SCHOOLS AS CENTERS OF COMMUNITIES AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Safe Routes to School Regional Summit
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Fewer kids today walk and bike to school

Unintended consequences have resulted
Parents driving children to school:

20%-25% of morning traffic

(NHTSA 2003; Dept. of Environment)
Students who live within 1 mile and walk or bike:

2001: 63%
1969: 87%

(CDC, 2005)
Community Design & School Siting

Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution
The Community + School Link

- Connected communities
- Safer conditions for walking and bicycling
- Can influence the way people behave in and out of cars
Source: Ruth Steiner, Ph.D, UF, 2006)
Central Florida 2060 Strategic Regional Policy Plan

- Neighborhood Schools
- Connection of facilities and community
- Schools as Centers of Communities
- Joint Use of schools and other facilities
- Removal of SRTS barriers
- Multi-modal transportation / Complete streets
Prohibit the use of cul-de-sacs unless a natural barrier exists that cannot be crossed.
Source: Ruth Steiner, Ph.D, UF, 2006
Remove requirements for walls around residential neighborhoods along streets where children walk to school.
School Siting

• 40 years ago - Small, neighborhood centered schools
  • 127 students
  • 42% of kids walk to school
  (EPA, 2003; Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey)

• Today: Mega Schools on community fringes
  • Average – 653 Students
  • 40% highschools – 1500+ Students
  • 10 - 30+ acres
  (U.S Department of Education, 2002)
Avoid prescribing minimum acreage requirements for new school sites.
Encourage public buildings (i.e. schools, post office, church, city hall) to locate in urban centers that become the ‘heart’ of the community.
• New schools should be sited as community anchors, located within walking distance of their students and co-located with other public facilities where possible.
Joint Use

- Communities Benefit
- Shared Expenses
- Maximizing access to existing facilities – rather than trying to construct new ones – is the most efficient and economical use of public resources.
- FL Statues allows joint use
  - Statues 1013.1 and 1013.15

(www.phlpnet.org)
Joint Use Agreements
(www.phlpnet.org)

- Opening Outdoor School Facilities for Use During Non-School Hours
- Opening Indoor and Outdoor School Facilities for Use During Non-School Hours
- Nonprofit Partnerships
- Joint Use of District and City Recreation Facilities
But Where?

Reuse of existing structures for schools should take precedence over new construction where feasible.
The Village @ Indian Hill
Pomona California
• Include bicycle and pedestrian facilities on roadways, utility easements, and mass transit or railroad rights-of-way.
Encourage the development of sidewalks to establish greater connectivity.
Include Safe Routes to School guidelines and Complete Street strategies in local comprehensive plans, new school designs, transportation improvements, and land use planning.
Beyond Infrastructure
Collaboration

Outreach

Education

Safe Routes to School

State Network

Influence
Let’s Create Healthy Schools and Communities Together

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