

SCHOOLS

A high quality education system is important to Albemarle County. The overriding goal for the County is to provide educational opportunities for each student to achieve the highest level of achievement possible consistent with his or her capabilities, aptitudes, and interests.

Schools play a vital role in the County's development and careful consideration must be given to the location and development of schools in order to be consistent with not only the goal of providing educational opportunities to all children, but also the growth management goals of the County.

There are a total of 26 public schools in Albemarle County, including sixteen elementary, five middle, and four high schools including the Murray High School and the Charlottesville-Albemarle Technical Center (CATEC) (See Map #X).

An objective of this Community Facility Plan is to provide adequate parks and recreational facilities through the utilization of school facilities. The result is the non-duplication of many recreation facilities, saves the County on costs associated with providing land and recreational facilities, and provides for the more effective use of existing public facilities. Therefore, it is important that schools sites are adequately sized to function effectively as Community and District Parks (See Parks and Recreation Section). This plan does provide for greater flexibility in elementary school design by allowing for a smaller school site based on providing additional "community park" facilities at other locations within the community and not at an elementary school.

Presently, the School Board and the Parks and Recreation Department have an agreement whereby the schools purchase the land, provide grading, and install major sports facilities related to school activities such as football and baseball fields and the track. The Parks and Recreation Department then provides funding for the remainder of the facilities required based on the standards outlined in the Parks and Recreation section of the plan.

The objectives and standards below attempt to ensure that all facilities will meet the needs of the County. These standards should be used in conjunction with the Overall Service Objectives (p. XX) of the Plan.

SERVICE OBJECTIVES

1. Establish service areas for existing schools and identify those geographic areas not effectively served as the basis for identifying overall school facility needs.
2. New schools should be located within the designated Development Areas to support the County's growth management policies. The existing schools located in the Rural Area are intended to be maintained and upgraded/expanded as necessary in order to continue to serve rural residents.
3. School location and design should be consistent with the general intent of the facility as described in the Comprehensive Plan-Neighborhood Master Plans.
4. Locate schools on sites meeting the optimum number of general location criteria:
 - Places elementary schools within neighborhoods and at neighborhood edges. Locates middle and high schools between neighborhoods in the Development Areas because of their size.
 - Maximizes safe and convenient access to pedestrian and road networks
 - Is compatible with adjoining planned and existing land uses. Locations near industrial and major commercial developments are less desirable, but not necessarily prohibited sites.
 - Is served by public water and sewer, and adequately served by police/fire and rescue services.
 - Is aesthetically pleasing physical qualities and appropriate engineering/developability features (soils, topography, floodplain, wetland, etc.)
5. Strive for parity in school facilities throughout the County.
6. Provide adequate classroom space and facilities to serve school enrollment. In addition, provide adequate recreational/athletic facilities on a school site to serve the students and provide Community or District Park level services as identified in the Parks and Recreation section of this Plan. The school division will make school, park, and recreational facilities available for community and public use, after meeting its responsibilities to students.
7. Provide new school facilities and the expansion of existing facilities over the next ten years in a manner that corresponds to that outlined in "The Long Range Plan for Albemarle County Schools." Discourage the use of modular facilities as permanent facilities, as they are not seen as an appropriate long-term solution for overcrowding. However, periodic use of modular facilities during periods of enrollment fluctuations or prior to expansion or development is viewed as a normal practice and economic necessity.

8. Identify land needed for school expansion and new schools and reserve these sites as soon as feasible for future use. Utilize a standard school site selection procedure.
9. Encourage innovative alternatives to address new facility needs, including potential cooperation with the City.

STANDARDS FOR ALL SCHOOLS

There are certain standards that apply to elementary, middle schools and high schools. These include the following:

Building Location: School design and development should reflect the desire to achieve parity, cost efficiencies and timeliness of construction. Building and site design should also be sensitive to the character of the site and neighborhood setting. School buildings should be designed to fit the terrain of the site and transition into the surrounding neighborhood to the greatest extent physically and programmatically feasible. The school building should be oriented to the public street when physically and programmatically feasible to encourage pedestrian access and connectivity to the surrounding neighborhood.

Buildings: While single story structures are preferred for operational and program efficiencies, multi-story structures are considered a viable option to address site development issues, and/or expansion needs. Buildings oriented to the street are generally encouraged, but ultimate location and orientation of the building should also be sympathetic to the existing (or future) character of the surrounding neighborhood, physical characteristics of the site, and issues of site efficiency and security.

Walks: Provide sidewalks, walkways, and/or trails to connect the school site to the neighborhoods. The County should program in the CIP necessary walkway improvements within a ¼ mile radius of the site to provide adequate pedestrian linkages between the neighborhood and the school. On site, walkways are to directly connect streets, bus loading zones, parking areas and auxiliary facilities to main building(s).

Bicycle Facilities: Bicycle access and facilities (bike trails and racks) should be incorporated into the design of the school. The County should program in the CIP or the Six Year Secondary-Road Construction Plan the necessary bike facilities improvements within a ¼ mile radius of the site to provide adequate linkages between the neighborhood and the school.

Driveway: Driveways are to provide access and control traffic to loading areas, parking areas and building service entrances and should be strategically located and designed to minimize vehicular and pedestrian conflicts on the public street. Multiple access points to a site may be considered appropriate based on site design issues. Entrances should be designed in a manner that allows for the construction of right and left turn lanes at the intersection with a public road.

Parking: To the extent physically and programmatically feasible, parking areas should be located no closer to the street than the school building. It is recognized that there may be characteristics of certain sites which affect the ability to fully implement this standard. Efforts should be made to meet parking requirements, particularly for overflow needs, through alternate means including designing internal roads to accommodate parallel parking, recognition and use of available on-street parking, and cooperative parking agreements with adjacent uses

Bus and Student Loading Zones: Bus loading zones are to be designed to accommodate all buses anticipated at one time. The bus parking area should be designed in connection with the loading zone, independent of driveways and designed so that backing is unnecessary. Designated bus spaces control signs are also recommended. It is desirable to have a student drop-off/pick-up zone that is separated from the bus loading zone and parking area.

Surrounding Land Use: Locations near industrial and major commercial developments are less desirable, but not necessarily prohibited sites.

Lighting: On-site lighting (for parking, fields) should be the minimum necessary to provide for adequate safety and security.

Environmental: The relationship of the building to the topography of a site shall be such that grading and development costs are minimized. To the extent feasible, school construction should not disturb any environmentally sensitive resources located on the site such as streams, wetlands and steep slopes. The environmental resources on the site are not to be extensive enough to alter or restrict the design of the building structure. The soil and subsoil conditions on the site are to be both adequate for supporting the building and vegetation.

Sustainability:

Structures - Community facilities should be designed and constructed with a commitment to providing facilities that are environmentally responsible. By addressing environmental responsibility in the design and development of community facilities, the County will create facilities that protect ecosystems, enhance biodiversity, improve air and water quality, reduce solid waste, and conserve natural resources.

Employee health - Community facilities should be designed and constructed with a commitment to occupant health and community benefits. By addressing occupant health and community benefits in the design and development of community facilities, the County will be creating facilities with improved indoor air quality, improved thermal and acoustic environments. These facilities will enhance occupant comfort and health, and contribute to the overall quality of life.

Infrastructure: Public water and sewer service to the site is desirable at the time of acquisition. Public roads serving the school site shall be adequately designed to accommodate expected traffic flow. All necessary road improvements to accommodate a school such as turn lanes, acceleration/deceleration lanes, signal lights, crosswalks, etc. shall be installed at the time of construction.

SERVICE/FACILITY STANDARDS

Below are recommended service facility standards that should be utilized to ensure that educational facilities and services are being provided equally throughout the County. These standards should be used in conjunction with the Overall Service Objectives (p. 5) of the Plan and the Service Objectives from the preceding page.

Elementary School

The standards below attempt to ensure that all new facilities developed will meet the elementary school needs of the County.

1. *Location of Site:* Sites shall be selected and acquired where sufficient population growth is anticipated. Seventy-five percent of the students are to live within 2.5 miles radius of the facility. Whenever practical, schools are to be located on a collector or local street. Existing schools located in, and largely serving, the Rural Area are not expected to meet this standard.
2. *Size of Site:* The usable area for an elementary school site shall be a minimum of 12 acres. However, smaller sites may be viable depending on initial school capacities, alternative building design concepts and location of parking, field areas, off- site storm water facilities or other features.
3. *Enrollment:* *Rated Capacity should not exceed 600 students.*
4. *Parking:* Parking area should be based on faculty and staff size, and school/public assembly and recreational use. The most significant generator of parking is school events and gym use for assembly and/or recreational activities.
5. *Recreational Facilities:* Elementary Schools are intended to provide a diversity of recreational opportunities for the school population as well as provide Community Park level of services to the surrounding area. In an effort to ensure that there is flexibility in design standards to allow schools to be designed to better fit within the neighborhood it is located in, two levels of recreational facilities standards are established for elementary schools to meet Community Park standards. The “Neighborhood” level school provides the minimum level of recreational/athletic facilities recommended to adequately serve the student population and surrounding neighborhood. The “Community Park” level school provides for a higher level of recreational facilities, and will require a larger site to accommodate.

The following should be provided at each school:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FACILITIES

<i>Facility</i>	NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL		“COMMUNITY PARK” SCHOOL	
	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Size</i>
Gymnasium	1	8,000 sq. ft.	1	8,000 sq. ft.
Hard Surface Area*	2	14,000 sq. ft. total	2	14,000 sq. ft. total
Multi-purpose Field	1	81,000 sq. ft.	2	126,000*** sq. ft.
Baseball/Softball Field	0	N/A	2	135,000 sq. ft.
Basketball Court	0	N/A	1	5,000 sq. ft.
Playground/tot lot	2	14,000	2	14,000 sq. ft.
Track**/measured loop	N/A	As space permits	1	Around field area
TOTAL		117,000 sq. ft.		302,000 sq. ft.

* Including 2 basketball goals

** Can be accomplished in different ways at elementary schools

***1 field @ 81,000, 1 @ 45,000 sq. ft.

Middle School

The standards below attempt to ensure that all new facilities will meet the middle school needs of the County, as well as achieve “Community Park” level service function (See Parks and Recreation section).

1. *Location of Site:* Sites shall be selected and acquired where sufficient population growth is anticipated. Seventy-five percent of the students are to live within five miles radius
2. *Size of Site:* The usable area for a middle school site shall be a minimum of 25-30 acres.
3. *Enrollment:* Rated capacity should not exceed 900 students.
4. *Parking:* Parking area should be based on faculty and staff size, and school/public assembly and recreational use. The most significant generators of parking are school events and gym use for assembly and/or recreational activities.
5. *Recreational Facilities:* Middle Schools are intended to provide a diversity of recreational opportunities for the school population as well as District level park services to the surrounding community. The following should be provided at each school:

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MIDDLE SCHOOL FACILITIES

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Size (sq. ft.)</i>
Gymnasium*	1	10,000
Hard Surface Area	1	3,600
Multi-purpose Field	2	162,000
Baseball/Softball Field	2	135,000 (250 ft. x 250 ft.)
Basketball Courts (2 full courts)	2	12,000
Tennis Courts	2	12,500 (100 ft. x 46 ft.)
Playground/tot lot**	1	2,500
Jogging/walking trail/track	1	As space permits
Asphalt track/Loop	1	Around multi-purpose field
TOTAL		246,000

*When capacity exceeds 850 pupils, an additional 5,000 sq. ft. should be provided.

**May be provided when recommended by Dept. of Parks and Recreation, based on community need.

High School

High Schools offer a wide range of educational opportunities and extra-curriculum activities. The standards below attempt to ensure that all new facilities developed will meet the high school needs of the County and address District level park services.

1. *Location of Site:* Sites shall be selected and acquired where sufficient population growth is anticipated. Seventy-five percent of the students are to be within seven radius miles of the school. Whenever practical, school sites shall be located on a major collector road with good visibility.
2. *Size of Site:* The usable area for a high school site shall be a minimum of 45 acres.
3. *Enrollment:* Rated capacity 1,500 students.
4. *Parking:* Parking area should be based on faculty, staff and student size, and school/public assembly and recreational use. The most significant generators of parking are schools events, including gym and stadium use for assembly and/or recreational activities.
5. *Recreational Facilities:* High Schools are intended to provide a diversity of recreational opportunities for the school population as well as District level park services to the surrounding community. The following should be provided at each school:

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HIGH SCHOOL FACILITIES

Facility	Amount	Size (sq. ft.)
Gymnasium	1	18,000
Auxiliary Gym	1	8,000
Hard Surfaced Area	0	0
Multipurpose Field	5	363,000
Basketball Courts	2	12,000
Stadium Game Field w/Track	1	180,000
Softball Field	1	62,500
Baseball Game Field	1	130,000
Tennis Courts	8	7,200
Playground/Tot Lot*	0	2,500
Cross Country Track	1	N/A
Jogging/Walking Trail	0	As space allows
TOTAL		811,500

*May be provided when recommended by Dept. of Parks and Recreation, based on community need.