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Facilitating Intergovernmental Collaboration in School Facility Planning

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Outline

- Recent trends
- Impacts of trends
- Intergovernmental framework for school facility planning
- Benefits of collaboration
- Obstacles to collaboration
- Examples



Recent Trends

- Larger schools on bigger, more distant sites
- Push for smaller, neighborhood schools
- Growing interest in school facility planning among:
 - Historic preservationists
 - Smart growth advocates
 - Public health officials
 - Land use and transportation planners
 - Community developers

Larger Schools, Bigger Sites





Minimum Acreage Standards

| | |
|------|--------------|
| K-6 | 10+1/100 ADM |
| 5-8 | 15+1/100 ADM |
| 7-9 | 20+1/100 ADM |
| 9-12 | 30+1/100 ADM |



School Size

"How much of our academic talent can we afford to waste? If the answer is 'none,' then . . . the elimination of the small high school through district reorganization and consolidation should have top priority."

James Conant, president of Harvard University, 1959



School Consolidation

| | <u>1930</u> | <u>2006</u> |
|------------|-------------|-------------|
| # Schools | 238,000 | 97,382 |
| # Students | 28 million | 55 million |

National Center for Educational Statistics, 2008



Impacts of large schools/sites

- Fewer kids walking or biking to school
- Schools have become major traffic generators
- School sprawl?
- Increased cost for busing

Fewer Kids Walking/Biking

- Nationally, among children aged 5 to 15, nearly half are driven to school in cars, another third take a bus, about 13% bike to school, and only 10% walk to school (CDC).



Schools as Traffic Generators





Schools and Sprawl?

“The public school system ... is the most influential planning entity, public or private, promoting the prototypical sprawl pattern of American cities.”

W. Cecil Steward, Dean of the College of Architecture, University of Nebraska



Interest in Smaller Schools

"One of the key issues that affects safety and the whole educational enterprise is the size of our schools. This is an area where we have made terrible mistakes. . . . Too many schools are just too big."

James Hunt, former governor of NC, 2001

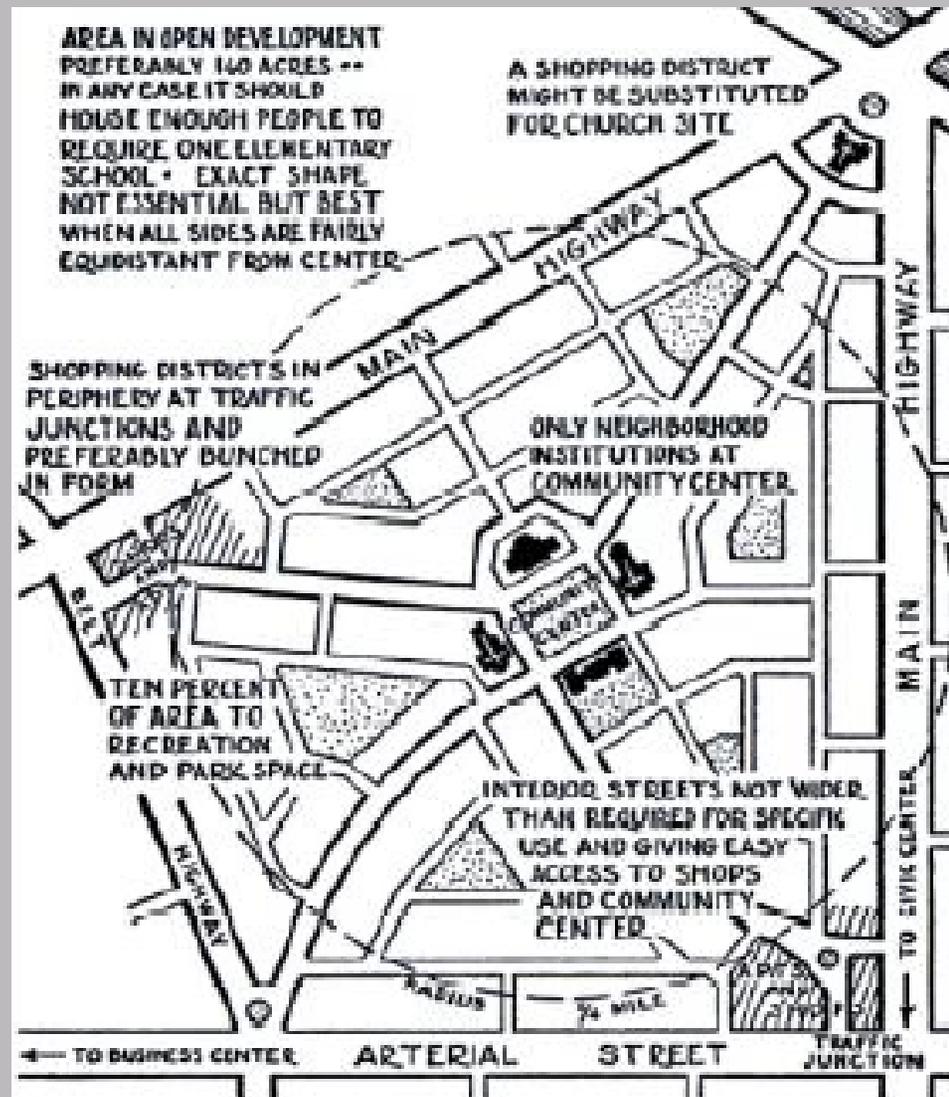


SC Policies

“Our current policies encourage the construction of massive, isolated schools that are inaccessible to the communities they serve. One of the keys to improving education is a sense of community where teacher, student and parent all feel a sense of ownership in their school.”

Governor Mark Sanford, South Carolina
2003 State of the State Address

Neighborhood Schools



Neighborhood School



Southern Village, Chapel Hill, NC



Mary Scroggs Elementary





Intergovernmental Framework

School
District

Enrollment projections, school facility plan, school construction

Municipalities

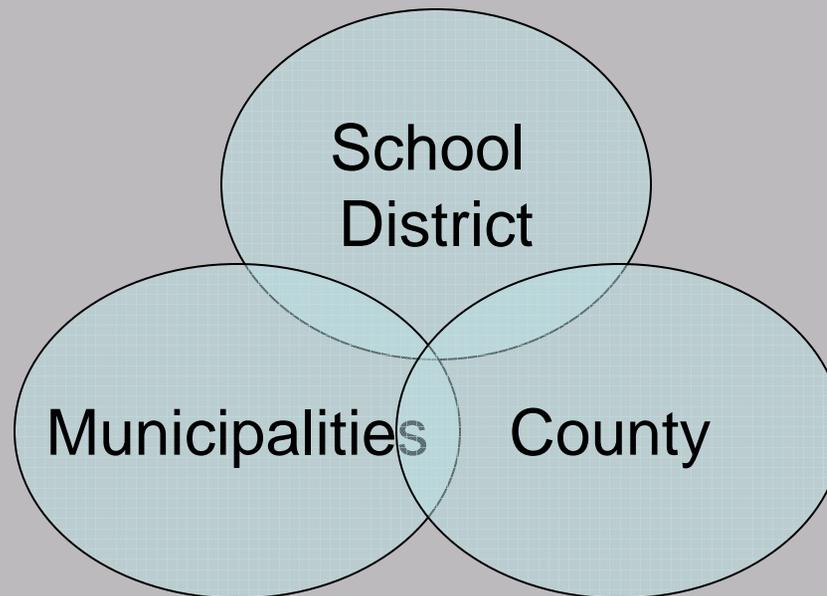
Population projections, comp. plan, infrastructure, public facilities, subdivision approval

County

Population projections, infrastructure, public facilities, capital costs for schools (NC)



Intergovernmental Framework





Nashville Area MPO

Do municipalities or counties consult with the school district when reviewing applications for new subdivisions?

| | <u>%</u> | <u>#</u> |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| Most of the time | 18 | 4 |
| Sometimes | 30 | 8 |
| Never | 14 | 3 |
| Don't know | 32 | 7 |



Nashville Area MPO

Does the school district consult with municipal or county governments when selecting sites for a new school?

| | <u>%</u> | <u>#</u> |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| Most of the time | 18 | 4 |
| Sometimes | 18 | 4 |
| Never | 5 | 1 |
| Don't know | 59 | 13 |



Questions to Ask

- Is there a compelling reason to collaborate?
 - Can you achieve more by working together than by acting alone?
- What informal or formal mechanisms exist?
 - Networks, partnerships...
- Is there sufficient interest (a constituency) ?
- Who should lead the effort?



Benefits of Collaboration

- Better alignment between local comprehensive plans and school facility plans
- Closer link between development and school capacity
- Better connectivity between schools and adjacent neighborhoods
- Co-location and joint use of schools with other facilities (e.g., ball fields, libraries)
- Improved student access and safety by coordinating construction of new schools with road and sidewalk improvement programs

Obstacles to Collaboration

- Autonomy
- Conflicting goals
- Time
- Trust
- Incentives
- Tradition – no history of working together
- Lack of mechanism to collaborate





Obstacles in Nashville Area MPO

1. Poor communication
2. No tradition of collaboration
3. Cost
4. Lack of leadership
5. Turf battles



Continuum of Collaboration

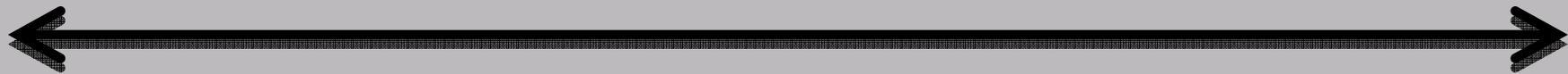
Networks

Partnerships

**Regional
Institutions**

Informal

Formal



Build
relationships
Exchange info
Identify
common interests

Coordinate
institutions
Negotiate
compacts

Create intermediary
organizations
Create regulatory
agencies

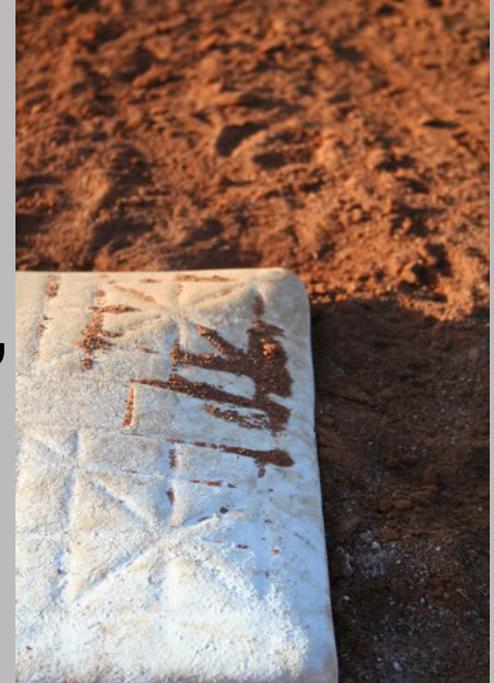
Status Quo

- Each entity carries out its mission independently:
 - Local governments approve new subdivisions
 - School district selects sites for new schools
 - County provides infrastructure, (and funding in some states), for new schools



First Base

- Organize joint staff meeting
- Identify common interests
- Agree to share information, e.g.,
 - Enrollment figures
 - Subdivision proposals
 - Plans for future schools



Second Base

- Hold joint meetings periodically
- Mandatory referral (for joint use)
- Seek each other's input, e.g., for rezoning, subdivision approval or plans to build a new school.



Third Base

- Formalize working relationship
 - e.g., intergovernmental agreements
- Integrate land use and school facility planning
- Coordinate new school construction with capital improvements, e.g., sidewalks



Home Run

- School concurrency:
 - Link subdivision approval to school capacity
- Representative on each other's board
- Impact assessments
- Joint use institutionalized
- School siting guidelines or ordinance





Examples

- Cabarrus County Summit
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg PLC & JUTF
- Lincoln, NE Super Commons
- Martin County, Florida – ILA and concurrency
- PG County, MD – county identifies and reserves sites for schools
- Fulton County, GA – School district comments on proposed rezoning.



Integrating Land Use & School Planning

- Durham Comprehensive Plan

- Goal 11.2: Integration of Land Use and School Facility Planning

- Ensure that school facilities are incorporated into the long-range comprehensive planning process so that schools may serve as focal points for communities and neighborhoods.

Chapter 11, Schools Element, Durham Comprehensive Plan, February 2005



Florida: Mandatory Coordination

- Mandatory inter-local agreement that address:
 - Student enrollment and population projections
 - Information-sharing on growth and planned school facilities
 - School site selection
 - School facility infrastructure
 - Availability of school capacity for growth



Martin County, FL

- School District, County and City of Stuart formed Joint Task Force, which developed an inter-local agreement (ILA)
- Task Force creates policy matrix to evaluate and rank potential sites
- Technical Advisory Committee uses matrix to rank potential sites
- TAC submits top 3-5 sites to School District's Long Range Planning Committee, which advised the School Board



Martin County, Florida

- In FL, the location of schools must be consistent with county and city comprehensive plans
- If the School Board selects a site from among those recommended by the LRPC, then the school shall be deemed consistent with the city & county comprehensive plans and will be exempt from local land development regulations



Martin County, FL

School siting criteria:

- *Walkability* – % of students living within 2 miles; sidewalks, speed limit, ...
- *Complimentary uses* – libraries, parks, community center, joint use potential...
- *Community design* – consistent with master plan, proximity to population centers, size of site
- *Environmental impacts* – e.g., wetlands
- *Infrastructure* – water & sewer, busing costs

School Siting Criteria, Martin County

GEOGRAPHIC - WALKABILITY

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|-----|--|
| 1 | % of students existing within 2-mile radius (0=none; 5=all) (existing students + approved subdivisions/lots projected to be built w/in 5 years but yet unbuilt; MC ARDP data) | | X 5 | |
| 2 | % of students proposed within 2-mile radius (0=none; 5=all) (NOTE: score as improvement to existing condition— as area builds out) (per adopted FLUM and approved subdivisions/lots projected beyond 5 years) | | X 5 | |
| 3 | existing/proposed condition of sidewalk network (0=need to build whole network; 5=network ready) (existing, within first 5 years of adopted CIP + within adopted private master plan) | | X 1 | |
| 4 | walkability of 2-mile radius (along "pedestrian routes" as defined by Chapter 6A-3, F.S.) (0=not walkable; 5=highly walkable) | | X 3 | |
| 5 | average adopted speed of roadway network within 2-mile radius (use 25 MPH as base) (0=too fast; 5=25 MPH) | | X 3 | |

GEOGRAPHIC - COMPLEMENTARY USES

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|-----|--|
| 6 | proximity of existing/planned public park/rec. uses/sites (w/in 2-3 miles; after-school activities) (0=distant; 5=close) (existing + within first 5 years of adopted CIP) | | X 2 | |
| 7 | proximity of existing/planned complementary public uses (library, comm. center) (w/in 2 miles) (0=distant; 5=close) (existing + within first 5 years of adopted CIP) | | X 2 | |
| 8 | potential to co-locate with proposed school facility, public park/rec use, or complementary public use (0=not able; 5=able) | | X 2 | |
| 9 | ability for noxious uses to locate within 1-mile radius (industrial, heavy commercial) (0=none; 5=any) (NOTE: existing or potential use based upon adopted FLUM or LDRs; MC to provide list) | | X 2 | |



Martin County ILA

- County, school district and City of Stuart meet twice a year
- Sharing of enrollment figures
- School board submits educational facilities plan to county and city for comment
- School district reviews development applications
- City and county provide school board with info on residential development approved, rezonings, building permits issued, ...
- Public impact statement required for residential projects over 50 units



Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC

Joint Use Task Force

- Public libraries
- County parks and recreation dept.
- Charlotte fire department
- Huntersville parks and recreation dept.
- County stormwater services
- Charlotte area transit system
- YMCA
- Several nonprofit athletic associations

Joint Use





Conclusion

- Collaboration makes sense if you are more likely to can achieve your interests by working together than by acting alone
- Collaboration can lead to better integration of schools and neighborhoods
- Collaboration can lead to more efficient use of resources (infrastructure, joint use)
- Collaboration isn't easy: many obstacles must be overcome



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Thank You

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Site Selection Criteria

Size - is parcel large enough?

Cost - is the parcel affordable?

Access – do roads have sufficient capacity?

Utilities - is water and sewer available?

Topography - is extensive grading necessary?

Location - is the site near future growth area?

Safety – is site free of chemical contamination?

State Policy – is the site consistent with state policy