

Regional School and County Co-location and Joint-use Efforts

Summary

Per a 2015 Montgomery County Department of Planning whitepaper on Co-location, existing efforts are typically driven by a pressing need, are facilitated by planning processes that incorporate interagency staff collaboration, and have a point in the CIP process at which opportunities for co-location and joint-use can be recognized and integrated into planning.

Arlington, Montgomery, and Loudoun counties have examples of co-located and joint-use facilities involving schools. A recent Arlington County study recommended implementing a formal decision-making process to facilitate County and School Board coordination with a focus on co-locating facilities where possible. Loudoun County has a formal process through which county and school staff consider and recommend co-location opportunities to the Board of Supervisors. This memo outlines key findings of the Co-location Whitepaper, existing co-location and joint-use efforts in Arlington and Montgomery counties, and the joint review process in Loudoun County.

While there are clear examples of capital planning structures that other governments have established to facilitate joint School-County planning, there seem to be fewer public examples of specific criteria used to assess co-location opportunities. However, the Montgomery County Whitepaper calls for more work to establish checklists to assess opportunities to collocate programs, and Loudoun County and Schools staff have identified a list of programs and services that should be considered for co-location with new elementary, middle, and high schools.

Key Findings - Montgomery County Department of Planning Co-location Whitepaper

- Potential cost savings - Capital costs may be reduced through efficient land use, reduced square footage, shared building shell components, and consolidated contracting. Operating costs may be reduced through shared support spaces, building systems, and parking. Additional costs are possible due to added density and intensity of use.
- Most observed co-location efforts evolve from internal municipal initiatives, with observed similarities including:
 - A pressing physical need or driver
 - Platform for promoting staff level interagency relations
 - Funnel point for CIP/integrated funding decisions
 - Agencies see an opportunity for accelerated/expedited planning, funding and execution
 - Clear lead agency/department capable of implementation
- Includes a number of examples and case studies of co-location and joint-use efforts between School and County programs, and identifies areas for further study including:
 - Establishing a multi-organizational co-location policy, with formalized goals, planning procedures and decision making steps, possibly endorsed under County Code.
 - Establishing formal means to coordinate agency planning functions, with co-location checklist/milestones as part of the process before internal finalization or organization strategic direction.

- Establishing an administrative focal point – a clearinghouse of sorts linked to the CIP approval process – potentially a critical management tool for coordinating agency strategic planning and budget analysis.
- Consideration of mandating (and standardizing) some form of cost benefit analysis that compares project specific single use facility options with co-location alternatives.
- Consideration of possible financial incentives for organizations to see quantifiable benefit from embracing non-traditional planning and budgeting practices. The concept of a discretionary co-location general fund might make for a means to offset agency budgetary impacts from co-location.

Arlington County

- Existing Joint-use and co-located County/Schools facilities include:
 - Swimming pools at all three high schools
 - Reed School/Westover Library
 - APS Career Center/Columbia Pike Library
 - Six community centers co-located with school facilities: Arlington Mill, Carver/Hoffman Boston, Drew, Gunston, Langston Brown and Thomas Jefferson
- Community Facilities Study (2015) identified a need for more coordinated County and School Board decisions about future facilities with focus on co-locating programs. The Study recommended establishing a new formal decision making system to allow systematic and regular review of future County and School needs to identify upcoming opportunities for joint-use and co-location. Includes three elements:
 - Facilities Strategic Planning Committee (two County Board and two School Board members)
 - Integrated staff team including APS and County departments, and
 - Joint Facilities Advisory Commission (JFAC), jointly appointed by both boards (established)

Montgomery County

- Existing co-located County/Schools facilities include: Daycare facilities, School Based Health and Wellness Centers, and Linkages to Learning programs. Construction funded by County CIP and based on County Program of Requirements – designed and constructed by MCPS.
- Prioritized list of sites for the above co-located facilities based on criteria determined by School Based Health-Wellness Center Advisory Task Group and the LTL Advisory Group
- Sites constructed as school facilities come up for renovation or expansion in the MCPS CIP; project then added to County CIP.
- Kingsview Middle School is adjacent to the Germantown Recreation Center (shared gymnasium), outdoor pool and ball fields (*existing*);

Loudoun County

- Joint County and School staff team recommended guidelines for co-location of facilities that require significant acreage include the following:

Colocation with School Facilities

Elementary School

ES/MS/HS School
Community Park
Library
Senior Center
Sheriff Substation

Middle School

ES/MS/HS School
District Park
Recreation Center
Teen Center
Sheriff Substation

High School

ES/MS/HS School
Regional Park
Recreation Center
Teen Center
Sheriff Substation

- Land Matrix Team (county and school staff) review all planned county/school land acquisitions using Established Evaluation Criteria for Acquiring Real Property to evaluate potential land sites for recommendation to the Board of Supervisors in closed session. The Land Matrix Team uses the following documents to guide its development of recommendations:
 - Loudoun County Public Schools Capital Facilities Planning Guidelines – March 2010
 - Parcel Evaluation Data Sheet
 - Evaluation Criteria for Acquiring Real Property
 - **Co-location of Public Facilities Guidelines - June 2008**
 - Public use Sites – Usable Land Criteria
 - Land Planning for School Sites – July 2008

Resources:

Co-location White Paper. Montgomery County Planning Department. January 2015.

<http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/research/documents/MNCPCCo-locationFinal1-14-15.pdf>

Arlington Community Facilities Study Final Report. November 6, 2015.

http://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/11/CFS_Final_Report_web.pdf

Loudoun County Public Schools, School Board Adopted FY 2017-FY 2022 Capital Improvement Program. December 8, 2015.

<https://www.lcps.org/cms/lib/VA01000195/Centricity/domain/66/cip/FY17-FY22%20School%20Board%20Adopted%20CIP.pdf>