

APPENDIX D

SITE SELECTION PROCEDURE

Anchorage is a city characterized by fluctuations in population size, shifting residential settlement patterns and a changing age structure. Due to these factors, planning for the provision of needed school sites and facilities in appropriate geographic locations is critical. The planning process involves the cooperation of many persons and agencies. The Anchorage School District works closely with appropriate agencies of the United States Government, the State of Alaska and the Municipality of Anchorage. Private individuals, community groups and agencies are also involved in this process, whenever appropriate.

Policy-making bodies involved specifically in the school site selection process are the Anchorage School Board, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Municipal Assembly. Members of these policy-making groups participate in a joint school site selection committee that guide staff efforts. The staff for school site selections comes from the Anchorage School District and its consultants, and the municipal Departments of Community Planning & Development and the Heritage Land Bank.

Identification of Needs

The first phase of a school site selection is identification of the need for a school. The School District identifies geographic areas where additional schools will be needed, based on membership projections. These projections are updated yearly, based on historic and current memberships as well as population trends. This is one of the functions of the Six Year Capital Improvement Plan document.

Site Selection Process

The second phase of a school site selection and acquisition process may be one of two formats and either is authorized under Title 25 of the Municipal Code.

1. The Standard Process involves the identification and evaluation of alternative sites for each geographic area that needs a new school. The steps involved include:

- a. A site search performed by municipal planning staff in order to identify potential school sites. The search takes note of site size, land status, surrounding land use and zoning, access, topography and other physical characteristics. Planning and school district staff review the findings of the initial site search and then determine the number and location of alternative sites that will be further evaluated. This task requires approximately four weeks to complete.
 - b. Obtaining engineering evaluations and real estate appraisals for all site alternatives. These documents evaluate technical questions in more detail than could be undertaken by municipal or school district staff. The engineering evaluations are prepared by an engineering consultant under contract to the District. The purpose of these evaluations is to ensure that any selected site can be feasibly developed for school use. After receiving rights of entry for soil tests, several weeks are spent on investigation, analysis of engineering characteristics (including soil testing), estimation of site development costs, and preparation of a report documenting these findings. Throughout this process, school district and planning staffs are involved in coordinating and directing consultant work. These tasks require approximately twelve weeks to complete.
 - c. Preparation of the site selection report by municipal planning staff after the engineering recommendations are finalized. The report consolidates and evaluates available information on the alternative sites and presents a recommended site to the decision-making bodies. Engineering recommendations, land use planning considerations, relative value of the sites and other factors are considered in the site selection report. This report requires approximately four weeks to complete.
2. Request for Proposals (RFP) Process involves developing the criteria for the RFP and taking the following steps.
 - a. Currently, proposals are solicited from the area wide community for possible school sites. An amendment to the ordinance is being drafted that would allow for land, design, and construction proposals.

- b. An RFP evaluation committee reviews the proposals and makes a recommendation. Next, the Department of Community Planning and Development prepares a comparative report on all sites proposed, including its recommended site. Planning then forwards their recommendation to the Anchorage School Board, Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Anchorage Assembly for final approval. This selection process is anticipated to take approximately nine months to final acceptance of selected proposal.

Site Approval

The third phase of a site selection is the approval process. When the report is available for public distribution, notice is given of a joint public hearing before the School Board and the Planning and Zoning Commission. Notices are mailed to nearby property owners and advertisements appear in newspapers three weeks prior to the hearing. Notices are also mailed to community councils. Prior to the public hearing, an informational meeting on the site selection is held with area community councils and representatives from the school district and municipal planning staffs. After one or more public hearings, the School Board and Planning and Zoning Commission make recommendations on their preferred site. These recommendations are forwarded to the Assembly for action. The Assembly ultimately selects a site for the school. This decision may be made without a public hearing. This process requires approximately ten weeks to complete.

Site Acquisition

The final phase of the selection process is acquiring the site. When purchase of a site is necessary, the Real Estate Division of the Municipal Heritage Land Bank obtains a full appraisal and negotiates the purchase of the property. If condemnation is required, a document is prepared that outlines the decision process. The matter returns to the Assembly to authorize the expenditure of funds prior to purchase or condemnation. This action requires approximately twenty weeks to complete.

Each phase of this process requires a certain amount of time to complete. The time can vary depending on various circumstances, therefore the number of weeks required for each phase are approximations.

Schedule of Site Selections

2003-2004:

- Eagle River Elementary School
- Southwest Anchorage Area Elementary School
- Districtwide ABC School