



Joint Meeting
LCPS and City of Las Cruces
December 3, 2013

School Siting Committee

- Bonnie Votaw LCPS Board
- Chuck Davis, LCPS Board
- Sharon Thomas, City Council
- Gill Sorg, City Council
- Billy Garrett, DAC Commission
- Karen Perez, DAC Commission
- Dane Kennon, LCPS
- Brian Denmark, CLC
- David Weir, CLC
- Tom Murphy, MVMPO
- Paul Michaud, CLC
- Daniel Hortert, DAC
- Janine Divyak, DAC
- Dawn Sanchez Healthy Kids
- Devashree Desai SRTS
- Chris Brown, NMSU
- Carlos Coontz, NMSU
- Rebecca Dutton, Intern

Why is school siting important?

- In 1969, about half of all students walked or bicycled to school. Today, fewer than 15 percent of all school trips are made by walking or bicycling, one-quarter are made on a school bus, and over half of all children arrive at school in private automobiles.



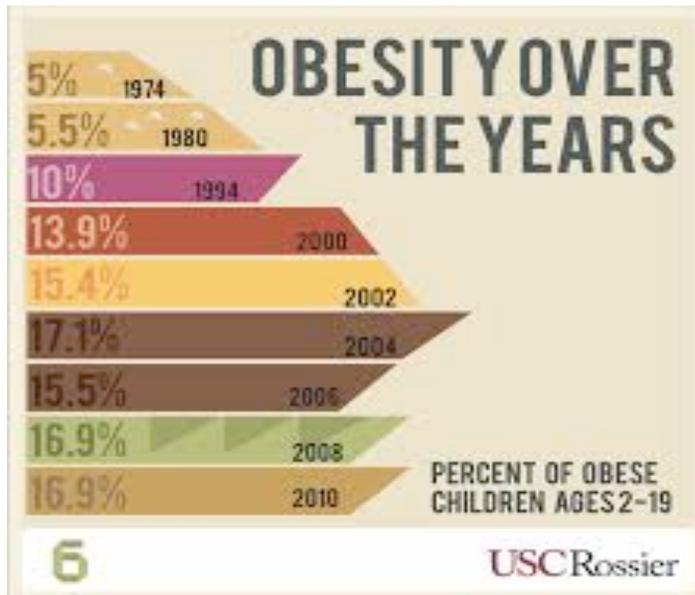
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



Concerns

Obesity and Diabetes

- At a time when **obesity** and **diabetes** are rising among children, it is crucial to seek, understand, and implement environmental design solutions that might help with these health challenges.



School Siting

- School siting and design are examples of how the **built environment** can influence children's health.
- When new schools are built **a long distance from where families live**, then children need to be driven to school, depriving them of an opportunity for physical activity.
- If schools are located **within walking or biking distance** of where people live, and if safe routes to school are provided, then children can make **walking or biking** a part of their **daily lives**, establishing healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

Why Students Don't Walk or Bike

- Distance from residential
- Acreage requirements
- Safety issues
- Fenced in schools



Built Environment/Urban Form



Walk Zone Conditions Condition 1



No Sidewalk with No Buffer

Condition 2



Sidewalk with No Buffer

- Lack of connectivity
- No sidewalks or unsafe sidewalks
- No buffers (parkways)
- No bicycling facilities



Safe Routes to Schools

- At its heart, the SRTS Program empowers communities to make **walking and bicycling** to school a **safe and routine** activity once again.
- Marked crosswalks and bike lanes, walking school bus, bicycle safety, etc.

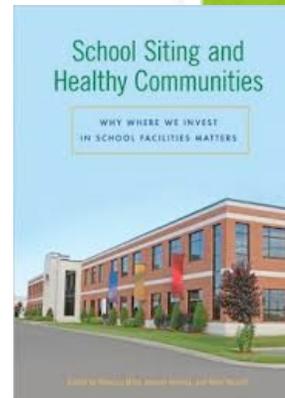
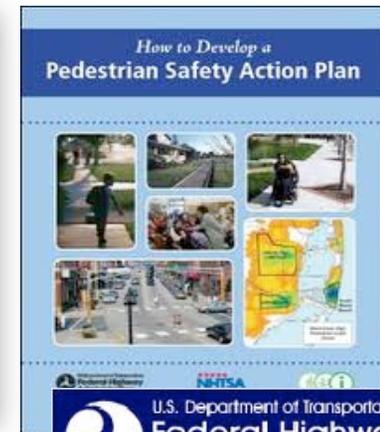


School Siting Guidelines

NATIONAL
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- Locating a school so that a large portion of the student body **lives within 1/2 mile (elementary) to 1 1/2 miles (high school) of the school.**
- Ensuring that **safe routes** to and from school are available for students.
- Locate schools with **appropriate access** from the adjacent roadway, walkway, and bikeway networks.
- Provide **access from more than one direction** to the immediate vicinity of the site, and provide access to the site from at least two adjacent streets.
- **Do not** locate schools in a remote location with natural barriers such as RR tracks (or arroyos?)
- Siting a school **within a walkable residential area** will decrease vehicle traffic and increase safety for walking and biking.

Why Johnny Can't Walk to School:
Historic Neighborhood Schools in the Age of Sprawl



PLANNING FOR SCHOOLS & LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES
The Oregon School Siting Handbook



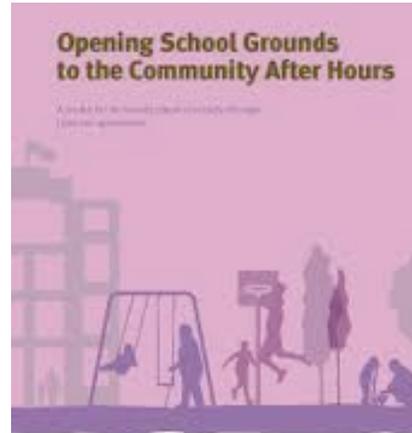
Keeping Kids Moving
How Equitable Transportation Policy
Can Prevent Childhood Obesity

Co-location/Joint Use

School as--
community focal point, physical center of the neighborhood, place community gathers (cultural events, sports, walk the dog, use the playground or the library, take an evening class), community anchor.

School's proximity and easy access enhance participation by neighborhood residents in school activities.

In turn, strengthens the neighborhood's sense of ownership toward the school and its willingness to take care of and support it.



Deubrook School and Community Library

"Dreaming. Developing. Doing!"

Bethal School district. 70 acre site too far outside of city. City worked with school district to find a location in the city. Have 35-acre site with Meadow View School (capacity: 800 students, K- 8), plus 30-acre Bethel Community Park--wetlands, a running path, ball fields, and a skate/ community park.

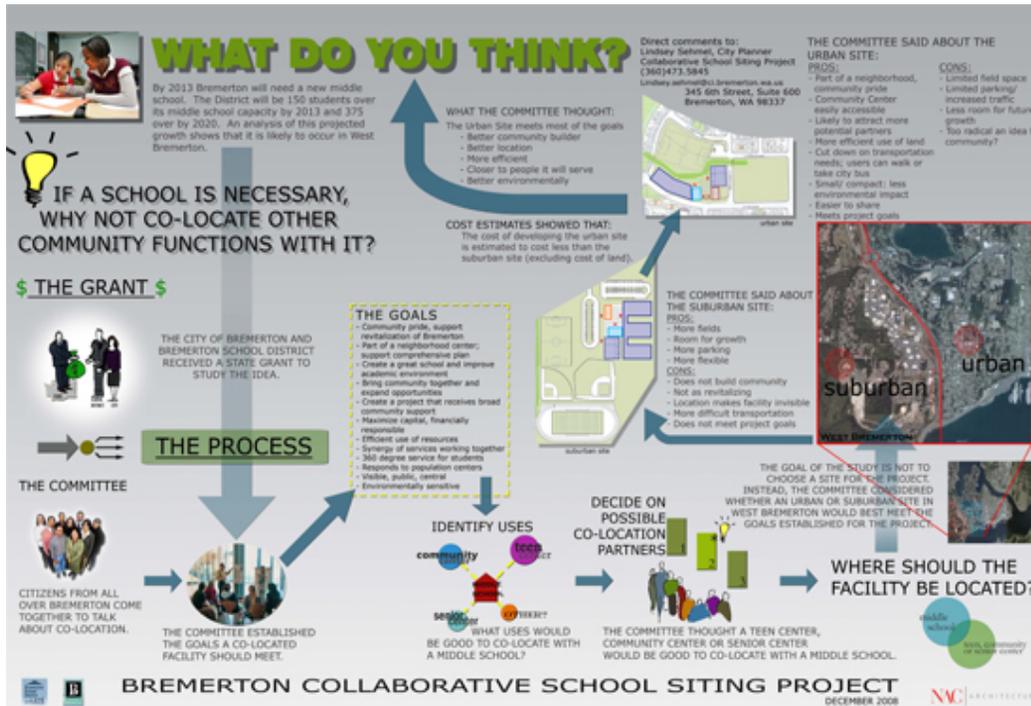
School Siting Committee



Initial Conceptual Site Plan

- We're not Oregon (not ready for state legislation)
- Joint meeting with LCPS and CLC.
- Request to set up a working group.
- Use MPO model—policy committee (elected officials) and technical committee (staff from city, county, LCPS)
- Develop an MOU with city, county, LCPS.

Work of the Committee



- Finite committee or standing committee?
- Develop policies, sign MOU, make recommendations, end of story.
- Develop policies, sign MOU, continue to be an advisory committee, reshape policies as needed to fit different settings as new schools are needed.

Planning for New Schools

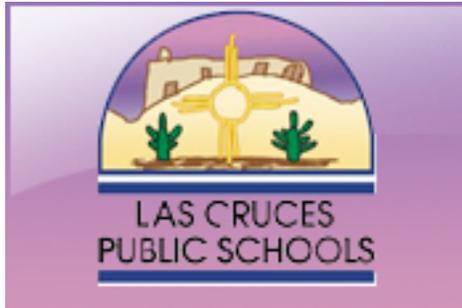
How to plan ahead to make sure there are school sites included in the planning for areas that are not yet developed.



What to do about areas that are already developing and need a school but no site has been set aside.



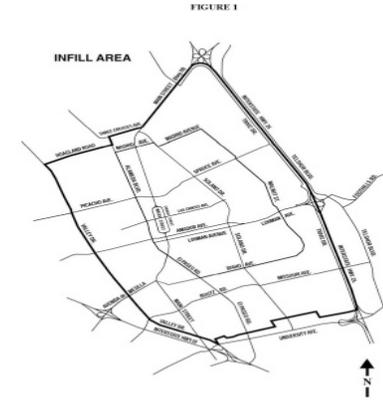
Sharing Information



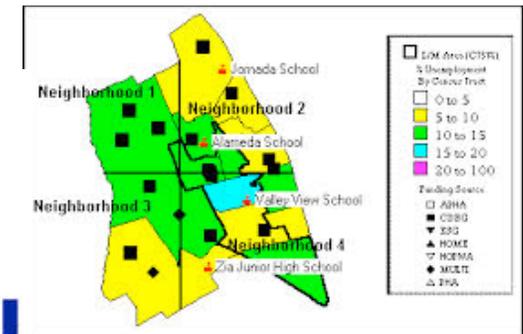
- *Enrollment predictions*
- *Lot size that will most likely attract families with children*
- *Socio-economic mix for all schools*
- *Know where the next school is needed—south of 70 (1462. 1362 2908); north of 70 (1611 and 1966); BLM land (public safety complex)*
- *Need land at a reasonable price*
- *Know areas where developers have submitted applications*
- *Can make maps that illustrate “existing and potential residential lots,” school locations, etc.*
- *Multiple times in the planning process when planners can initiate the conversation about school sites.*
- *Have to know where the schools are needed.*

Other Conversations

- Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan (schools)
- Viva Doña Ana (HUD grant)
- Land around Centennial High School (BLM Resource Management Plan)
- Health Impact Analysis
- Elementary School Walkability (Carlos Coontz—walkshed maps)
- Affordable housing policies (city and county)
- NMPSTA acreage requirements (not enforced).
- MOUs between county and LCPS
- The process to negotiate with developers for land for schools
- Regional planning committee



VIVA DOÑA ANA



Where We Are Now

- The administrative update of the **city's Comprehensive Plan** now includes information about **school siting**.
- Also recommends that school district representatives be involved with the city's **Comprehensive Plan** and that city and county representatives be involved in the school district's **Facility Master Plan**.
- **City letter** has gone to BLM re: land around CHS.
- Planners are working on a **negotiating process**: how to **get planning for schools included** in the planning process when developers bring in master plans; how to **find a location** for an elementary school south of 70 (possibly north of 70 as well).
- School, city, and county planners have met to discuss **GIS layers available for planning**. Discovered LCPS does not use ESRI.
- **Health Impact Analysis** moving forward (Place Matters).



Community-driven Health Impact Assessment

A Community-driven Health Impact Assessment tool is developed by communities to assess the potential effects of a project, program or policy on community health.

Trained to facilitate Community-driven Health Impact Assessments, Health in Common will work with you to develop a CdHIA tool that reflects the values and beliefs of your community so you can estimate how a particular activity (policy, program, project or service) will impact the health and well-being of your community.

Contact us to find out how we can work with you, and read Community-driven Health Impact Assessment to learn more.

Where to go from here?

- Bonnie Votaw will take lead on **Policy Committee**.
- **Technical Committee** will take over task of finding a location for the next elementary school.
- **GIS mapping**—current schools, set asides for future schools, zoning, master plans, property ownership.
- Need for all parties to use ESRI?
- **Negotiation process** points might be purchase of the land, annexation request, initial zoning, master plan, request for a waiver, etc.
- Necessary to **codify** negotiation, incentives, etc.?
- City, county, and ETA should have the **same policies**.
- Need for **regional planning** that includes school siting.
- The **Camino Real Consortium** (HUD grant) is engaged in several regional planning projects.
- The county is developing a **Unified Code for Sustainable Development**.
- **Policy Committee**: meet quarterly with reports from the Technical Committee?

What's Possible

- Auburn, WA – Regional Collaborative Approach
- Pooled resources to get grants.
- Focused on fixing unsafe walking/ biking conditions for students living close to school.
- Result: \$500,000 in grants.
- Twenty percent more students have a safe walking environment and don't need to be bused.
- Saving \$240,000/year in transportation costs.



Conclusion

- Consider more regional planning that includes school siting.
- Greater understanding of what school siting is about.
- Developing a plan for ways the city, the county, and the schools can work together.
- Better ideas on how to coordinate our work and our policies.
- Recognize the value of sharing our projections for school needs and development growth.

