



School Siting for Healthy Communities: *Concepts and Strategies*

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Mission

To position high-quality education as a critical component for broader city and metropolitan policy-making.

We believe that invigorating public education and revitalizing neighborhoods are goals that can, and should, be accomplished in tandem.

.....and that new schools are key tools in creating great new communities.

Historic Time for School Building in California

We can all agree....

...schools should provide students with a
safe healthy place to get a great education.

But....

...what other benefits can we get from
this major public investment?



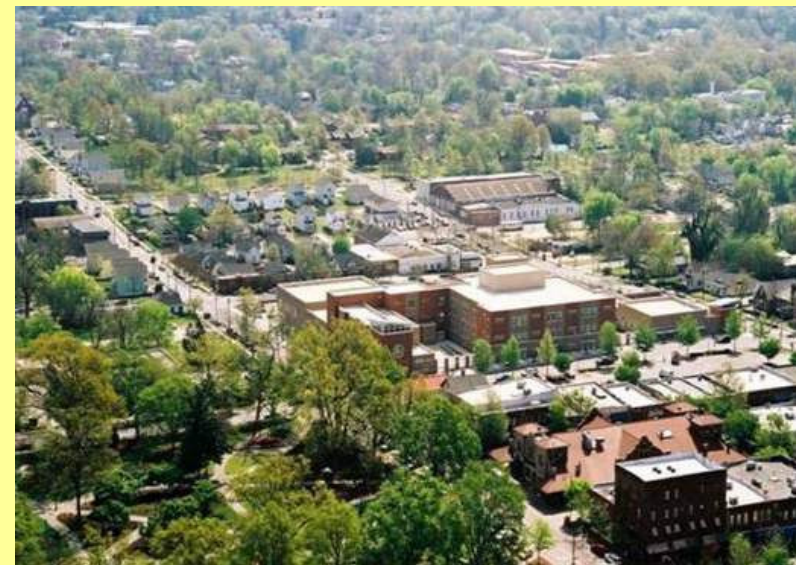
School Siting for Healthy Communities

1. What types of schools are we building?
2. Why does it matter?
3. Innovative concepts and strategies



Prior to WWII, we built...

1. Schools and neighborhoods together
2. Relatively small schools (small sites, multi-story)
3. Schools as neighborhood focal points



But...things have changed: The *Mega School*...is alive and well

Half of all secondary schools
enroll 1,000+ students



Dorman High School in Spartanburg, SC



Mega Schools....in the news

- Iowa school district plans 98 acre* mega campus (*The Hawkeye*, 9/07)
- 65 acre high school planned in Bakersfield (*Bakersfield Californian* 9/07)
- 80 acre HS planned in Illinois (*The Daily Herald* 9/07)

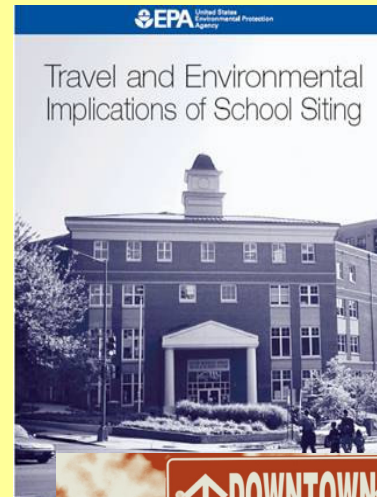


****FYI, the entire Magic Kingdom in Disney (FL) is on about 100 acres.***

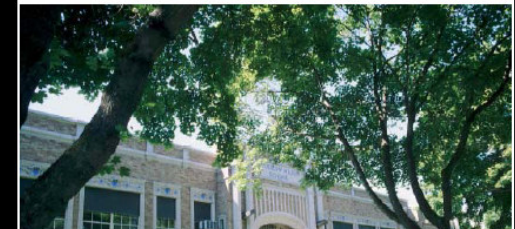
Mega Schools: What are the implications?

Research finds:

- Increased auto trips and less walking/biking to school
- Increased infrastructure costs for roads and utilities
- Lost investment when older schools are abandoned
- Encourages sprawl



Why Johnny Can't Walk to School



PLANNING FOR SCHOOLS & LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES
The Oregon School Siting Handbook





Mega Schools: What are the implications?



PHOTO BY STEVE RINGMAN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Why are we building Mega Schools?

- Desire for sports fields
- Comprehensive school offerings
- Economies of scale with more enrollment
- Far out land is often cheaper and easier to obtain
- State policies can unintentionally encourage it (acreage and funding)
- *It's become standard operating procedure*



Questioning “standard operating procedure”

Voters say no to ‘mega-campus’



Kevin Hoffman/The Mercury

Pottstown School Board challenger Michele Pargeon, above, greets voters in front of a sign telling voters to stop the \$54 million proposed mega campus in Pottstown. At right, the five challengers celebrate their victory. From left are Richard Huss, Julia Wilson, Nat White, Dennis Wausnock and Michele Pargeon smile and talk about the favorable results as they come in.



Challengers overwhelm incumbents to win seats on Pottstown School Board

By Evan Brandt
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POTTSTOWN — Voters swept from office Tuesday the incumbent school board team that had advocated closing the borough’s five elementary schools.

Instead, voters chose by a roughly 4-to-1 margin the team that championed saving those schools.

Unofficial results tabulated at Republican campaign headquarters showed a whopping 78 percent of the voters favoring the challengers — Dennis Wausnock, Julie Wilson, Michele Pargeon, Rick Huss and Nat White.

They handily defeated the team of one-term incumbents led by Barry Robertson, James Smock, Philip Thees, Bonita Barnhill and Cathy Skitko.

Both teams “cross-filed” for both the Republican and the Democratic line on the November ballot.

The challengers’ overwhelming majority on both ballot lines makes the November election a foregone conclusion.

“I got fired, I understand that,” Robertson said from his home after the results had become obvious.

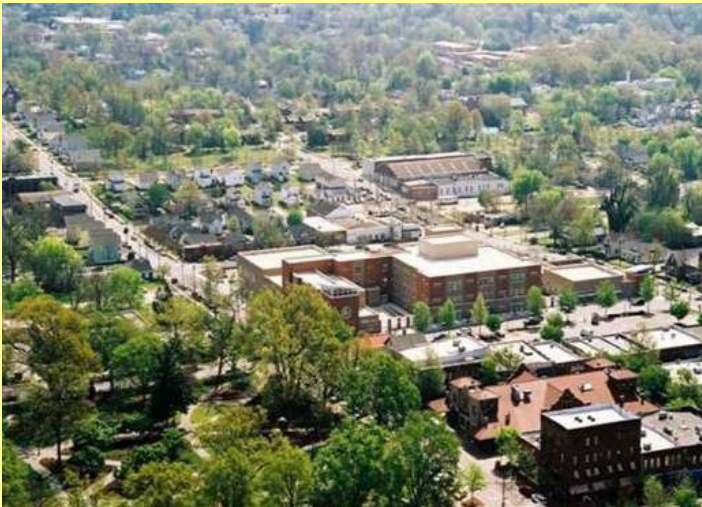
“Of all the elections I’ve been in, this is the most exciting,” said Huss, a former school board member who “came out of retirement because the issue meant so much to me” to run for a fourth time.

“It was exciting because the people spoke,” Huss said.

What they spoke about was the rejection of the

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CONCEPTS



- School siting decisions should benefit the entire community
- School sites should take full advantage of existing resources
- School sites should be easily and safely accessible by walking, biking, and/or transit
- School site should be a community focal point when appropriate

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STRATEGIES

- Smaller sites/schools
- Multi-story design
- Strategically co-locate
- Shared / joint use facilities
- Relate design to existing buildings
- Ensure “pedestrian friendliness”
- Conduct full cost evaluation of alt sites
- Community participation
- *Partner with local governments*



Conclusion:

School Siting Matters for Student and Community Health

3 key mechanisms:

- School location
- School size
- School design/type/use



We need to ask ourselves:

How do proposed new school sites affect student and community health outcomes?

- Joint use or co-location opportunities?
- Offer travel to school options?
- Efficiently use land and existing resources?

Resources

Center for Cities & Schools, UC Berkeley

<http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu>

BEST (Building Educational Success Together)

<http://www.bestschoolfacilities.org>

EPA, Smart Growth Program

<http://www.epa.gov/dced/schools.htm>

American Architectural Foundation, Great Schools by Design

<http://www.archfoundation.org/aaf/gsbdb/index.htm>

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities

<http://www.edfacilities.org>

Thanks and intellectual credit to Tim Torma (U.S. EPA, Smart Growth Program)

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