

Schools and Communities PLAN 2040 Presentation and Feedback

April 22, 2010

In ARC's outreach, we are hearing that there may be a role for ARC in education, but have not been told exactly what that means.

- Quality of K-12 education?
 - o Already many layers.
- Higher education institution in every county?
- Schools, Land Use, Transportation, and Environment connection?
 - o Should there be a S & C Forum?
 - o Expanding this committee's work?

FEEDBACK

- Why do we only look out 30 years? Why not 100? See where we've been and then go out much farther than 20-30 years.
- How do we retrofit older buildings to be more sustainable? Is this cost-effective?
- Concern over re-segregating our communities. Consolidating for air quality purposes.
 - o There has been a return to the idea of community schools, how does this affect integration?
 - o Also need to encourage mixed-income communities (smaller schools back into communities).
- State funding rules encourage creation of larger schools (450+students+location+acreage)
 - o How do you change this?
 - o Larger schools are technically more efficient to operate.
- ARC should not get involved in K-12 quality of education (spoken as a former school board member).
- Should absolutely get involved in school siting, transport and environmental issues; need integrated plan.
 - o Means ARC should target charging policies and innovative solutions.
 - 1. Common formalized population forecasting
 - 2. Regional planning school siting that gets at land and air quality issues and transportation.
 - Objectives include size of schools requirement and location.
 - Siting – not near industrial but need to sell to commercial if needed.
 - 3. In land strapped counties, developers and school systems are directly competing for properties (but schools can't compete) – is there a solution?
 - Large developments put enormous stress on schools; need money to offset costs.
- Should state have an approval role?

- Yes, because they have a stake in education but needs to be more nimble/flexible.
 - Ex. Need many waivers to do different things (e.g. putting a school in a community building)
- The U.S. EPA has just finished draft guidelines for state and local governments (public review late Fall 2010).
 - Schools need to be more central to communities.
 - Promote healthy kids
 - Shifting back to smaller schools.
 - Walking/busing, etc.
 - Recommendations, not mandates.
- May want to incorporate into any GA/ARC effort
- Why can't ARC regulate LCI community to include joint use opportunities with schools? (e.g. In Tampa Bay, a school is next to a YMCA – sharing agreements)
- LCI attention to education is missing.
- Not just LCI but major redevelopments (e.g. DRIs)
 - Atlantic Station (could support a small elementary school)
 - GM Redevelopment will impact schools and their budgets.
- Would regulate consideration of infrastructure.
- Economy has made some established neighborhoods have an increase in school attendance because they are more affordable.
 - Housing affordability has changed projections.
 - But almost all schools have to be overcapacity before you can respond by building.
- What about a requirement that would formalize data sharing/forecasting between schools and local governments? (e.g. FL)
 - In Florida – joint population projections.
 - Anything that could regulate communication between the two would be good. (L. Searcy)
 - School boards are leery of how BOC might use data.
- Have seen schools places in outlying areas (b/c need large acreage to build) and neighborhoods growing up around them.
- Also try to site close to neighborhoods, but have seen push back from community because of traffic access issues.
- If they want to reopen an old school, they can't now because would not meet new State standards. (Have to go through new site evaluation process.)
 - May build larger school.
 - May repurpose (registration/head-start, etc.)
- May want to look at region-wide policy for planning and implementing bike/ped facilities for new and established schools (Plan 2040).
 - Also considering creating access in general.
- Are virtual schools a future possibility?
 - Would miss the social, athletic and enrichment opportunities.
 - Some charter schools are operating on this basis.

- School also serves as main source of food for many students.
- What about encouraging / regulating HIAs (health impact assessments) for new developments to get a health aspect? Do we need a full blown HIA? – Included in LCI.
- Back to the bike/ped access – older neighborhoods interconnected and could walk/bike easily; not so for cul-de-sacs. New developments not connected so there's no ability to walk/bike anywhere.
 - Could the State or local governments incentivize or mandate interconnectivity in new developments?
 - Could you regulate local governments to consider access to schools in plans for undeveloped land? Actually build it into the plan. Creating guidelines on how to site access points before development (not in force now). Another example for silos between local governments and school planners.
- Bike paths vs. bike lanes – safety issues, legality of riding bike on sidewalk? Definition and guidance needed.
- Encourage communities to put in greenways (e.g. Big Creek in Forsyth Co.)
 - Shared land that provides linkages between developments.
 - Conservation.
- Greenspace bonds.
- Leasing unused school land sites back to Parks and Recreation for parks/conservation.
- SPLOSTS – No process for amending; too inflexible. 7-9 year span. Why did they pass?
- Smaller schools – can they offer more programs?
- Smaller have better graduation rates. Larger schools are more efficient.
- Highest increasing health hazards in population – address in plan.
- Economic diversity in housing; achievement scores comes from socio-economics (transiency).

**** The best outreach next steps would be to talk with the individual school boards in their work sessions. A letter from Tad to the Board chair and the school superintendent would facilitate the way.**