

# SUCCESS WITH SCHOOLS: NEW TOOLS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

2013 New Partners for Smart Growth

... for our children's health.

Over the past 30 years, rates of childhood obesity have more than tripled among children ages 6 to 11



... for walking and biking.

In 1969,  
close to 87%  
of students  
who lived  
within a mile  
of school  
walked or  
biked to  
school.  
Today only  
21% live  
within biking



... for traffic and greenhouse gas emissions.

Researchers found a 30% increase in the number of cars on the road between 7:15 and 8:15 during the



... for preservation of older schools.

Demolishing and abandoning schools in existing communities decreases property values and therefore property taxes.



... for the environment.

The construction and operation of buildings account for 48% of the United States' greenhouse gas emissions



# New Tool:

Working Group of School Board,  
MPO (Safe Routes to Schools),  
County, Healthy Kids, and City  
Council

New Partners for Smart Growth  
Kansas City, Missouri  
February 6, 2013

# Background

- Retired English professor
- City Councilor, Las Cruces, NM
- Daughter is transportation planner
- Safe Routes to School
- Downtown revitalization, EPA Technical Assistance program (corridor plan), HUD Sustainable Communities grant
- Conferences—NMAPA, AMPO, New Partners for Smart Growth







# New Schools



- Oñate High School
- New elementary school and middle school
- Land around elementary school divided into space for buses, space for parent drop off, and space for staff parking..
- Went to school board meeting with SRTS (MPO)

Do you see a problem here?



# School Siting Requirements

- New Mexico Public Schools Facility Authority (no school impact fees in New Mexico)
- One paragraph on school siting
- NMAPA conference (2008) School Siting NMDOT
- No acreage requirement



# Centennial High School



*Las Cruces High School - Las Cruces, New Mexico*



- LCPS wanted area to be annexed.
- In my council district.
- Utilities nearby, but only one road to the school.
- Better communication, but only with city staff.
- Meetings limited to staff from LCPS and city.
- One public meeting—the school, not the site.
- Need a second road. “We don’t build roads.”

# Gathering Community Input

- Worked with county commissioner
- Met with residents.
- Gathered their questions.
- Scheduled our own meeting.
- Invited residents, school administration, architect, BLM, NMSU, city and county staff, MPO.
- Asked them to answer our questions in a public forum.



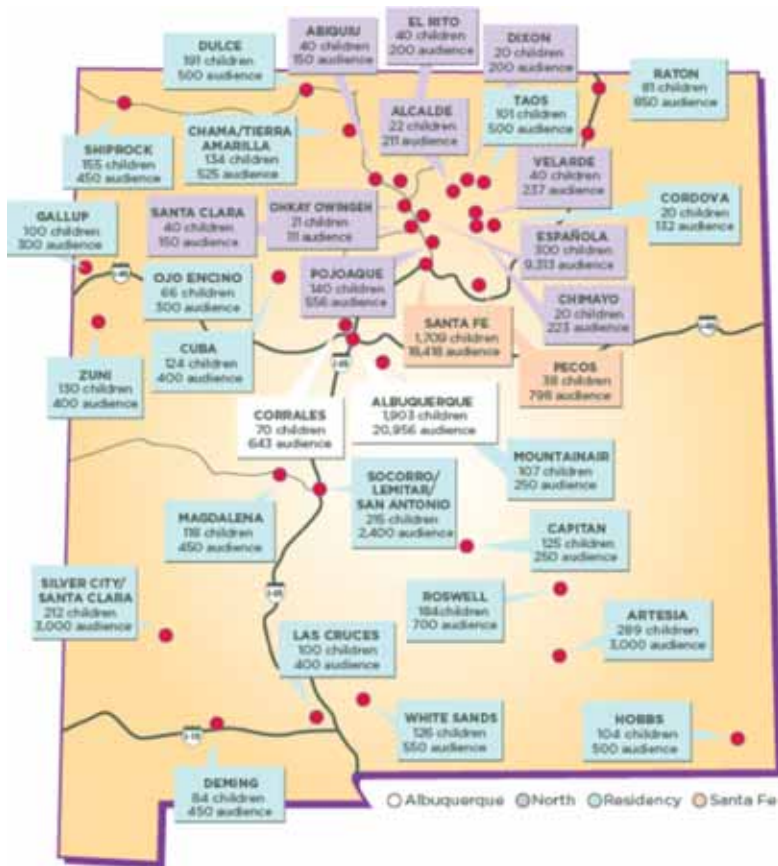


# CHS Committee

- Set up by school district.
- School under construction.
- Traffic problem, safety issues, etc.
- Intersection with traffic light, turning lanes (cost to city).
- Second road to school with bike lanes (cost to city).
- Plans for a bike boulevard (MPO).
- CHS opened fall 2012.



# Current State Level Situation



- Invited to state level meeting to talk about school siting
- NMPSFA white paper on school siting
- Encouraged cooperation at the *local* level.

# Local Level Working Group



Initial Conceptual Site Plan

- We're not Oregon (not ready for state legislation)
- Joint meeting with LCPS, city, and county.
- NMPSFA presentation on school siting (first question: acreage requirement?)
- Request to set up a working group.
- Use MPO model—policy committee (elected officials) and technical committee (staff from city, county, LCPS)
- Develop and MOU with city, county, LCPS.



# Technical Committee

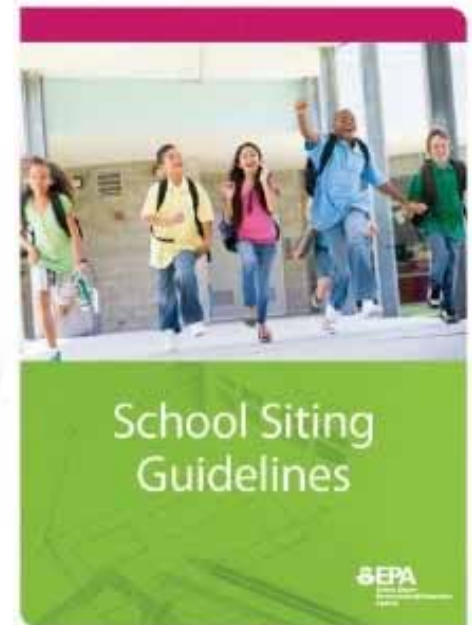
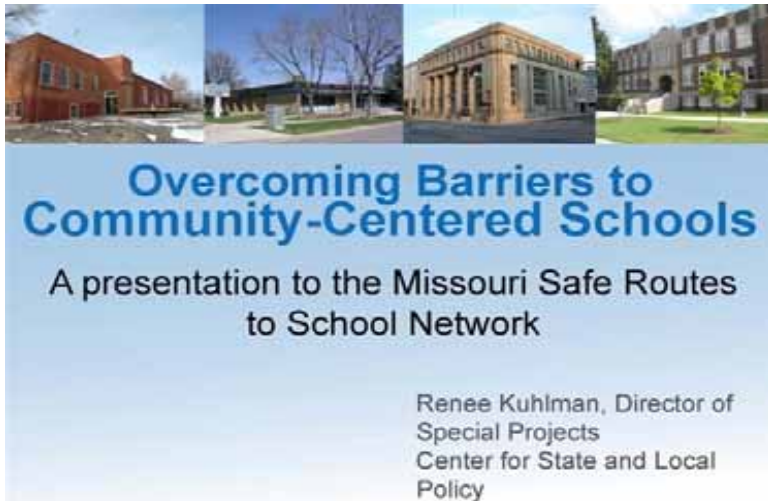


- Nada
- Phone calls not returned.
- Emails not answered.

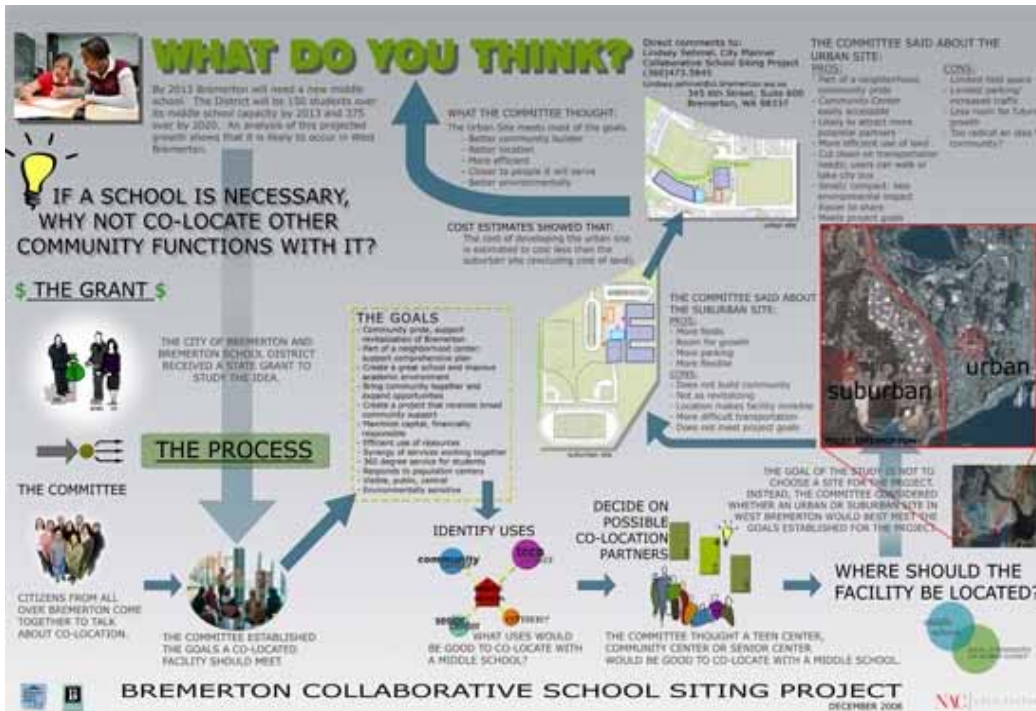
# Policy Committee



- Set up your own meeting
- Policy makers—two each county, LCPS, city.
- Added MPO SRTS Coordinator
- Added Healthy Kids Coordinator (NM Health Department)
- Assistant City Manager (very important)



# 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.

# Purpose, Goals, Issues

Meeting ended with the following:

- Send in a paragraph describing what you think the purpose of this committee should be.
- Also provide a list of the issues/topics this committee should address.
- SRTS coordinator, city councilors, Healthy Kids director will organize submissions from committee.

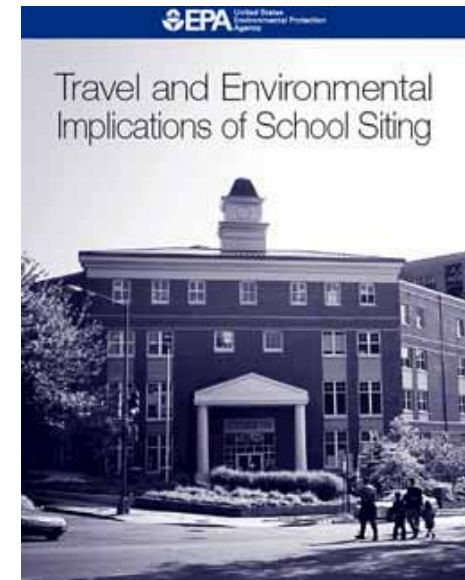


**PURPOSE**



# Conversation, Dialogue, and Collaboration

- Initiate conversation and collaboration
- Develop a two-way dialogue
- Establish a clear vision on both sides of the equation for decision-making,
- Recognize the importance of coordinated, multi-jurisdictional collaboration in the school siting and development issues,
- Include university and community college in the network for planning (early college high school),
- Consider which methods best support appropriate community engagement and sound decision-making.

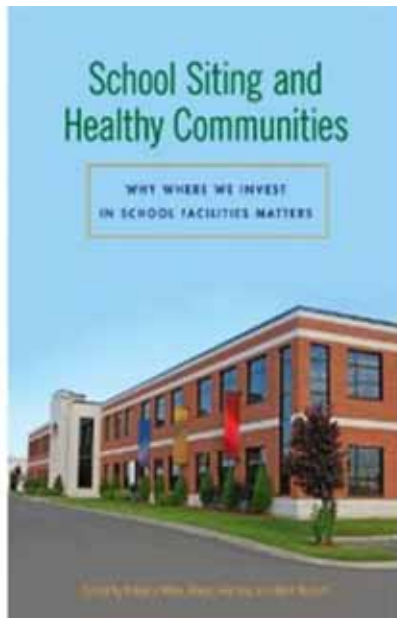


# Sustainable Anchor Institutions

- Schools as hubs in their neighborhoods, places where other family and community needs are met--after school activities, workforce development, library (media center), parenting classes, health care, etc.
- Optimize the educational and social benefits that can be derived from a good fit between public schools and their surroundings.
- Develop the school district's vision for the type of development, buffers, and amenities needed for both urban and rural schools.
- Location, operation, and physical development of a school must consider the needs of each school as a functional entity as well as the interests of the surrounding community and its individual members.
- Planning process for new schools and existing schools = sustainable anchor institutions for the community,



# Planning, Infrastructure, Safe and Accessible



- Existing infrastructure integrated into comprehensive planning efforts--land use and transportation SRTS
- Coordinate all aspects of the planning processes for the most economical and feasible decisions = maximum benefit (health, economics, educational, etc.)
- Students receive education AND physical activity as they walk to school and use playgrounds after school.
- Schools are easily and safely accessible—walk and bike to school; Safe Routes to School.
- Incorporate the school into established priorities and available infrastructure and support systems, including public transportation, water, sewer, gas, fiber optic, drainage, road networks, multi-use paths.


# Lessons Learned

- Be persistent
- Work with all the stakeholders—residents, LCPS, city staff, county staff, other elected officials, BLM, NMSU, NMPSFA, MPO, etc.
- Form alliances at the local and state levels.
- Keep educating staff, residents, elected officials.
- Get their attention.
- Hold your own meetings.
- Bring in members of the community and beyond who are also interested in school siting—SRTS, NM Health Department.
- Go to conferences, take others along, write grants.
- Keep learning—EPA Sustainable Communities, Oregon School Siting Handbook, National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- Don't rush. These things take time.
- Hope that someday we can bring change to the state level.





# Questions and Answers



Q: Who should be invited to the committee meeting and what should their paragraph include?

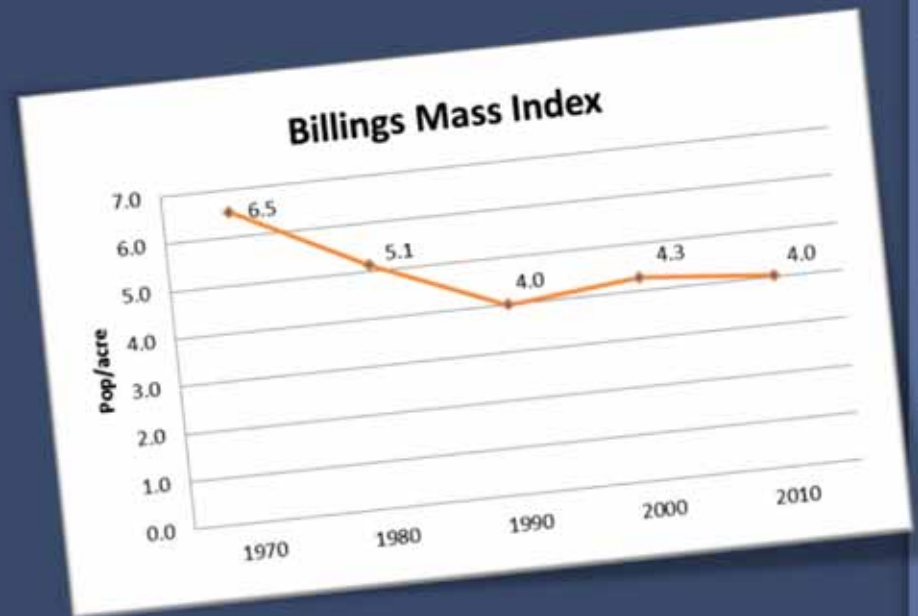
# City of Billings, Montana School and City Collaborative Planning

Candi Beaudry, AICP  
New Partners for Smart Growth Conference  
February 7, 2013



# Shifting Land Use Patterns

- The area of Billings grew 36% between 2000 and 2010
- Population increased 20% from 83,000 to 100,000
- The Billings Mass Index moved from 4.5 persons per acre to 4.0 persons per acre





Growth in Billings between 2000 and 2010 occurred mostly as greenfield development

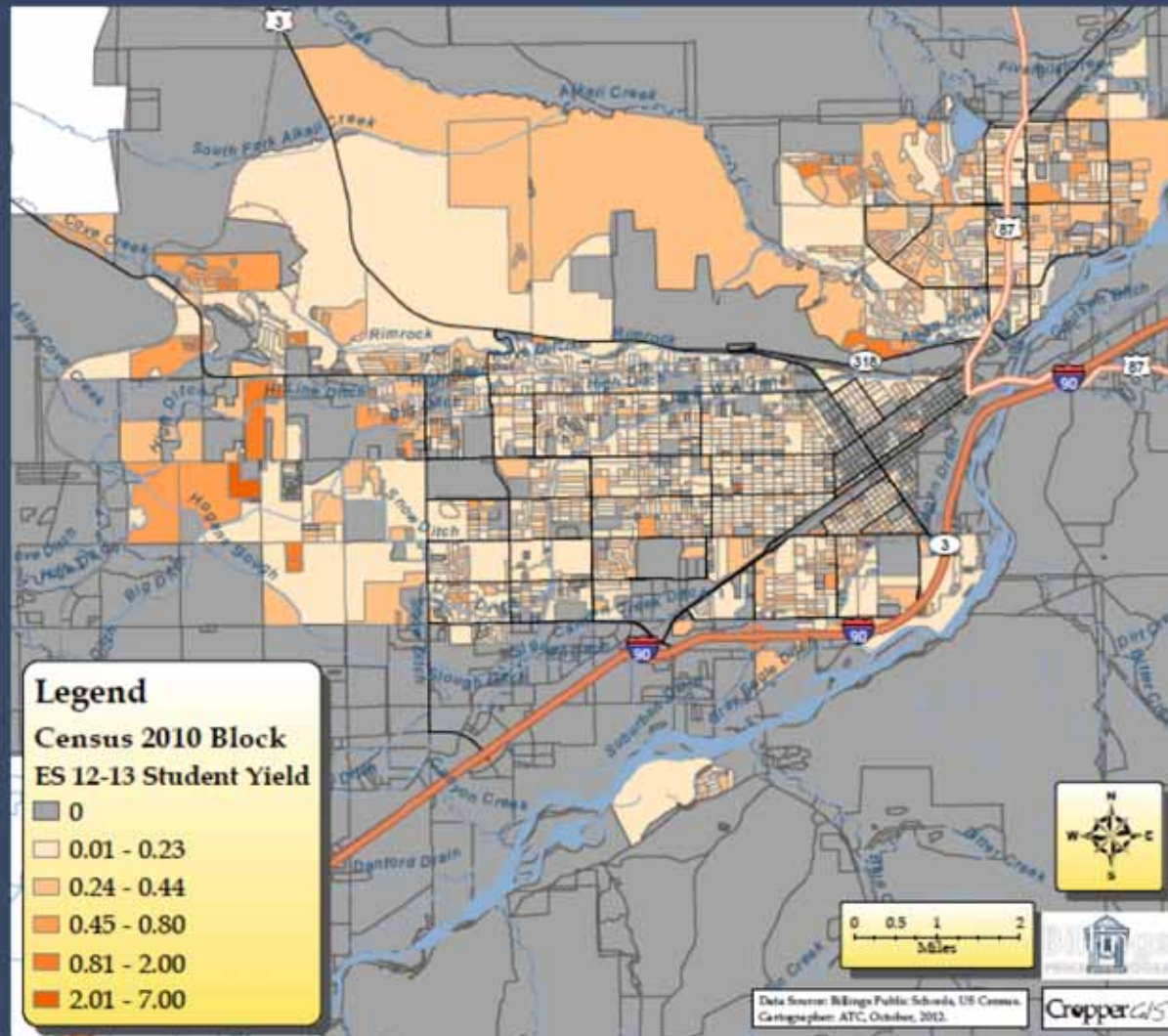


Existing farmland was converted to residential subdivisions

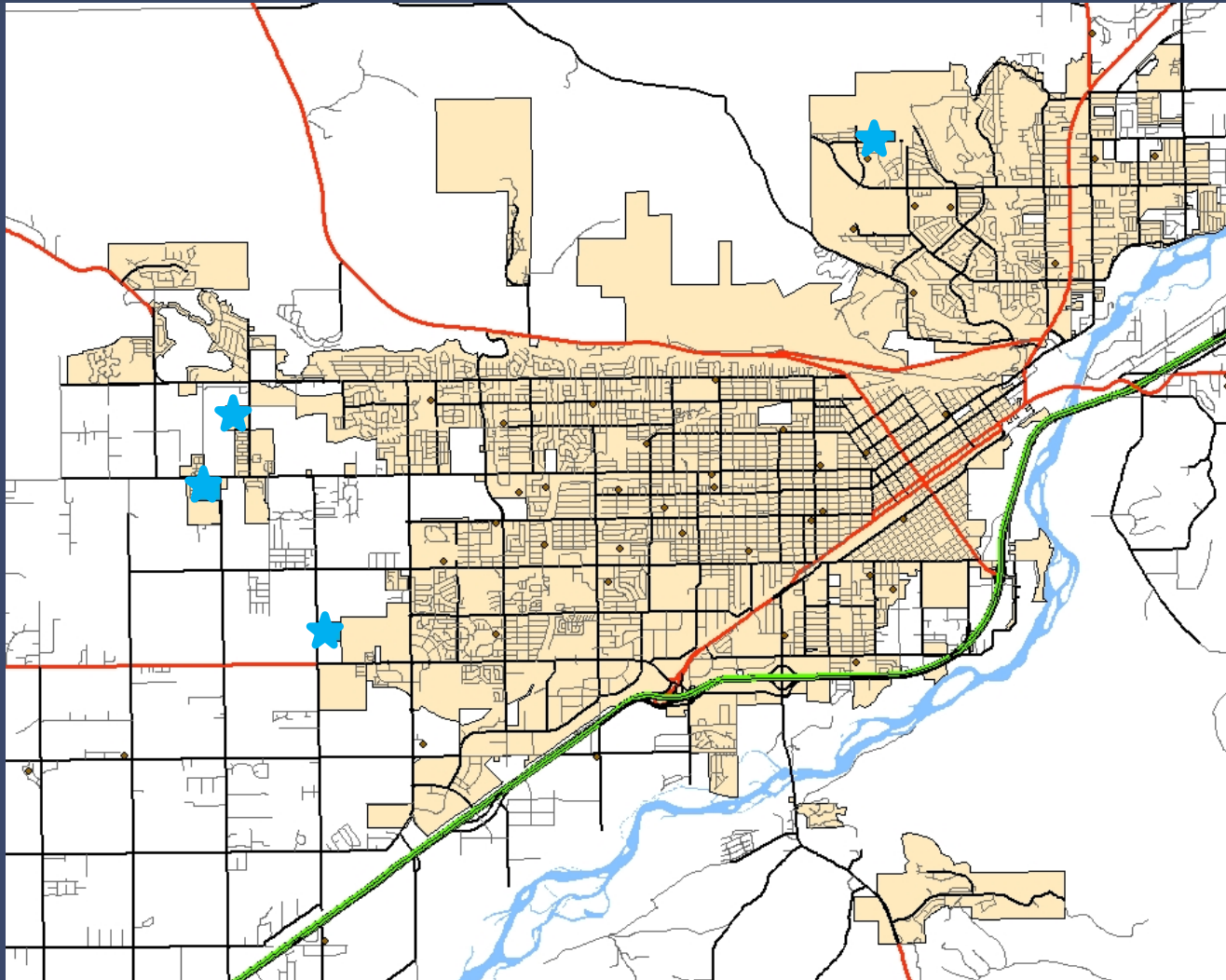


**City extended infrastructure and services to  
leapfrog developments at a high cost to  
existing residents**

# Number of Elementary School Students per Household

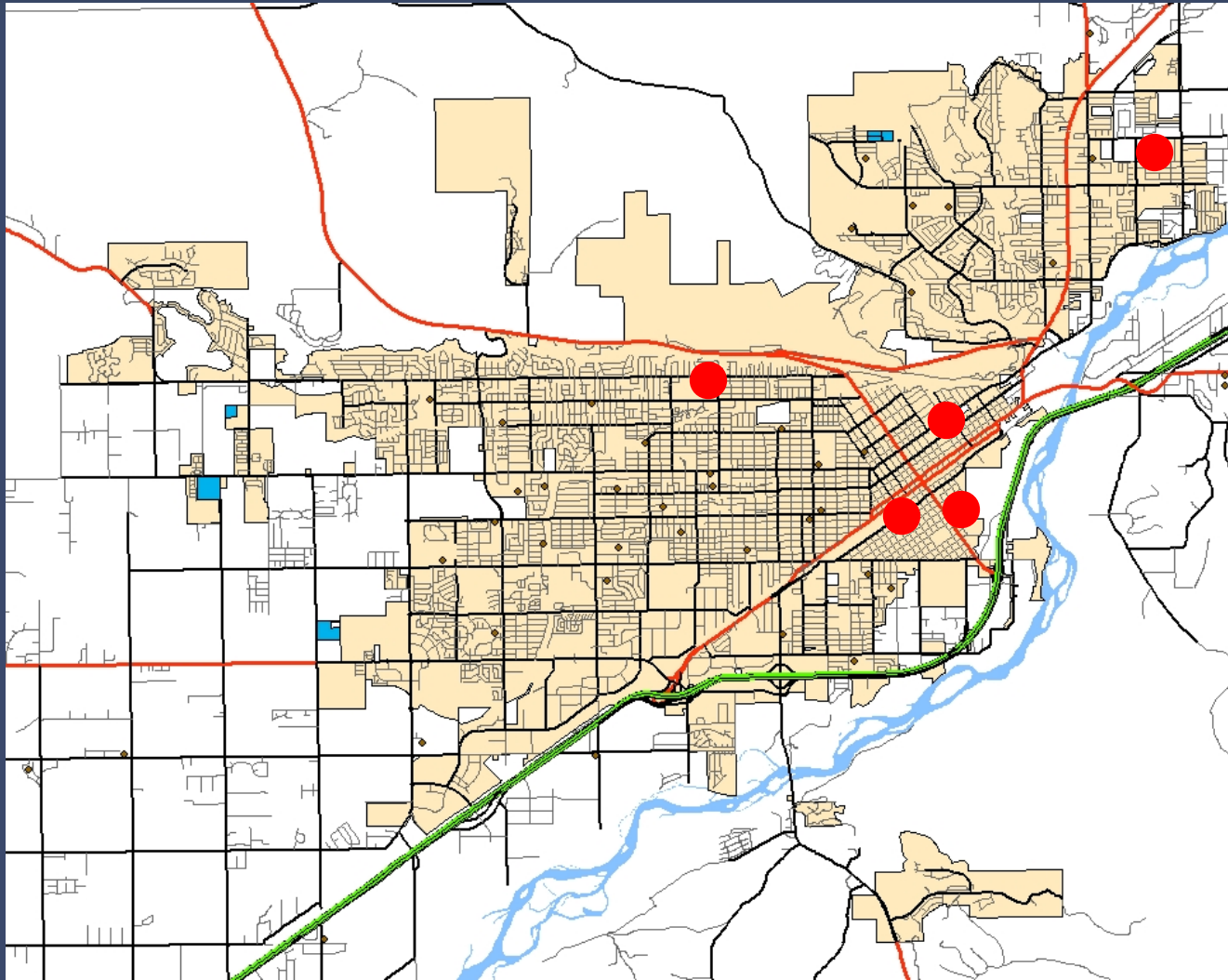


# School Land Purchases





# School Closures



# School Closure



*Rimrock Elementary is located in a walkable, core neighborhood adjacent to a city park and private college.*

*Rimrock Elementary School, along with 3 other elementary schools, was closed in 2001.*



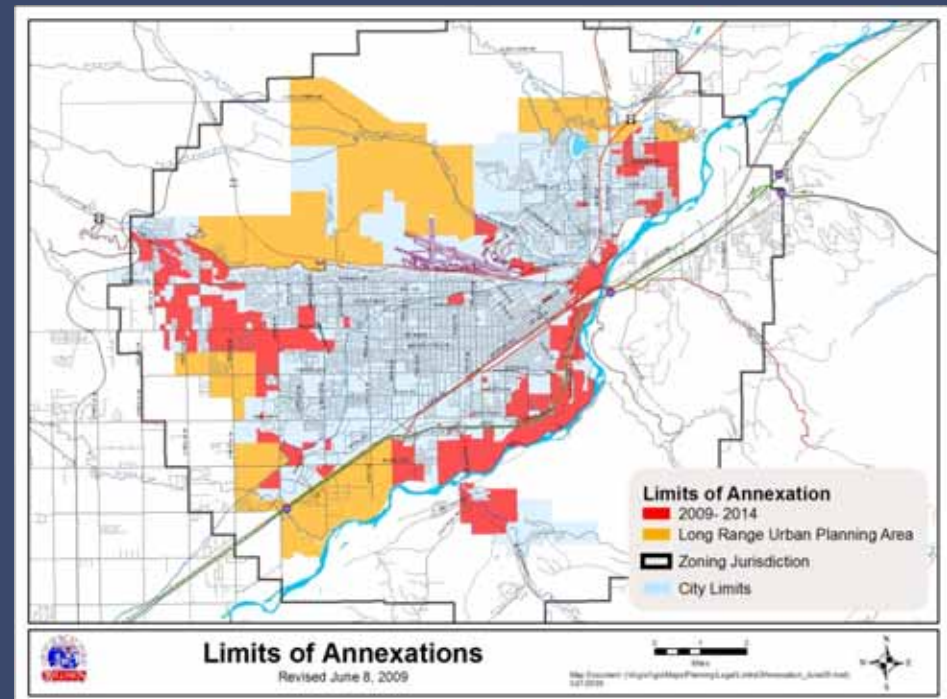
# School District Needs

- Deferred Maintenance
  - \$150 Million
- Capacity
  - reconfigure schools to relieve pressure in elementary schools
  - Redraw attendance boundaries to redistribute students
  - New elementary and middle school - \$66 Million
- Educational Adequacy
  - Accreditation threatened



# City's Response to Address Sprawl

- **Annexation Policy**
  - Annex only properties that can be served by existing or planned infrastructure
- **Infill Policy**
  - Encourage development of existing, core neighborhoods
- **Growth Policy**
  - Coordinate land use and facility planning among local governments and school district



# School District's Response to Address Needs

- Demographic Study
- Facility Master Plan Recommendations:
  - 2 new middle schools
  - 1 new elementary
  - Maintenance of elementary and middle school



# City – School Collaboration

- Quarterly Meetings
- Planning Board Attendance
- Facility Master Planning Process
- Smart Growth Implementation Assistance



# Smart Growth Implementation Assistance

- Scope of Work
  - Policy audit
  - Cost calculator
- Expected outcome
  - Alignment with City policies
  - Cost implications of decisions
- Application
  - School facility siting
  - City parkland disposal



EPA Region 8 Administrator, Jim Martin , School District, City and County officials join the walking school bus before announcing the SGIA award.

## COST CALCULATOR

WHAT FACTORS TO MEASURE?

- ◎ Transportation costs?
- ◎ Healthcare costs?
- ◎ Others?





# Questions and Answers



Q: What costs should be “inputs” for the cost calculator? What data should be included?

Q: What “outputs” or answers should the calculator be able to provide?

Mayor Karl Dean, Chairman



NASHVILLE AREA

**Metropolitan Planning Organization**

# Addressing School Siting in the Greater Nashville Area

Leslie A. Meehan, AICP

Success with Schools: New Tools for Your Community

New Partners for Smart Growth

February 7, 2013

# School Siting Policies

- ➔ Who decides where schools should go?
- ➔ What factors go into siting schools?
- ➔ What about the public?



# School Siting Symposium

- ➔ Literature Review
- ➔ School Siting Survey and Interviews
- ➔ School Siting Symposium



# Symposium Details



January 2010

- ➔ Full-day symposium with 2 national speakers, a local panel and breakout sessions
- ➔ 125 Attendees from public and private sector
- ➔ Results: 2 Major Recommendations
  - Host a training for school board members and planning commissioners on school siting
  - Include School Siting Guidelines in Community Plans



# School Siting Health Impact Assessment

1

Examine the positive and negative health impacts of siting a school near the Hamilton Springs Transit Oriented Development

2

Examine the retail food environment surrounding the school

3

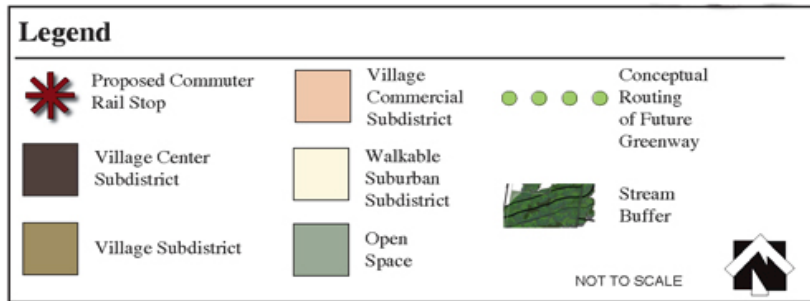
Determine the impact of transportation options near the school site



# Health Impact Assessment Steps

- ➔ **Screening** – determine a policy where a HIA would provide valuable information
- ➔ **Scoping** – identify priority health impacts
- ➔ **Assessment** – determine who will be affected
- ➔ **Developing recommendations** - Provide suggestions for changes or additions to the policy
- ➔ **Reporting** – Present recommendations and key findings to decision makers
- ➔ **Monitoring and evaluation** - Identify the effect of the HIA on the decision

# HIA: Proposed school site within TOD





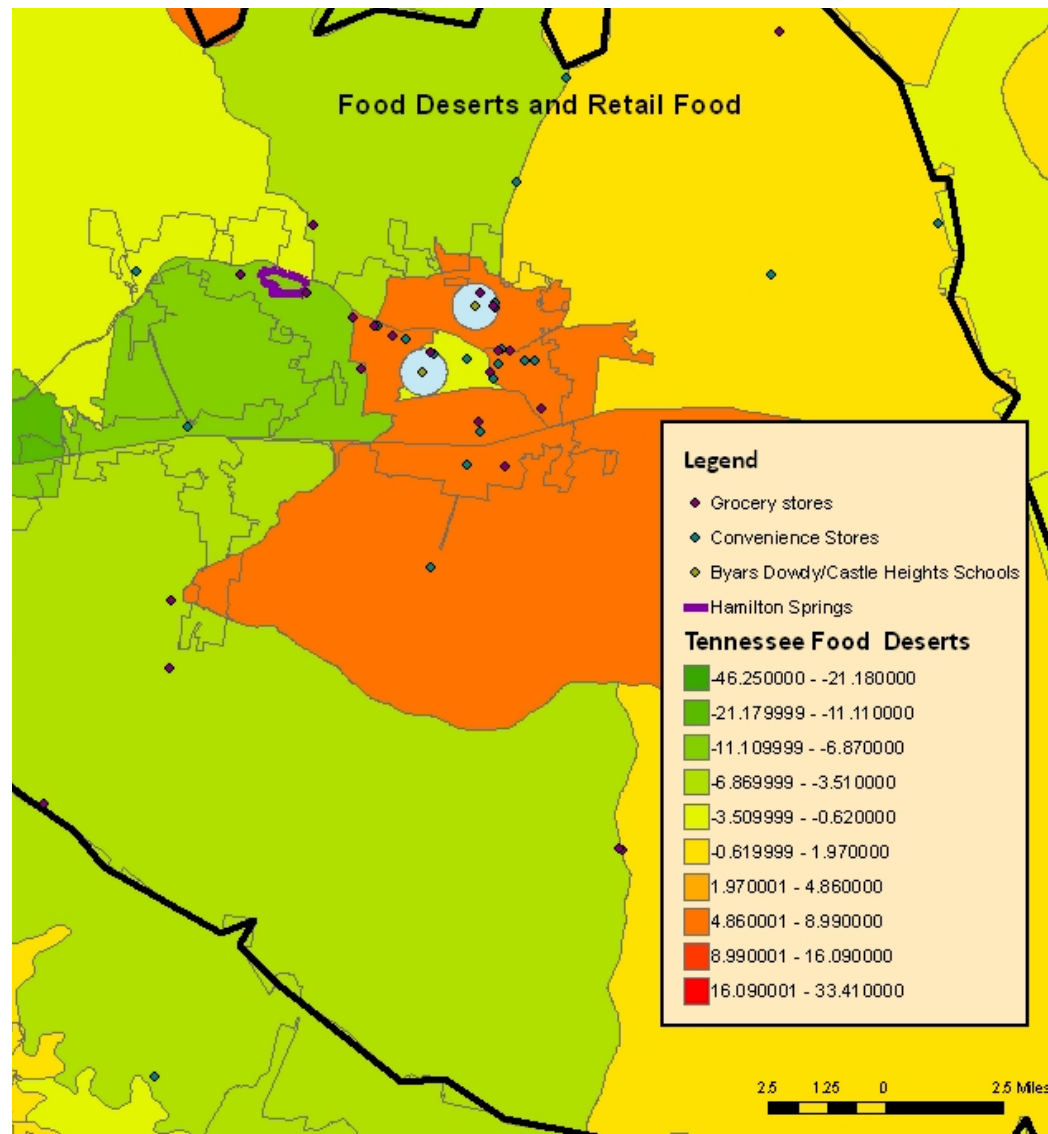
# Comparison Schools

➔ Byars Dowdy Elementary School

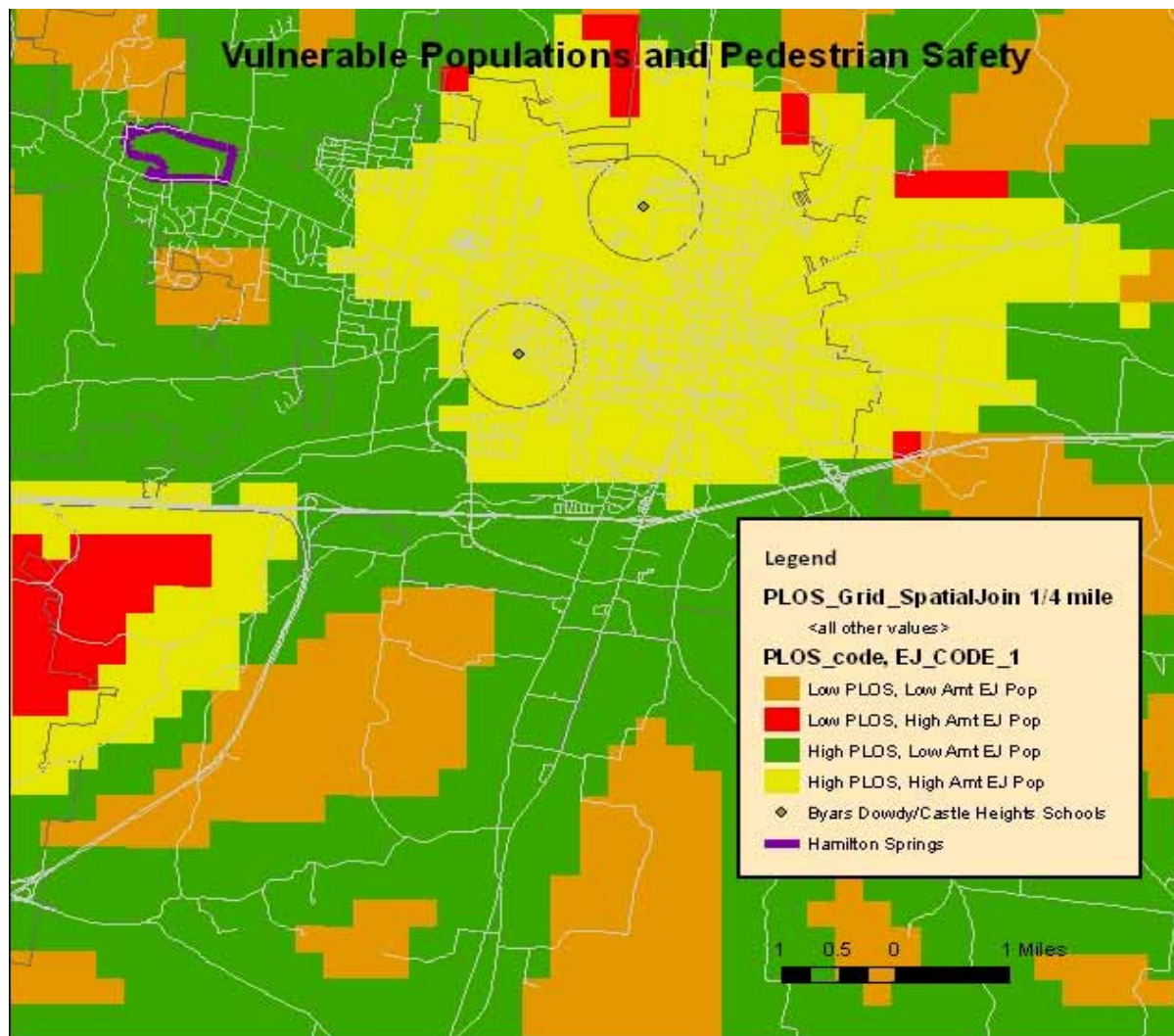
➔ Castle Heights Elementary School



# Heat Mapping – Food Deserts



# Heat Mapping – Vulnerable Populations and Safety



# Findings

[nashvillempo.org](http://nashvillempo.org)

# Impact: Physical Activity

Walking or bicycling to school is associated with higher levels of physical activity and lower rates of chronic disease :

- Children who walk to school are more physically active overall
- When children live more than 1 mile away from school, rates of walking and bicycling slide downward
- Children who have friends in the area were more likely to active commute
- Neighborhood schools are estimated to increase active commuting by 13%



At full build out, 4,500 residents are expected to live within ½ mile of the TOD. Students from these families would be able to walk to school or participate in a Safe Routes to school program

# Impact: Travel Safety

More students walking to school may result in greater pedestrian accidents

- Pedestrian accidents are less likely in areas where more people walk or bicycle

A school location within the TOD and within walking distance of homes may bolster a Safe Routes to School application

Parents who are using the Music City Star to commute may walk with their children to school



## Impact: Reduced vehicle emissions

With reduced driving and fewer cars idling near the school, overall air quality may be improved

- A 5% increase in walkability is associated with 6.5% fewer vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita
- Schools that require extensive busing and driving are estimated to have 4.5 times the emissions of criteria air pollutants and greenhouse gases

# Impact: Food Access

- ➔ School children may be more impacted by the location of fast food in that they have to stay near the school
- ➔ Each grocery store within 1-km of a person's home reduces the likelihood of being overweight by 11%
- ➔ Among 9th grade children , fast food outlets within 1/10th of a mile are associated with a 5.2 increase in obesity rates
- ➔ However, research on the impact of limiting fast food near schools is limited



# Economic Impact

- ➔ Locating a school near a TOD can allow for workforce housing
  - ↘ Can increase a school districts ability to recruit and retain teachers and faculty
- ➔ Locating a school farther from the development can lead to roadway improvement costs
- ➔ Walkability raises home values by \$4000 to \$34,000 in a study of 15 different U.S. markets

# Recommendations



**#1**

Joint Use Agreement

**#2**

Examine retail food zoning  
around school

**#3**

Complete Streets

**#4**

Interlocal agreement  
between planning and  
school district

[nashvillempo.org](http://nashvillempo.org)

# Current Efforts

- ➔ School Siting in Nashville Public Schools
  - Addressing Departmental Barriers
  - Developing Decision Making Matrix (focus is health)
  - Gathering Sample Policies and Best Practices



- ➔ Obesity Taskforce and Tennessee Safe Routes to School Network
  - members
  - Complete Streets, Safe Routes to Schools, and Joint Use
  - developing policy goals
  - unders

Leslie Meehan  
Nashville Area MPO  
meehan@nashvillempo.org  
615-862-7211



Livability. Sustainability. Prosperity. Diversity.

# Questions and Answers



Q: Based on what you've heard today, how will you help your community use an HIA in making school siting decisions?