

Advancing School-Community Planning

TIPS AND LESSONS FOR COMMUNITY PLANNERS

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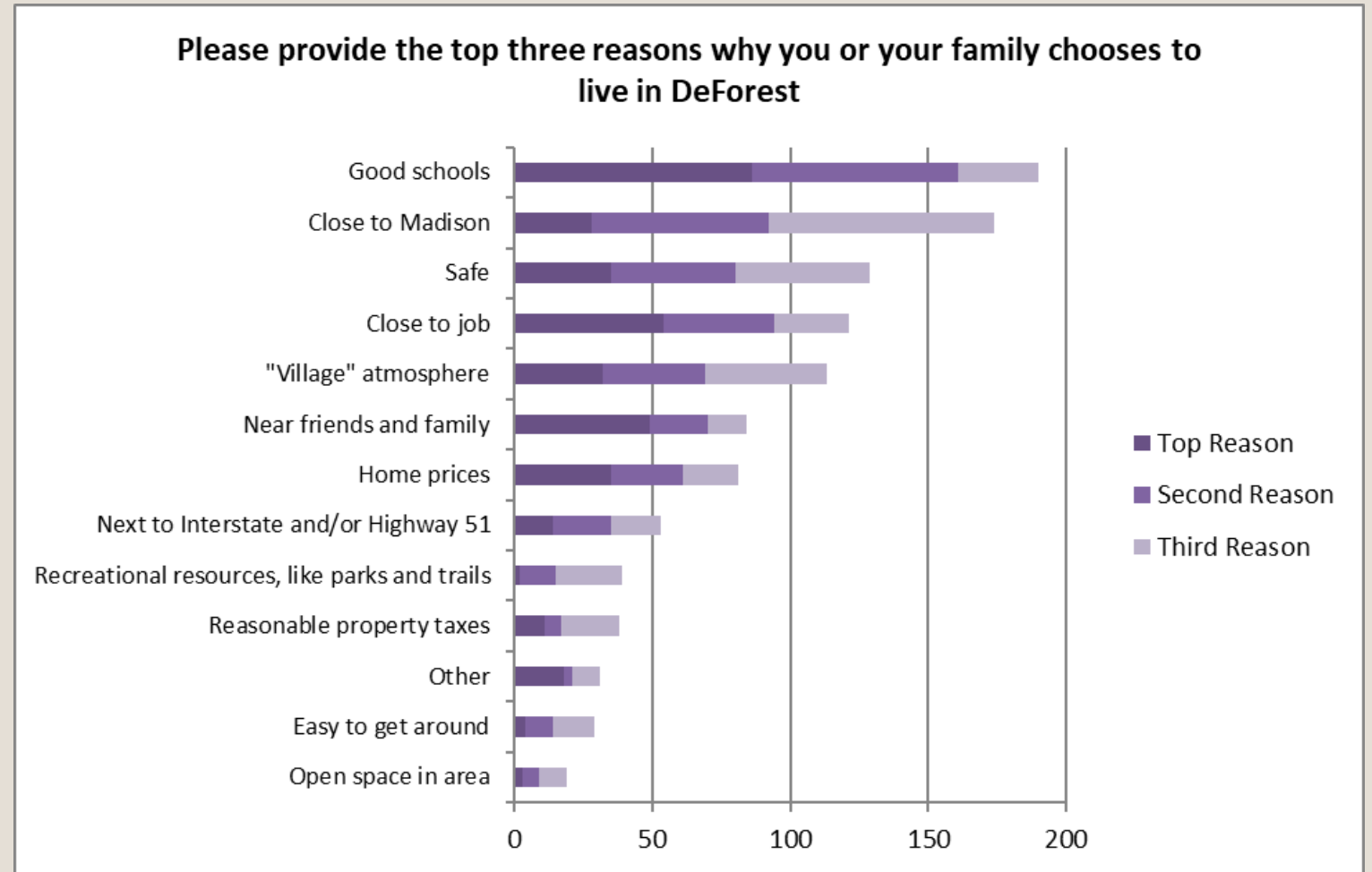
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Who am I?

- Disappointed Brewers fan
- Pumpkin spice hater
- 27 years of planning experience for Wisconsin municipalities, counties, and school districts
- Worked with municipalities to help plan for and review school projects
- Worked with 22 Wisconsin school districts over the past 5 years on enrollment projections; facility master planning; strategic planning; school site selection; attendance area adjustments; and other housing, demographic, statistical, and geographic analyses

Why should we care about school districts ?

- Lots of room for joint improvement
- Health of communities and their schools are inextricably linked
- Surveys consistently show that “good schools” are why residents come and stay →



What drives school districts?

- **Enrollment growth** = more state shared revenues; enrollment decline = less state shared revenues
 - So, they want housing and economic development too
 - Some efforts in Wisconsin legislature to help rural & declining districts
- **Facility modernization**, affected by aging buildings and modern learning needs, like STEAM and more flexible spaces
- Interest in **equity, diversity**, and student/parent engagement
- In general, adherence to **suburban planning & design standards** and other rules-of-thumb

How can planners collaborate with school districts?

1. Housing and equity/diversity goals
2. Community design and transportation improvements
3. New school siting and development
4. School district planning projects
5. Mutually beneficial community improvements
6. Other partnership opportunities

1. Housing and equity/diversity goals

Different municipalities and counties are planning and promoting:

- Denser development closer to center; less dense on edge
- Downtown and commercial strip redevelopment, including for workforce housing
- Single family development, often on the edge and often higher-end housing
- In rural areas, ANY type of housing



1. Housing and equity/diversity goals

School districts are often planning and promoting:

- Greater student and parent engagement, which is sometimes affected by school distance
- Equity in educational opportunity
- Student diversity across schools
 - % of English language learners
 - % of students of color
 - % eligible for free & reduced lunch



Image: Verona Area School District

1. Housing and equity/diversity goals

Free & reduced lunch (FRL) eligibility is school districts' primary metric for low and moderate income students

- Federal standard
- Calculated on sliding scale
- Family of 4 making less than \$46,435 (130% of poverty level) qualifies



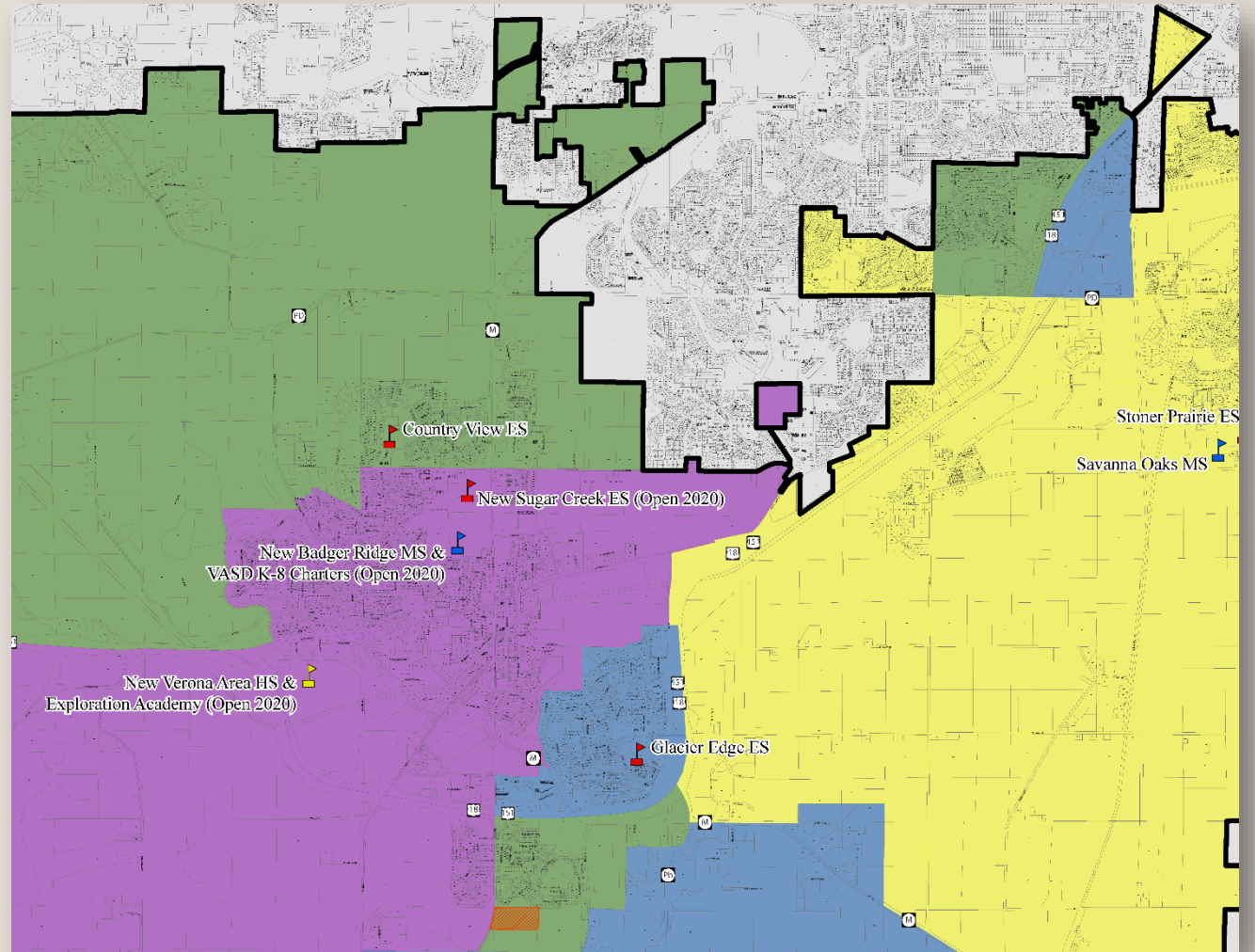
1. Housing and equity/diversity goals

- These diversity metrics help inform school district decision making
- Verona Area School District Board of Education prioritized a student diversity criterion to guide recent adjustments to its elementary school attendance areas →

Student Diversity: The Board values diversity and recognizes the positive impact diversity has on student achievement. We expect diverse populations (e.g., socio-economic, race, special needs) at each of our school sites. Consideration should be given to maximize diversity when possible.

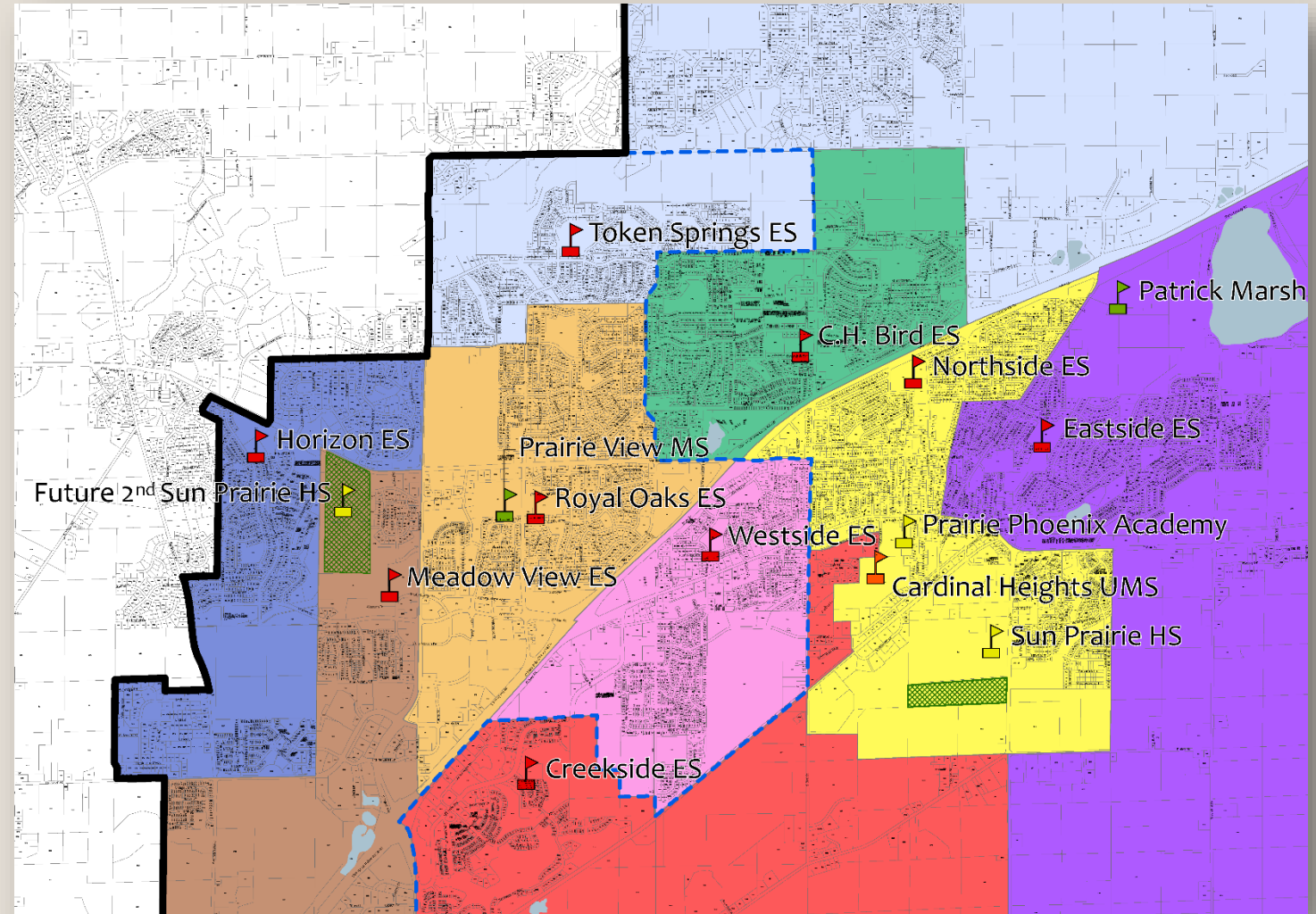
1. Housing and equity/diversity goals

- Concentration of housing for students of color, with lower incomes, and with English as a second language are in the Verona district's northeast corner
- Resulted in discontinuous elementary school attendance areas, as represented by different map colors →



1. Housing and equity/diversity goals

- Sun Prairie Area School District went through a similar attendance area adjustment process
- Did not have diversity criterion, but are concerned about equity in opportunity
- Result was contiguous attendance areas, but with significant differences in diversity metrics among schools →



1. Housing and equity/diversity goals

- At times, municipal housing, redevelopment, and land use policies result in concentrations of affordable housing and/or higher-income housing in locations that challenge school district achievement of diversity and equity goals
- Such municipal policies are almost always put forward with very good intentions, but sometimes with no or limited consideration to school impacts



1. Housing and equity/diversity goals

What can planners do?

- Understand and try to integrate school district policies into municipal housing and land use policies
- Compare school district and school attendance area boundaries with land use and redevelopment plans
- In general, promote a range of housing types and affordability in most to all neighborhoods
- Involve school district in municipal planning processes



One collaboration example

-
- The map displays a grid of land parcels, many of which are labeled with owner names and acreage. A red rectangle highlights a central area containing parcels 1401 through 1410, 1400-01, and 1410. The map is divided into four quadrants: NW, NE, SW, and SE. A highway shield for '12' is located at the bottom left. The text 'Sec 12 T09 R06' is printed at the bottom center.

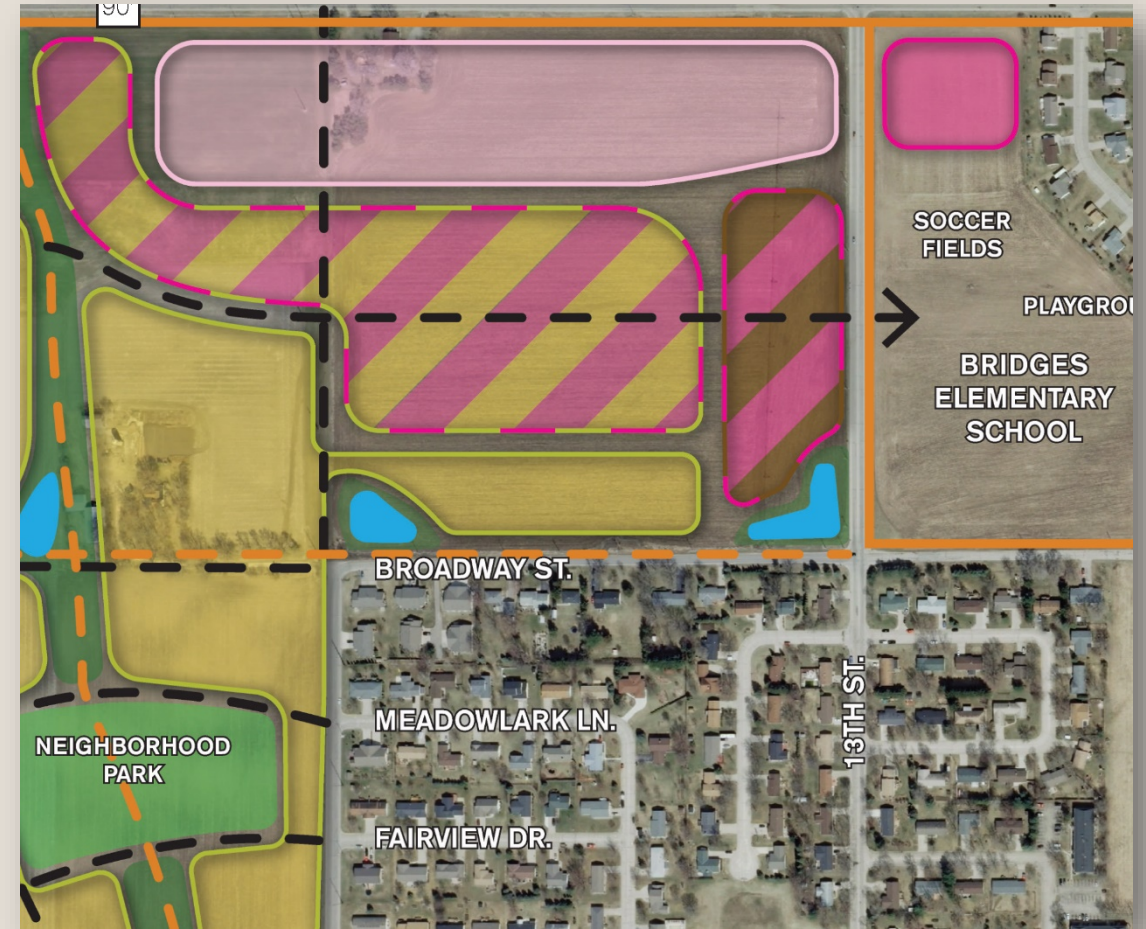
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- 2. Community design and transportation improvements**
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2. Community Design & Transportation Improvements

Different municipalities and counties are planning and promoting:

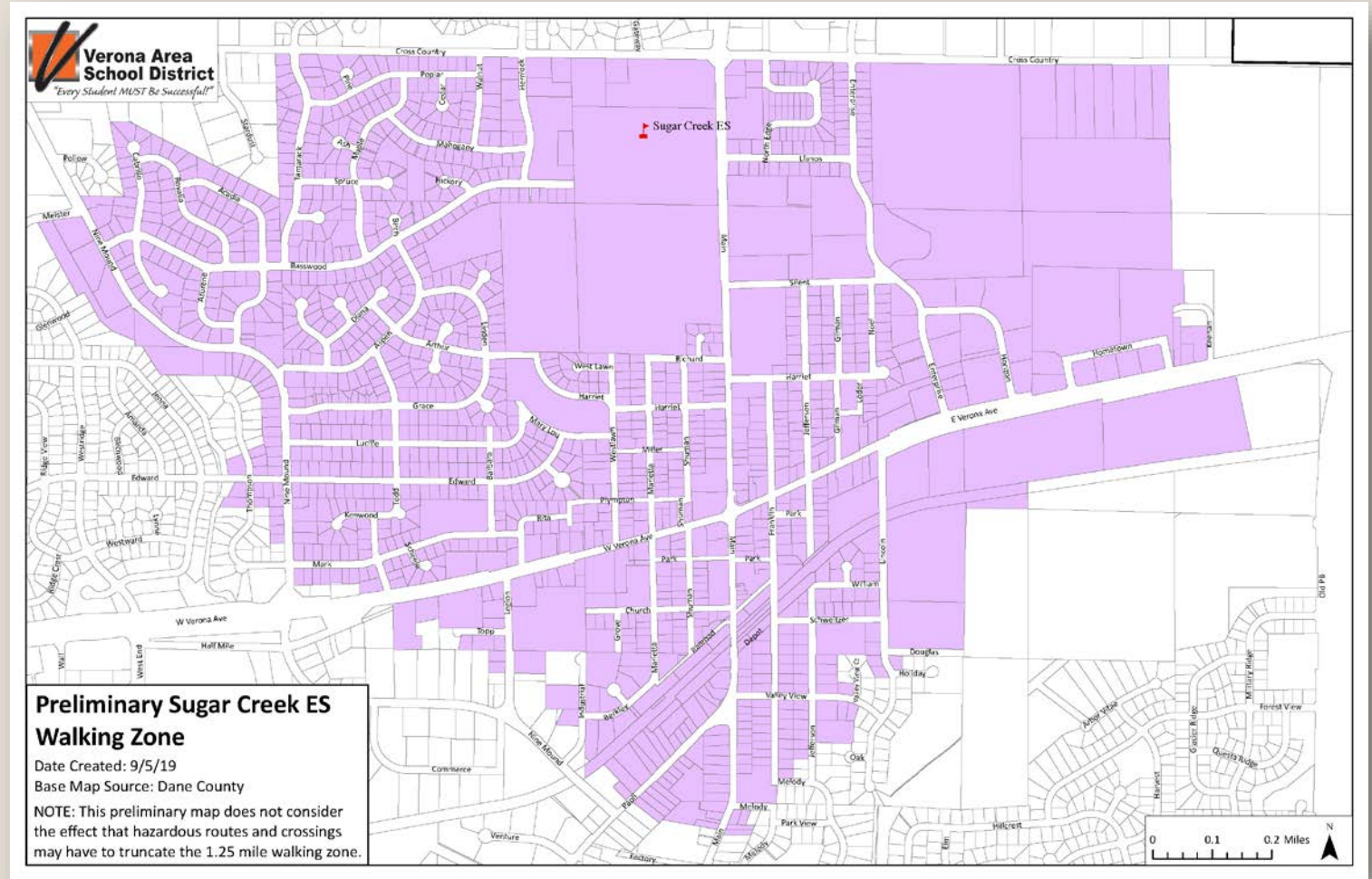
- Walkable neighborhoods
- Interconnected street, bike, & pedestrian systems →
- Sometimes fairly strict differentiation among arterial (big), collector (a little less big), and local streets (small)



2. Community Design & Transportation Improvements

Different school districts and promoting:

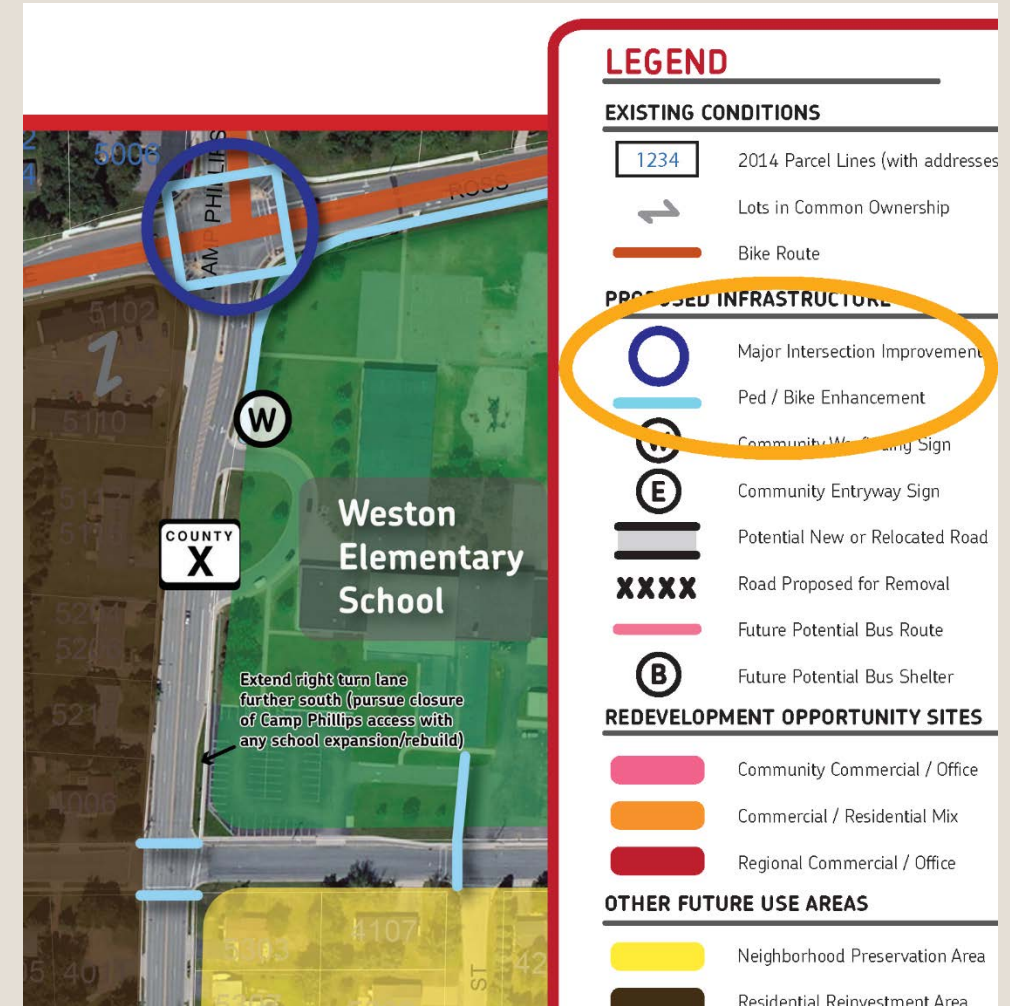
- Efficient and multiple routes to schools for buses and driving parents
- Walking and biking to school, using walking zone studies and designations →



2. Community Design & Transportation Improvements

What can planners do?

- Offer GIS services for walking zone designation and bus routing efforts
- Work with districts on Safe Routes to School Plans, grants, and similar
- Maintain and grow emphases on walkable neighborhoods and interconnected sidewalk and path networks
- Reconsider strict street classifications
- Mitigate impacts of wide and busy streets with safer crossings, signals, guards →



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1. Housing and equity/diversity goals
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- 3. New school siting and development**
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3. New School Siting and Development

Different municipalities and counties are planning and promoting:

- Future school sites as part of comprehensive & neighborhood plans
- School sites connected with municipal parks and/or environmental corridors →
- That school districts consider impacts—particularly transportation—when new and expanded schools are proposed



Map: City of Madison

3. New School Siting and Development

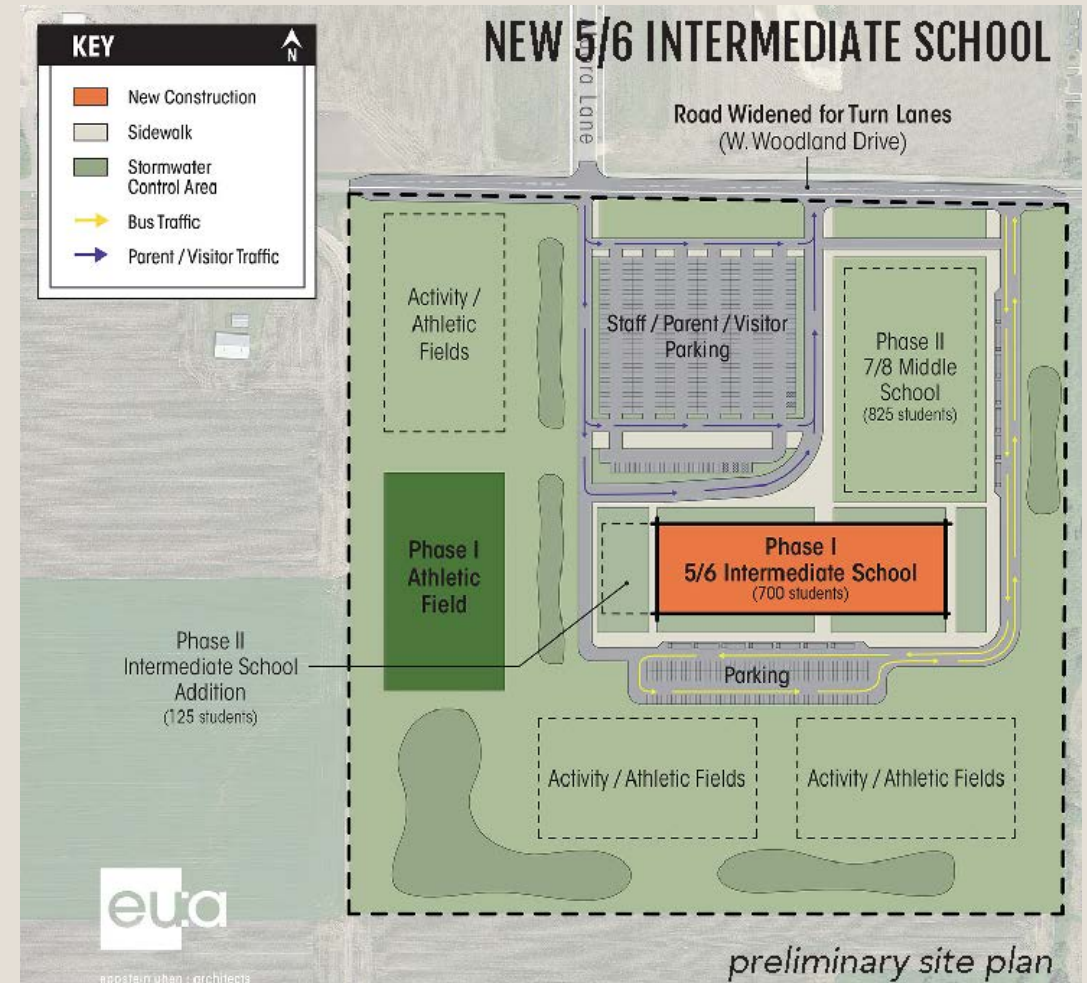
Different school districts are planning and promoting:

- Future school sites sometimes in areas planned for future residential development (occasionally not)
- Minimizing off-site improvement requirements
- Segregated on-site access for buses, parents driving, kids walking and biking, & staff →
- Suburban site area standards



3. New School Siting and Development

- Suburban school site acreage standards often used by districts:
 - Elementary: 15 + 1 per 100 students
 - Middle: 25 + 1 per 100 students
 - High: 40 + 1 per 100 students
- Districts seek sites that allow for future expansion & campuses →
- Some districts were burned by too-small sites relative to past school designs, and are therefore uncomfortable with smaller sites



3. New School Siting and Development

What can planners do?

- Involve school districts in your planning processes
- Reach out to school officials *WAY* before a building referendum
- Integrate developer, district, and parks department needs →



How can planners collaborate with school districts?

1. Housing and equity/diversity goals
2. Community design and transportation improvements
3. New school siting and development
4. **School district planning projects**
5. Mutually beneficial community improvements
6. Other partnership opportunities

4. School District Planning Projects

Different school districts are:

- Engaging the community on planning efforts
- Preparing long-range facility master plans, and short-term plans and programs
- Engaging in strategic planning efforts



4. School District Planning Projects

What can planners do?

- Offer to participate on committees and to provide technical support
- Suggest options for facilities
- Provide data on recent and expected housing development and community change
- Help project enrollment



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5. **Mutually beneficial community improvements**
6. Other partnership opportunities

5. Mutually Beneficial Community Improvements

Different school districts are:

- Incentivized by State to increase enrollment
- In MANY places facing declining enrollment, in part due to factors beyond their control
- Therefore, interested in making their communities more appealing places to live for families



5. Mutually Beneficial Community Improvements

- Many school districts are really struggling with declining enrollment
- Some are closing schools, a few are consolidating



5. Mutually Beneficial Community Improvements

What can planners do?

- Jointly identify and sponsor family-friendly activities, places, and improvements
- Emphasize parks, trails, and other recreational amenities (including private)
- Focus community improvement efforts around school sites (e.g., redevelopment)
- Assist with reuse for closed schools
- Participate in joint marketing efforts →



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6. **Other partnership opportunities**

6. Other Partnership Opportunities

What can planners do?

- Invite district input on community development
- Get a district person on your plan commission
- Consider occasional joint board meetings
- Jointly pursue grants (e.g., TAP-21/SRTS)
- Pursue shared recreation, employee, and other services
- Pursue joint natural resource enhancement and educational efforts
- Identify and share mutually beneficial data



6. Other Partnership Opportunities

- Maintain up-to-date (and spreadsheet-friendly) building permit records with addresses →
- Seek from districts scrubbed student address records to help with park system and other planning efforts

SF Condo, Plex & Multi-Family Development: City of Mequon										
	NAME	TYPE	Single Unit Buildings	No. of 2 Unit buildings	No. of 3 Unit buildings	Other	TOTAL UNITS	Acreage	Density	
5	Artesa	Apts.				33 Unit	33	1	33.00	
6	Apple Orchard Apartments	Apts.	3	22	1		47	8.2	5.73	
7	Apple Orchard Condos	Condos	1	7			15			
8	Aster Woods	Condos		16			32	16.84	1.90	
9	Baldwin Court Condos	Condos				3 - 10 units	30			
10	Cedar Gables	Condos		30			60	14.2	4.23	
11	Cedar Ridge	Condos	3	26			56	18.9	2.96	
12	Columbia Creek	Condos	16				16			
13	Concord Place	Condos	3	53			109	27	4.04	
14	Country Terrace	Condos		39			78	15	5.20	
15	Eastbrook Estates	Condos		15			30	10	3.00	
16	Essex Place Condominiums	Condos		19			38	38	1.00	
17	Greenbriar Meadows Condos	Condos				5 -16 unit	80	9.283	8.62	
18	Heritage Estates Condos	Condos				4 -20 unit	80	14	5.71	
19	Heron Pond	Condos		17			34			
20	Hidden Creek Condominiums	Condos	29	18			36	27.6	1.30	
21	Hidden River Condominiums	Condos	46				46			
22	Hidden Reserve Condominiums	Condos		27			54	49.09	1.10	
23	Highland Colony Estates	Condos				4 - 8 units / 2- 6	44			
		Housing Starts 1&2 Family		Average House Value 1&2 Family		dwelling chart		Bldg Permits Issued		Pl...

What should we talk about next?

- Any questions, reactions, and constructive criticism? (now or later at mark@mdroffers.com)
- What lessons have you learned in working with (or not) the school districts in your area?
- Do you think Yelich will be back 100% next year? If so, can the Brewers win the Series?
- Do *you* like pumpkin spice? *Really?*

