months passed and it appeared that the school district had no reason not to purchase the O'Reilly parcel. It wasn't until Morrissey received a draft of the engineer's report and questioned the omission of flood elevations. The report, surprisingly, did not address the flood plain. Within two weeks the bad news arrived. The engineer reviewed the drainage plans that FDOT prepared for the widening of SR 44 in this area and discovered the entire site was within the 100-year flood plain. Challenges included the cost of fill combined with the hurdles of providing compensatory storage.

Although a series of meetings ensued to investigate the engineer's findings, multiple factors now combined to subvert the choice of this site. New public opposition mounted to oppose development west of I-95. Citizens and the media dubbed the school site a poor policy choice. The local newspaper in particular vigorously opposed this site in its editorial column. The criticism mounted just as the School Board began to actively pursue voter approval of a one-half cent sales tax to support a ten year construction program of renovation projects and new schools. The New Smyrna Beach High School replacement was among the projects central to the election campaign.

As the sales tax program gathered steam, it became clear that editorial support from the newspaper would be easier to get if this school location were abandoned. Moreover, there now were a growing number of agitated citizens from throughout the county who didn't think that the New Smyrna Beach High School site was appropriate. They also threatened to oppose the referendum if the Board continued to pursue the western site.

The two issues collided. District staff advised the School Board that the option on the site should be allowed to expire and the site search reopened. Two years had passed since the master plan for New Smyrna Beach High School was approved, and the district was back to square one. This decision began the third phase of the site selection process.

THE REOPENED SITE SEARCH

In August 2001, district staff revisited the previously considered sites to determine their availability. All sites were still available though terms would, in some cases, be different. In addition, the City of Edgewater now had renewed political interest in seeing the high school located within Edgewater. A portion of the city's industrial park was now brought forward to the school district for its consideration. Further, because the previously selected site had generated so much community interest, citizens actively began to suggest sites and general locations for high school's relocation. The area along Tenth Street, which was relatively central to the student population, started to receive more community attention.

Initially, the school district had disregarded Tenth Street because an 80-acre parcel was unavailable. Nonetheless, district staff considered parcels along Tenth Street even though several did not meet the original checklist criteria. Because of the central nature of Tenth Street to the student population and planned roadway improvements to Tenth Street by the County, the site search focused on three options in this area:

1) The partially developed 100-acre Daytona Beach Community College campus, which was located on the south side of Tenth Street in the City of Edgewater;
2) A portion of the City of Edgewater's industrial park, also on the south side of Tenth Street; and,
3) An assemblage of up to five parcels, including an existing church, to create a 90+ acre parcel on the north side of Tenth Street. Four parcels were in the unincorporated area of Volusia County, one was within the City of New Smyrna Beach.

With the City of New Smyrna Beach's desire and political persuasion to continue to call the high school "New Smyrna Beach High School", Morrissey was directed to negotiate an assemblage with the five individual property owners. By January 2002, option agreements were obtained on four of the five parcels for a total of 72 acres. One of the sites was a 25-acre parcel with an existing church. Three of the four sites were located within the county. The fourth site was located within the City of New Smyrna Beach and was an undeveloped 12 acre parcel zoned R-PUD.

The Second Due Diligence

The subject site was in both the city and the unincorporated area. The only portion of the site where the zoning did not permit the school by right was the parcel located within the City of New Smyrna Beach. The remaining 56 acres had zoning that included public schools as a permitted use. The partnership with the City remained strong. The City developed a program that included annexation of the entire parcel and a zoning plan that supported a land use designation suited to school.

While this new site met the City of New Smyrna Beach's primary objective of retaining the high school, it did pose some traffic concerns. Traffic considerations were a key factor for neighbors who opposed this site and echoed by some City

Commissioners. The high school's traffic generation was compounded by the presence of a nearby middle school and proposed multi-family housing project.

Thus, the location on Tenth Street seemed to satisfy much of the community; it predictably did not make the surrounding single family residential community happy. There is a neighborhood to the north of the site and Seventh Street already impacted by the nearby middle school, and facing a proposed apartment project. They expressed concern about the impact of the high school. There are citizens located to the north along Ingham Road who were concerned about the impact of a high school. Residents along Tenth Street objected to the high school, as did those to the south along Tatum Road.

One of the initial steps during the due diligence period for the new site was to meet with the surrounding neighbors. School district staff met and attended neighborhood meetings. Additionally, the School District sent out letters to all property owners within 800 feet of the subject parcel inviting interested parties to a meeting to discuss the proposed high school site.

The meeting was difficult. From the district staff perspective, the best that could be offered was that the site would be developed responsibly, with provisions for adequate buffers, limited access to residential streets, and a high degree of sensitivity to drainage that addressed existing drainage problems. The District also coordinated timing with the county for the planned widening of Tenth Street. Although everyone was not satisfied, consent was strong enough to lift the decision to the elected officials' level.

The School staff undertook a traffic study that showed impacts to the area's road systems would be less severe than anticipated, but opponents remained unconvinced by the technical data. The key parties to the site selection process were ultimately able to overcome objections. One key factor was clearly the coordination with Volusia County to restructure its road program to implement a phased four-lane construction for the main road serving the school. The City agreed to delay road construction on other county maintained roads in the New Smyrna area to allow funds to be redirected to this project. The City and School staff also agreed on an access plan than minimized impacts to other nearby neighborhoods.

In April 2002 the School Board exercised its options with the four different property owners, and purchased the parcels. A 72-acre site has become the home of the future New Smyrna Beach High School.

CURRENT STATUS

As of January 2004 the subject property has been annexed into the City of New Smyrna Beach, designated for school use on the City's Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map, rezoned to allow for public schools, and the high school site plan approved by the city of New Smyrna Beach. Permitting with all outside agencies has been completed. The existing church has been demolished.

Construction documents have been finalized and bid. The New Smyrna Beach Replacement High School is scheduled to begin construction in January/February 2004. The new school should be ready for occupancy by August 2006, nearly 10 years since the beginning of the master plan process for the (old) New Smyrna Beach High School.

The county is 80 percent completed with the first phase of the Tenth Street widening plans and is beginning to acquire right of way necessary for the widening and the retention. The school district is donating all necessary rights of way from the middle school and the high school along both Tenth and Myrtle Streets. In addition, the school district is participating in the acquisition of property for the proposed retention pond because of its location to the middle school and ability to assist in the resolution of drainage problems at the middle school. The Cities of New Smyrna, and Edgewater and Volusia County have committed to prepare a joint drainage study, which is underway.

CONCLUSION

This case study is an example of the difficulty school districts face balancing their mission to provide quality facilities, ensuring strong intergovernmental coordination, and community consensus. There are many examples of lost time and efforts that caused in some estimates two or three years of delay. The initial failed site selection efforts did, however, help elected officials recognize that no perfect solution existed. In many ways, this helped school and city officials overcome political pressures from surrounding neighbors at the final site. As one observer noted, all parties came to ultimately support the Tenth Street site, although some votes were reluctantly given.

The Site Selection Guide offers some strategies and suggestions that might help others tackle the tough task of siting community schools. For example, multiple alternative site diligence efforts, combined with a rigorous multi-agency public participation process, are recommended, especially for large and/or complex projects.

It is impossible to predict if more public involvement would have expedited the New Smyrna Beach High School relocation decision. Fortunately, the team of professional planners who managed the project involved in this case study retained a strong working partnership throughout the many years' effort. Their diligence clearly contributed to a successful outcome, for at the end of the day a new modern high school will be completed at a site centrally located to the students it serves.

NEW SCHOOLS IN A NEW TOWN

A CASE STUDY OF
HORIZONS WEST, ORANGE COUNTY, FL.

Can you plan the ideal community? How would you do it? Where would you start? For most planners, the opportunity to ask these questions rarely arises. It's not because the desire to plan great neighborhoods with great places to live, work, shop and learn, doesn't exist but because the right circumstances rarely present themselves.

What if you had the chance to plan a new large scale community from scratch? What if you had a complete greenfield, well coordinated landowners, and supportive leadership? This scenario actually unfolded in the early 1990's in Orange County, Florida. Only a few years earlier what is now known as Horizon West probably didn't feel like the ingredients of a great planning opportunity, but it was.

From disaster to opportunity

During the 1980's some of the most productive citrus groves in west Orange County took a devastating blow. 1983 was a harsh winter with freezing temperatures. Only two years later, in 1985, freezes reoccurred. A third freeze in 1989 dealt the final crippling blow, leaving tens of thousands of acres of dead citrus groves in its wake. Hard freezes and lost crops were certainly not new phenomena, but three freezes occurring so close together was economically devastating. Landowners faced crop replacement and waiting seven years before seeing production. Some experts predicted as long as double that time, or fourteen years, before production would begin again.

Meanwhile, Orlando and its metropolitan area were changing fast. For the agriculture landowners in West Orange County, the harsh winter storms of the 1980's were the catalyst for organization. Hundreds of landowners with holdings ranging from small parcels to large acreage organized themselves and formed Horizon West Inc. Their goal was to develop a land plan proposal for their properties that would replace the values lost from their previous agricultural efforts. The landowners represented a substantial area by anyone's measure, with 38,000 gross acres and more than 20,000 developable acres. The existing Orange County planning philosophy and adopted Growth Management Plan designated the lands as Rural/Agricultural and outside the urban services boundary. This land use allowed one home for every ten acres. Meanwhile, SR 429, the Western Beltway, was planned to link Winter Garden from the north and Disney World to the south. Windemere, an upscale residential community, had already been established to the east, and suburban development had leapfrogged over the area into adjacent counties.

Through organization the landowners were able to control their destiny. Their first significant accomplishment was forming a landowners' coalition. The framework

for a group existed in the Association of West Orange Landowners (AWOL). From this larger group, discussions among key owners within what would become Horizon West emerged. Through donations the owners organized themselves into Horizon West, Inc and hired Orlando based planning and development consulting firm, Miller Sellen Conner & Walsh. After many months of initial planning efforts, they found their neighbor to the south, Disney, was willing to join the group and match their donations. This collaboration of private efforts helped keep the planning efforts moving forward.

Ultimately, a second strategic partner was needed. With the leadership and commitment of Orange County Chairman Linda Chapin and her fellow elected officials, a coalition with the County was formed and remained intact over the full two year initial planning cycle. Chairman Chapin and District 1 Commissioner Bob Freeman understood the dilemma these landowners faced with decimated crops and agricultural zoning. Their understanding and support for both the owners and the County resulted in the dedication of staff resources and, ultimately, funding assistance. The County and Horizon West, Inc. joined forces, creating a public/private partnership and process to develop a new “demonstration model for planning and growth management."

Even today, ten years later, all parties agree that it was the well organized and cohesive landowners group that kept the process on track. Within only a few short days, a telephone tree could deliver literally hundreds of supporters to a County Commission meeting to voice necessary support. With the fall back of the existing land use designation of 1 unit/10 acres, and the possibility of enhanced property values upon completion, opposition was light and not from citizens within the planning area.

The Orange County/ Horizon West Inc. partnership obviously benefited from the skills of an independent professional planning firm. For project leader, Jim Sellen, Horizon West Inc and Orange County offered a great challenge and awesome planning opportunity. According to Sellen, the project started from very logical beginnings including data gathering, visioning efforts and design charettes.

Together, the group moved toward devising a new concept for the area. Consensus centered on planning a “sustainable” mixed use community, where families could live, work, shop, learn and play. The description of ‘place’ used today to describe these early efforts appears to have struck a cord with the family values orientation of the generational landowners. These owners worked with their hired professional consultants and governmental planners to devise a new land use classification system founded on the principles of neighborhoods.

Many policies were ultimately adopted as part of the new Village Land Use Classification plan. Integral was the above cited philosophy of neighborhoods, as well as policies regarding compact development, diversity of housing, walkable transit options, ample open spaces, and villages with well defined edges. However, there was another key design component of the Horizon West Plan; at the center of each neighborhood was a community-based use, the elementary school.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

The initial efforts included visioning exercises and charettes. These well attended meetings looked at a range of development patterns and designs that could be chosen to create "communities." The options ranged from what had already become the standard for Planned Unit Development, residential areas averaging 1 unit/acre, to high density urban options with densities of 8 units/acre. The third primary option was a hybrid form of what Sellen calls "new suburbanism." This option, according to Sellen, "creates organic communities with walkable neighborhoods, places where children can walk to school and neighbors can walk to village centers." Even the commercially oriented "Town Center" area would include grid streets, mixed uses, and walkable areas.

How did a group of landowners not trained in urban planning and design, much less the precepts of smart growth, reach consensus? How did they arrive at the core concept of walkable schools and neighborhoods? According to Sellen one of the trigger questions that struck a cord with the group was, "Do you want your kids to walk to school or ride the yellow cheese wagon?" There was a strong opinion that emerged; they chose walk over riding the "yellow cheese wagon"!

With the vision efforts complete, concept level planning evolved into a series of villages comprised of multiple neighborhoods. Elementary schools quickly became the core design criteria of each neighborhood. Walking distances vary according to experts. For the Horizon West plan a ½ mile walking distances was deemed a reasonable standard. This works out to an area of approximately 500 acre "neighborhoods." To create adequate density to justify a stable student enrollment, 5.0 units/net acre must be developed within each neighborhood, resulting in elementary schools with an estimated 950 students. (The student size for the elementary school was determined by the Orange County School District.)

From this core concept, 2-4 neighborhoods are to be clustered together to create each "Village". Each Village is supported by one 60 acre "Village Center" that is envisioned to include a Middle School and community oriented mixed use commercial. The commercial element can include a grocery anchored shopping area complimented with smaller retail shops, office uses and additional residential development. Except for the grocery store, no retail use can exceed 10,000 sq. ft. within any Village Center. Another two acres of neighborhood commercial can be developed within the core of each neighborhood. To further ensure the character of the development remains consistent with the vision, no four lane roads may be constructed that serves a village.

Fortunately, most of the usable acres in the planning area are gently rolling uplands. Environmentally sensitive areas generally lay outside the village areas, and were left conserved in the Plan. To seek balance and equity, and hopefully promote density in neighborhoods, a Transferable Development Rights scheme is available in the Plan, although, only used to a limited extent to date. The TDR program is unique, and can be used to increase or decrease density under the County's scheme. Fundamentally, however, TDR requests must demonstrate that

each neighborhood elementary school can achieve adequate enrollment through stable density.
In the end, nine conceptual residential villages were approved, each averaging 3000-4000 gross acres and 2500 acres of net developable land. An additional village, the Town Center, is designated, where all retail establishments that did not conform to the limitations of the Village Centers can locate. Big box retail, light industrial, and other commercial and office developments are all envisioned in Town Center, together with a strong mix of residential development. Coupled with two interchanges planned as part of the extension of the 429 Western Expressway, demand for the envisioned commercial development appears inevitable.

In summary, the Plan came together in approximately two years. With the cooperation of the legislature in Tallahassee, the Sector Plan process was approved and duplicate analysis through a Development of Regional Impact became unnecessary. The Horizon West Sector Plan covers the entire 38,000+/- acres of Horizon West, including hundreds of owners. With a target population of 16,500 residents/village, and assuming a mix of residential uses in Town Center, the area could represent a population of over 130,000 residents upon full build-out. Population estimates for target year 2015 for the Horizon West Study area range from 63,000-88,000 persons.

Between 14 and 25 new elementary schools could be built in the centers of their new neighborhoods. If so, children should flood the sidewalks in the morning and afternoon hours. Seven or more middle schools could also be built. Although an oversight and not considered in the original effort, latest plans project two high schools. At least one high school will likely be built in the Town Center.

PULL OUT INSERT IN THIS LOCATION

Schools in Traditional Neighborhood Settings

Florida has become a leader in developing communities that foster traditional neighborhood or New Urbanism design theories. These types of communities present some interesting opportunities to capitalize on State and national movements toward smaller classes and smaller schools. Many feel that reduced class size enables teachers to give children more individualized attention and there is some research that larger total school populations may be detrimental to the learning process. Traditional neighborhood design precepts that seek to locate schools, especially elementary schools, as a close knit element of the urban fabric would seem to have a bias toward smaller sites and therefore smaller schools.

While there is certainly an overlap between these educational and community objectives, there are other considerations that need to be addressed as TND school sites are presented. Despite the obvious

correlation of objectives, it is likely to take a lot more work than might be expected to overcome some of the concerns list below.

Costs: Studies conflict as to whether the initial and life cycle costs are more for small schools than for larger schools. For cash strapped school boards, it may be very difficult to justify building and operating smaller schools. Local governments, school boards and the development community will need to look at specific sites, perhaps joint use community support facilities, to overcome some of the cost considerations.

Joint use of public facilities such as playfields, libraries and other similar facilities are also frequently offered as a means of reducing spaces needs for the school site. While the benefits of joint use are clear, there can be some issues created if the public demand for the shared facility does not reasonably align with the timing of the new school. In this case the local government or the school might be faced with a decision to invest in a facility prematurely.

Mandated Design Standards: Local school boards do not have total freedom to design schools that fit well on small sites. For example State rules require that grades K – 3, and all common facilities such as the media center and lunchroom, be located on the ground floor.

Student Density: While TND communities typically promote higher residential densities, it is not yet clear that higher student densities necessarily follow. Given the age profile common to many Florida communities, a small "neighborhood school" that promotes community objectives could still have a modest "walkable" population.

Student Diversity: To the extent that value is assigned to a diverse student population, it may be hard to achieve with a small school drawing primarily from a close by housing base. In the community design planning needs to be done to encourage a diverse population in the community if a diverse population is desired in the school. Ultimately busing may be necessary to achieve some of these goals.

FROM A SECTOR PLAN TO BUILDING COMMUNITY, IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

The 1995 culmination of the Sector Plan marked the first of many important milestones for this impressive planned community. From a technical planning perspective, detailed comprehensive plan amendments must be developed on a village by village basis. Thus far two villages have been through the amendment process, having completed their village Specific Area Plans (SAP's). As promised, Orange County initiated the first SAP and worked with the Department of Community Affairs to complete this effort. This first amendment cycle has set the stage for smooth subsequent village plan amendments, and laying the foundation for development to proceed.

But true to the commitment toward schools and other core village needs (adequate public facilities), platting comes at a cost. For example, before any neighborhood plat can be recorded the elementary school site must be deeded to Orange County. Similarly, before any plat can be approved in a Village Center, the middle school site must be similarly deeded to the County. These land donations do come with value in the form of school impact fee credits. Sites with infrastructure and some site development components in place will earn a developer $22,500/acre of credit. Raw lands without such improvements are credited at a rate of $15,000/acre. However, this credit value is considerably less than the market value in Horizon West which can approve $60,000 per acre.

Obviously, the school sites themselves must be developed for the end product of walkable school neighborhoods to be achieved. However, as Dan Buckman, Senior Executive Director of Planning and Governmental Relations for the Orange County School District explains, the district has the sites reserved. Buckman arrived at the Orange County School District during the initial stages of planning for Horizon West and recalls that the School District was always a player in the process. The key representatives were staff members like him, though elected school district officials were well aware of the efforts being made on behalf of schools. The impact fee credits may reduce the income generated by residential development, but it secured school sites in well planned locations and at pre-construction land prices. Buckman notes that both are luxuries not always afforded to schools in planned community efforts. Buckman also notes that often school sites are reserved as an afterthought by land owners and developers, in locations least suited for development, profits, or walkable communities.

Clearly, the most notable difference in Horizon West, as neighborhoods head toward platting, is that the elementary school site is treated as a foremost consideration. School sites are not set aside in a corner of the development. They are centered in the core of each residential neighborhood and reserved for the time when capital construction can begin. Moreover, density requests are considered in

the context of school enrollment, striving to ensure that residential areas are able to support a stable student body.

In addition to school sites, each SAP identifies other critical public facilities that must be ensured through donation, dedication or other means prior to any plat recordation. They include such important components such as road right-of-ways, park lands, and utility sites and easements. These sites also receive limited impact fee credits as described above.

Since each neighborhood and village center is comprised of multiple land owners, these final steps may prove to require the most crucial cooperation among Horizon West members yet. Already, as the first two villages have begun to develop, the timing of owners and developers has presented some challenges. In one village center, the commercial developer did not control the middle school site. Similarly, in one of the first residential neighborhoods, the entity who owned the identified school site would not sell to the adjacent landowner, who was ready to plat their land for residential development. The school site could not be donated, and development was delayed. Eventually, the SAP was changed, and a new school site was identified and deeded to the County.

According to Jim Sellen such hurdles will undoubtedly be faced again, but no waivers from the requirement for dedications can be afforded. In the end, market forces will have to come together to meet the goals and policies of each plan, or development will not proceed.

The Public Sector Role in Horizon West, A Matter of trust and cooperation

It is clear the Orange County government played an important role in making the Horizon West Sector Plan a reality. Without the understanding and leadership of the elected officials, and the work of a diligent planning staff, it might have been just as likely that a battle could have erupted over urban service boundaries or other policy hurdles. Instead, the voice of the unified ownership, and the partnering of the owners and county, resulted in the joint funding of the professional planning firm. Together, there was clearly a shared vision for creating a new standard for neighborhoods and quality of life.

How influential were roomfuls of vested owners? Undoubtedly their political voice was strong. The fact that no competing neighborhoods or commercial areas viewed the Sector Plan as a threat was no doubt critical, as well. Chris Testerman, Orange County Planning Manager, has remained a key player and lead contact on the project from its inception. According to Testerman, Winter Garden was the nearest commercial core that might have staged a formidable opponent to the planning effort, but their location well to the north helped allay concerns. Testerman is able to provide a stable resource for the County and the landowners,

and has helped implement the planning efforts through the many local and state milestones that have occurred.

But what seems consistent from every recount of the events was that neither local government planners nor school district staffs were the early champions for school centered neighborhoods. That concept was arrived at through visioning, and a consensus based decision making process heavily led by the landowners themselves. Nonetheless, local planners actively participated, embraced the theories, and helped influence the designs that emerged

Although involved in the planning process, the Orange County School District let the County take the governmental lead throughout the land use planning process. One result is that school sites are being dedicated to the County, not the School District, at least initially. The County conceives that they will deed the sites to the District once construction of the school is assured through capital budgeting. However, the County sees as its duty to hold the sites for public use. If, for whatever unforeseeable reason, the School District cannot or will not construct schools as envisioned, the site will at least be available for other community uses that might be able to replace elementary schools as a core neighborhood gathering center. This is a fall back position. Everyone involved hopes that the elementary schools will be built as envisioned and those walkable neighborhoods will develop.

The plan to reserve school sites, as neighborhood anchors, is no doubt both a luxury and a challenge for the district. A luxury, since school sites were reserved on the District's behalf and dedicated to the County before any development in the area can proceed. A challenge, because the transfer of dedicated school sites will occur only once a financial plan for school construction has been completed. Thus far, not a single school site has made it into school district ownership, although the first site appears imminent.

Orange County is exploring the formation of an Educational Benefit District (EBD) to fund school construction. This type of financing, combined with traditional capital improvement budgeting, may be one more innovative solution to emerge from Horizon West. The EBD for schools may be a way to leverage the resources needed to construct schools, even as financial challenges face the District. However, to date the County has not been receptive to this type of funding mechanism.

In Summary

As traditional as the school house in the center of town is in America, it seems that the leadership to call for this template of development is infrequent. With Horizon West, the plan has re-awakened the curiosity of many planners. Although the replication of circumstances that brought 38,000 acres of rolling greenfields

together to be planned cohesively might not be presented again for many years, the fundamental concept of walkable schools is a lesson that may be applied on smaller planned neighborhood scales. The method of tapping minimum densities and designing for tight densities in a walkable radius can be replicated to achieve similar results.

At Horizon West the road from agriculture to neighborhood has been underway for about a decade, and today several hundred homes are constructed. Implementation will likely be accomplished not by the original landowners but by developers who have the means and experience to construct the adopted plans. The missing component in the initial plan was identification of high school sites. According to Testerman and Sellen, at the time the high school seemed like a regional facility not necessarily germane to their planning efforts. However, today more refined work has been completed and the area will likely generate demand for two high schools within Horizon West. High schools also generate a source of civic pride through their athletic and other programs, thus enhancing the community spirit often missing in large developments. Fortunately, these sites will be planned and provided for within the Town Center.

Unlike Horizon West, planners in school districts and local governments need not wait for educated developers and landowners to bring the concept of walkable neighborhoods and walkable schools to their jurisdiction. Educating elected and appointed officials about development pattern choices is a critical first step. If the value of walkable neighborhoods is shared, then maybe fewer “yellow cheese wagons” will be needed.

CHAPTER SIX

REFERENCES FOR THE COMMUNITY

School districts and local government professionals throughout the State are working toward to create stronger and better communities daily. The siting of school sites is one of many public facility functions that is both a necessity and a possible attributes in a neighborhood. Identifying, acquiring and planning new schools is a function of the school district, but cannot be accomplished without community involvement, especially in the form of a partnership with local governments.

This Guide offers both the basis for strong intergovernmental coordination, and some tools in the form of collaboration models and site strategies for considering school facility decisions. These principles are important in the maintenance of facility planning, as well as in individual site decisions. Building strong relationships between local governments and school districts at the siting stage of a school project will provide an even stronger platform for the many other partnerships required once a school is open.

Fortunately for facility managers, planners, construction managers and the many other professionals responsible for school development and siting coordination, there are many resources available to access. The following references were used to assemble this Guide, and can be accessed for more detailed information. School planning enjoys a strong interest throughout the Nation, and fresh methods and processes are being discovered every day by concerned professionals and community members whose goals are to improve our schools and educational systems.

REFERENCES

***Chapter One**:*

Sam Passmore, Education and Smart Growth: Reversing School Sprawl for Better Schools and Communities. Funders Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, 2002.

Coalition of Essential Schools @ www.essentialschools.org

Linking School Siting and Land Use Planning. Atlanta Regional Commission, Community Choices Quality Growth Toolkit, 47 pages.

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities: www.edfacilities.org

Schools as Centers of Community: A Citizens Guide for Planning and Design: http://www.cefpi.org/pdf/schools.pdf

Linking School Siting and Land Use Planning

Before You Dig; Here's What You Need to Know About Selecting a Site for Your New School**.** @ http://www.asbj.com/2001/10/coverstory.html

Getting the Most from Urban Schools. Education is Essential to a City's Future, but Can Schools Help Shape the City, Too? @ http://www.cudc.kent.edu/Quarterly/Articles/Schools/schools.htm

A Guide to School Site Selection @ http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/_documents/schools/facilities/site2_a.pdf

What If.@ http://www.nsbn.org/publications/whatif/

Chapter Two:

Making Current Trends in School Design Feasible. Public Schools of North Carolina State Board of Education, Department of Public Instruction. 49 pages.

Site Selection Criteria and Evaluation Handbook 1997 Edition. State of Alaska - Department of Education Support Services/Facilities @ http://www.state.ak.us/facilities/publications

Education and Smart Growth: Reversing School Sprawl for Better Schools and Communities, the Funders Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, Translation Paper Number Eight, March 2002 @ http://www.fundersnetwork.org

Florida Department of Education website @ http://www. Fldoe.org

Getting to Smart Growth, Volumes I and II, International City/County Management Association and the Smart Growth Network @ http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/getting_to_sg2.htm

Stopping School Sprawl, Phillip Langdon, American Planning Association Planning Magazine, May 2000.

"Choosing a School Site." School Planning and Management. August 2002

San Diego Model School Project to Create "Urban Village". Urban Educator, October 2002 @ http://www.cgcs.org/urbaneducator/2002

The Development of Educational Facilities through Joint Use Mechanisms, Case Studies: Joint Use Joint Use Working Group. January 2000. New Schools Better Neighborhoods @ http://www.nsbn.org/case/jointuse/developfacilities.php

New Schools: Proposition MM, Repairing our Neighborhood Schools. San Diego City Schools @ http://prod031.sandinet/propmm

What Difference Do Local Schools Make? A Literature Review & Bibliography. Sept. 1998 @ http:/www.ruraledu.org

Land for Granted: The Effects of Acreage Policies on Rural Schools and Communities. Lawrence, Barbara Kent, Ed.D., Dec. 2003 @ http://www. Ruraledu.org/docs/landforgranted.pdf

School Siting, Design and Construction in Delaware Summit March 2003 Report and Recommendations." AW Hunter and C. Sawak @ http://www.ipa.udel.edu/research/publications/schoolinfrastructure_rep.pdf

"San Diego Model School Development Agency" @ http://www.sdmodelschool.net

School Site Selection and Approval Guide, School Facilities Planning Division, California Department of Education @ http://www.cde.ca.gov/facilities/field/publications/schsiteg.htm

Schools Uniting Neighborhoods Initiative, A Collection of City, County, State and Schools in Portland (Multhomah County, OR) @ http://www.sunschools.org

Smarter Planning for Schools and Communities. Ellen Shoshkes, Ph.D. January 2002. American Planning Association PAS Memo.

Energy Efficient Schools Green Initiative. Boston Globe July 24, 2002 @ http://www.nsbn.org/articles/item.php2?id=47

Coalition of Essential Schools: www.essentialschools.org

New Schools/Better Neighborhoods: www.nsbn.org

21st Century School Fund: www.21csf.org

Travel and Environmental Implications of School Siting. United States Environmental Protection Agency Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation: http://www.epa.gov/livability/school_travel.htm

Smart Growth School: A Fact Sheet
http://www.nationaltrust.org/issues/schools/schools_smarthgrowth_facts.pdf

Good Schools-Good Neighborhoods: The Impacts of State and Local School Board Policies on the Design and Location of Schools in North Carolina
http://www.unc.edu/depts/curs/goodschoolsreport.pdf

Historic Neighborhood Schools in the Age of Sprawl: Why Johnny Can't Walk to School.Http://www.nationaltrust.org/issues/schoolRpt.pdf

PHYSICAL EDUCATION FACILITIES*: Learning to share school facilities in the 21st century can be a complex undertaking. Who pays for what during the design and construction phase? Which facilities can community members use? When can they use these facilities? Who maintains the facilities? Fickes, Michael @*
http://www.peterli.com/archive/spm/532.shtm

Interlocal Agreement for Public School Facility Planning, Adopted March 19, 2003 between Volusia County, the City of Daytona Beach, City of Debary, City of Deland, City of Deltona, City of Edgewater, City of Holly Hill, City of Lake Helen, City of New Smyrna, City of Port Orange, City of South Daytona Beach, Florida and the Volusia County School Board.

The Feng Shui of Schools - If you build it, will they learn? Kate Zernike, Education Life, August 5, 2001

Chapter Three:

Schools as Centers of Communities - A Citizens Guide for Planning and Design. United States Department of Education, April 2000 @
http://www.cefpi.org/pdf/schools.pdf

A Toolkit for Tomorrow's Schools. Steve Donnelly, AICP, Planning Magazine, October 2003 pgs. 4-9.

Successful Public Meetings, A Practical Guide for Managers in Government, Jossey-Bass, 1992.

Citizen Participation Handbook for Public Officials and Other Professionals Serving the Public. Tenth Edition 1997, Institute for Participatory Management and Planning

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL PLANNING @ http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/community_participation.cfm

10 Principles of Authentic Community Engagement**.** @ http://www.kwfdn.org/ProgramAreas/facilities/10principles.pdf

Schools as Centers of Community - A Citizens Guide for Planning & Design from the United States Department of Education @ http://www.cefpi.org/pdf/schools.pdf

http://www.nsbn.org/case/community/http://www.kwfdn.org/ProgramAreas/facilities/10principles.pdf

Chapter Four:

Orange County, Florida Comprehensive Plan, Public School Facilities Element, Adopted by the Orange County Commission (*insert date*).

Smarter Planning for Schools and Communities. Article by Ellen Shoshkes, Ph.D., PAS Memo January 2002 published by the American Planning Association, Washington, D.C.

Stopping School Sprawl. Article by Philip Langdon, PAS Memo May 2000 published by the American Planning Association, Washington, D.C.

Choosing a School Site, Article in School Planning & Management August 2002.

Visions for a New American Dream, Anton Clarence Nelessen, APA Planners Press, Chicago, Ill. 1994

Negotiation and Implementation of School Interlocal Agreements: The South Florida Experience. Article by Susan L. Trevarthen, Esq., AICP in Florida Planning August 2003 published by the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association, Tallahassee, FL

Making Current Trends in School Design Feasible, November 2000 by the Public Schools of North Carolina State Board of Education, Department of Public Instruction, Division of School Support, Raleigh NC

Good Schools – Good Neighbors, Center for Urban and Regional Studies, The University of North Carolina, June 2003

Linking School Siting and Land Use Planning, Atlanta Regional Commission

Various comprehensive plans in Volusia County including Volusia County, Holly Hill and New Smyrna Beach.

Chapter Five:

A Village Land Use Classification and Horizon West Study Report**,** Prepared for Orange County and Horizon West, Inc. By Miller~Sellen Associates, Inc. February 1995.

Personal conversation with Don Phillips, Horizon West, Inc., November, 2003.

Personal Conversations with Chris Testerman and Alissa Barber Torres, Orange County Planning Division, November, 2003.

Personal Conversation with Jim Sellen, Miller~Sellen Associates, Inc., November 2003

Personal Conversation, Dan Buckman, Senior Executive Director of Planning and Governmental Relations, Orange County School District, December 2003.

http://www.kwfdn.org/ProgramAreas/facilities/10principles.pdfhttp://www.kwfdn.org/ProgramAreas/facilities/10principles.pdfhttp://www.kwfdn.org/ProgramAreas/facilities/10principles.pdfhttp://www.kwfdn.org/ProgramAreas/facilities/10principles.pdf

APPENDIX 'A'

SITE EVALUATION MATRIX

Site Name:

Acreage:

Site Costs: (If known)

Site Development Issues:

Flood Zone None 500 Year 100 year Flood zone/way

Wetland areas None Isolated Poten. impact Substan. Mitig.

Soils Sandy Clay Muck

Historic/Spec. Trees None Less than 10% < 25% > 26+%

Endangered/Threatened Species None Possible Likely

Water bodies (Streams, canals, etc.) None Outside Building Area Within site

Potential for Hazardous Materials None Possible Likely

Potential for Natural Hazards (sinkholes) None Possible Likely

Utility/Infrastructure Issues:

Water Service At Site <.5 miles >.5 miles

Sewer Service At Site <.5 miles >.5 miles

Electrical Lines	**At Site**	**<.5 miles**	**>.5 miles**
Stormwater Capacity	**Provided Offsite**	**Area Onsite**	**Limited**
Natural Gas	**At Site**	**<.5 miles**	**>.5 miles**
Telephone/Cable	**At Site**	**<.5 miles**	**>.5 miles**
Roadway LOS w/i 2 miles	**All LOS adequate**	**Few LOS constraints**	**Substantial Intersection Failures**
Evacuation Capacity	**Adequate**	**Constrained**	
Emergency Service Response Time	**< 5 minutes**	**< 10 Minutes**	**>11+ Minutes**

Walkability/Access Issues:

Existing sidewalks w/I 2 miles	**Complete linkages**	**Interspersed**	**None**
Sidewalk ramps	**Installed/adequate**	**Some needed**	**None**
Existing crosswalks @ major intersections	**Installed/adequate**	**Some needed**	**None**
Roadway speeds (Main Access)	**<35 MPH**	**<45 MPH**	**>46+ MPH**
Roadway speeds (Secondary Streets)	**<25 MPH**	**<35 MPH**	**>36+ MPH**
Bikepaths	**Installed/adequate**	**Some needed**	**None**
Residential Density w/i 2 miles	**<25% student pop.**	**<50% student pop.**	**>50% student population**

Co-Location Opportunities:

Playing/rec fields	**Possible**	**Unlikely**
Public library	**Possible**	**Unlikely**
Fire Station	**Possible**	**Unlikely**
Health Center	**Possible**	**Unlikely**
YMCA	**Possible**	**Unlikely**

After School Activities	**Possible**	**Unlikely**
Meeting rooms	**Possible**	**Unlikely**
Police substation	**Possible**	**Unlikely**
Community College programs	**Possible**	**Unlikely**
Daycare Center	**Possible**	**Unlikely**
Affordable Housing	**Possible**	**Unlikely**
Other:		
_	**Possible**	**Unlikely**

Land Use Issues:

Zoning Compliance	**Consistent**	**Special Review**	**Rezoning**

Comp Plan Policy Issues	**Consistent**	**Some Policy Issues**
	Requires Text or Map Amendment	

Proximity to future growth trends	**w/I urban area**	**Future Growth Projected**
	No Foreseeable Growth in Area	

Adjacent Land Uses	**Compatible Uses**	**Possible Issues**
Issues	**Significant Concerns**	

Proximity to Activity Generators	**None**	**Some Community Uses**
	Significant Community/Private Activities	

External Noise Impacts	**None**	**Possible**	**Likely**

Proximity to Airport	**<1 Mile**	**<3 Miles**	**>3+ Miles**

Acquisition Issues:

Single site vs. Assemblage	**Single Site**	**<5 Owners**	**>6+ Owners**

Displacement of existing homes/businesses	**None**	**< 5 houses/businesses**
	>6+ houses/businesses	