The Teacher is In!
School Siting Tools You Can Use

New Partners for Smart Growth Conference
January 30, 2015
- Regina Langton
  Senior Policy Analyst
  EPA Office of Sustainable Communities
  1300 Constitution Avenue NW
  Washington DC 20460
  (202) 566-2178
  langton.regina@epa.gov

- Katherine Moore, AICP
  Sustainable Growth Program Director
  Georgia Conservancy
  817 West Peachtree Street, Suite 200
  Atlanta, GA 30308
  (404) 876-2900 X106
  kmoore@gaconservancy.org

- Bill Michaud
  Senior Technical Advisor, Land and Sustainability Programs
  SRA International, Inc.
  3434 Washington Boulevard
  Arlington, VA 22201
  (860) 738-7501
  bill_michaud@sra.com

- Nick Salmon
  Educational Facility Planner
  CTA Architects Engineers
  306 West Railroad Suite 104
  Missoula, MT 59803
  (800) 757-9522
  nicks@ctagroup.com
U.S. EPA School Siting Guidelines

- Voluntary
- Directive from Congress to create model guidelines accounting for:
  - Special vulnerability of children to hazardous substances or pollution exposures
  - Modes of transportation available to students and staff
  - The efficient use of energy
  - The potential use of a school as an emergency shelter

www.epa.gov/schools/siting
These guidelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WILL</th>
<th>WILL NOT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide a resource</td>
<td>Mandate school location choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the need for public involvement</td>
<td>Provide a detailed guide on how to engage the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide guidance on locating school facilities</td>
<td>Apply retroactively to previous siting decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage holistic thinking</td>
<td>Specify cleanup standards, etc. for sites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EPA School Siting Guidelines

Before the Siting Process Begins
- Develop a Long-range School Facilities Plan
- Consider Whether a New School is Needed
- Consider Whether a New School Will Be a High Performance/Green School

Environmental Siting Criteria Considerations
- Identify Desirable School Location Attributes
- Consider Environmental Hazards
- Select Locations that Do Not Increase Environmental Health or Safety Risks
- Locate Schools Near Populations and Infrastructure
- Consider Implications of the School Location on Transportation Options
- Plan For and Develop Safe Routes to Schools Programs that can Support Alternative Modes of Transportation
- Consider the Potential use of the School as an Emergency Shelter
- Potential Onsite Hazards
- Potential Nearby Hazards
- Screening Locations for Potential Environmental Hazards

Environmental Review Process
- Stage 1: Projects Scoping/Initial Screen of Candidate Sites
- Stage 2: Preliminary Environmental Assessment
  - Initial Assessment of Area Air Quality
  - Inventory of Air Pollutant Sources and Emissions
  - Screening Evaluation of Potential Air Quality
  - Development of an Environmental Assessment Report
- Stage 3: Comprehensive Environmental Scan
- Stage 4: Develop Site-Specific Mitigation/Remediation Measures
- Stage 5: Implement Remedial/Mitigation Measure
- Stage 6: Long-term Stewardship

Meaningful Public Involvement*

*Meaningful public involvement is critical throughout the school siting decision-making process. The public involvement section includes a table with examples of points in the process where meaningful public engagement should be considered, as well as strategies for engagement and the types of information that may be presented to, or requested from, the public.
Katherine Moore, AICP
Georgia Conservancy
School siting training modules and guides
Resources

Professional Training
- One-hour training and user’s guide
  - Frames issues for decision makers
- Three-hour training and user’s guide with supplemental break-out exercises
  - Detailed review of issues
  - Interactive exercises

Parent/Community Training
- 30 minutes
- Layman’s terms
- Frames issues from community’s view

Technical Services

www.georgiaconservancy.org/schoolsiting
Case Study 1
Edgewater elementary
Exercise 2
Site Evaluation

Information Provided
- General Description
- Size
- Construction Costs
- Roads/Parking
- Water/Sewer availability
- Adjacent land uses
- Walkability
- Annual bus costs
- Demographics

Discussion Points
- Pros
- Cons
- Consequences
- Mitigation Strategies
## Group Exercise 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site A</th>
<th>Site B</th>
<th>Site C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General description</strong></td>
<td>Facility would include a state-of-the-art theater that could be used for community productions.</td>
<td>One-story administrative building, located in a former industrial area. The current owner, a pesticide company, will donate it and the surrounding land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
<td>50 acres to be donated by a developer with an approved new housing development</td>
<td>The entire lot is 10 acres in size but sits across from Henley Park, a 15-acre recreational park owned by the city but rarely used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construction cost</strong></td>
<td>$30 million</td>
<td>Renovation: $16 M Abatement of hazards: $10 M Total construction costs = $26 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roads/Parking</strong></td>
<td>A road to the school would need to be constructed, along with a new highway exit. The city is reluctant to fund this construction and noted that the comprehensive plan does not support a school here.</td>
<td>The site could easily accommodate parking for teachers and 5 visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public water and sewer</strong></td>
<td>None. The developer is waiting to finalize his subdivision plans until after extension of public water and sewer for the school.</td>
<td>Readily available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjacent land uses</strong></td>
<td>No zoning is in place to prohibit a concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) on the neighboring farm.</td>
<td>Renovation of this building could spur revitalization of the central business district which is within walking distance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Walkability</strong></td>
<td>Currently no students could walk or bike to the location. No sidewalks are planned (or required) for the housing development.</td>
<td>Approximately 50 kids (within 1 mile) could walk or bike to this location on sidewalks that need to be repaired. Also more safe crossings are needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual bus transportation costs</strong></td>
<td>Bus transportation costs for the district and for the state would increase by approximately 40%.</td>
<td>Bus transportation costs for the district would not vary greatly from current cost of $100,000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics</strong></td>
<td>While the ethnic make-up of the student population wouldn’t change, the lowest income students would have to travel about 30 minutes more each way each day.</td>
<td>The nearest neighborhood is 5 blocks away and has the lowest income levels in the city.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from an exercise developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
Using the guidelines

Ideas from Georgia conservancy workshops
Billings, Montana

School board actively selecting 2 MS sites

One four-hour workshop held to address:

• Value of community-centered schools
• School Siting Guidelines, contents and tools
• Prioritize site evaluation categories
• Address post-decision considerations
• Considerations for the next siting process
Harlem, Georgia

City leadership faced with relocation of in town ES & MS

- Introduction to School Siting workshop with Mayor, Regional Commission, other stakeholders
- Two-hour workshop during DCA retreat
- Provided visuals to aid in discussions with school board
Bill Michaud
SRA International, Inc.

EPA’s Smart School Siting Tool
Overview

- Background
- Description of the Smart School Siting Tool
  - The Assessment & Planning Workbook
  - The Site Comparison Workbook
- Completing the Tool
- Demonstration
Description

Two Stand-Alone Parts

- **Assessment and Planning Workbook**
  - *Purpose:* To help communities understand how well the school siting process is coordinated with land use and other community planning processes.
  - *Design:*
    - Three assessment sections: Plans & Codes, Site Selection Criteria, and Siting Process
    - Results: Assessment Summary → Set Priorities worksheet → Develop Action Plan worksheet

- **Site Comparison Workbook**
  - *Purpose:* To help communities compare school siting alternatives, including renovation, expansion, and new construction, and help support the broader school siting process.
  - *Design:*
    - One workbook per site
    - Twenty-five questions and two cost calculator worksheets
    - Site-specific Summary and Detailed Summary reports
Description:
User-Friendly Design

- MS Excel platform using survey-based interface
### Information Needs: Familiarity with...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workbook Section</th>
<th>Information Needs: Familiarity with...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plans and codes</td>
<td>Familiarity with/access to...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School system plans:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Long-range facilities plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Capital improvements plan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Community plans and codes:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Comprehensive plan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Zoning and building codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Local and regional transportation plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Community capital improvement plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School siting criteria</td>
<td>Existing school siting criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site selection process</td>
<td>Process used to select school sites</td>
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</table>
## Overview and Information Needs

### Site Comparison Workbook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workbook Section</th>
<th>Information Needs</th>
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</table>
| Description of school need and site  | • District and site identifiers  
• Grades to be served, capacity      |
| Proximity to students and population | • District demographics  
• Geographic information  
• Neighborhood demographics        |
| Location in the community            | • Community development plans  
• Infrastructure                     |
| Site characteristics                 | • Potential neighborhood impacts  
• Shared use opportunities           |
| Connectivity with neighborhood       | • Neighborhood street network                                                    |
| Bike and pedestrian accessibility    | • Condition and safety of pedestrian and bike networks/facilities               |
| Cost calculators                     | • Planning-level capital cost estimates (by source of funds)  
• Planning-level O&M cost estimates (by who pays) |
Completing the Tool

- The tool is intended to foster collaborative, coordinated planning and site selection processes.
- The tool will be most effective if it is completed with input from:
  - The local school planning agency - e.g., administrators and facilities staff.
  - Local government staff - e.g., planning, land use, public works, transportation.
- The workbooks are independent:
  - The Assessment & Planning Workbook could be completed once or on an ongoing basis.
  - The Site Comparison Workbook could be used for different siting projects over time.
- The tools are designed to be practical:
  - Users can fill in what they can, gather additional information, fill in some more, etc.
  - Most questions rely on information that is relatively easy to gather.
  - More complex questions (e.g., requiring demographic information in a selected area around a potential site) provide options and detailed guidance.
Demonstration
Assessment & Planning Tool
Demonstration
Site Comparison Tool
How this fits into Comprehensive Facility Planning

(prepare)

ASSESS

EXPLORE

APPLY

(report)
Topics & Issues Raised

Demographic Profiles/Housing Diversity
Population Distribution/Urban Growth Areas
Optimal School Size
Building Condition/Capacity
What I learned while beta testing

Q2: Loss/gain of enrollment
Q8: Bonus for sites that don’t require new roads
Q20: Site Security
Three Stories

Hamilton
Franklin
Dickinson/CS Porter
Hamilton
Urban/Suburban
Add Grade 5 & Restore Middle School
Bitterroot College Downtown Presence
Downtown Impacts

100 additional Middle School Students
Transform Historic Middle School
Bitterroot College Downtown Presence
Right Location/Wrong School

School Expanded 5 times in 92 years
Rapidly Changing/Expanding Neighborhood
Use of Existing Street Network
Dickinson/CS Porter

Swap Adult Education & Middle School
7 lanes of 45 MPH Traffic
7 Students West of Reserve/21 Students within ¼ mile
Existing Bike/Pedestrian Network
Cost Savings
Economic Diversity Challenge
Swap Schools
THANKS FOR JOINING US!