



Site Selection Criteria and Evaluation Handbook

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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Overview.....	2
Authority.....	2
Basic Procedures	3
Site Selection Elements.....	3
Weighting Factors (WF).....	3
Applying Ranking Criteria.....	4
Tabulating and Analyzing Results	4
Ranking Criteria Elements.....	5
The Evaluation Report.....	24
Introduction and Executive Summary	24
Maps and Graphics.....	24
Evaluation Matrix and Narratives.....	24
Appendix A Site Evaluation Matrix.....	25
Social and Land Use Factors.....	25
Construction Cost Factors.....	26
Maintenance and Operating Cost Factors.....	27
Site Evaluation Summary Table	27
Appendix B Sample Site Graphic Analysis.....	28
Appendix C Suburban School Layout.....	29

Introduction

Overview

The perfect school site can be envisioned as generally level with some topographic interest, having complete utilities, stable, well drained soils, excellent road and pedestrian access, protection from excessive weather patterns, with ample space for school facilities, playground and sports fields. The site would be accessible to present and future populations and be free of any natural or environmental hazards. It would be removed from undesirable business, industry and traffic hazards but be convenient to important public facilities and recreational/outdoor learning areas. In most communities, however, the perfect site is elusive and difficult to find.

School siting is also a serious public policy decision. Land availability, land use, public sentiment and other community issues can have dramatic influence on site selection. In any site selection process, local involvement and judgments regarding the relative significance of selection criteria are important.

This Site Selection Criteria Handbook was developed with flexibility in mind and can be used by school districts to perform a site selection analysis for any school facility by carefully selecting the appropriate criteria and weighting factors. Districts can use this guide for analysis of site opportunities for elementary schools, secondary schools, charter schools, alternative schools and special purpose facilities.

Finally, site selection for school facilities has a direct and lasting impact on the resources of the State of Alaska. Both the economic resources and the natural resources of the state are affected by the construction and operation of public schools. Primarily in response to these factors, the state recognizes the need for careful and thorough evaluation of school sites.

Authority

The guidelines incorporated in this handbook have been developed to give assistance and direction to Alaska school districts and communities in determining the suitability of various building sites for educational facilities planning. They are based upon AS 14.11.013 and 14.11.100, which provides for department review of projects to ensure they are in the best interest of the state. This provision is further developed by regulation 4 AAC 31.025 which requires approval of educational facility sites under paragraph (a) and investigations by the appropriate local governing body for suitability in paragraph (d). This handbook establishes the basic considerations for an adequate site selection process. Other products of similar detail may be used to fill the requirements laid out in statute and regulation.

Basic Procedures

Site Selection Elements

This handbook establishes a set of basic site selection elements and offers suggested evaluation criteria for rating the elements. Although the document does incorporate an internal weighting factor (it lists a few key ranking criteria elements which have high-cost impacts in more than one sub-category) it does not prescribe the importance of most selection elements but rather, incorporates a weighting system whereby a district or community can assign a range of importance to each element. It is recognized that information for all the elements cannot always be determined nor are all elements applicable to every site. However, detail and rigor in addressing the elements is important for an effective evaluation.

The selection elements are grouped into three major categories as follows:

1. Social and Land Use Factors
2. Construction Cost Factors
 - a) Soils/Foundations
 - b) Utilities
 - c) Other
3. Operations and Maintenance Cost Factors

The site selection elements form the basis for an evaluation matrix which is shown in **Appendix A** and is available as a spreadsheet on the department's website. The first step in the process is to review the matrix elements for applicability to the project and sites being considered.

Weighting Factors (WF)

After identifying the site selection elements, the next step is to assign weighting factors to each element. Assignment of the weighting factors is the district/community's opportunity to apply its values to the evaluation process so that the final scores for each site reflect issues involved at the local level. This is often accomplished through community surveys, public meetings and other forums for developing consensus among the parties affected by the school project. A suggested model for the district/community weighting factors is shown below:

Weighting Factors

- 1 = not very important*
- 2 = somewhat important*
- 3 = important*
- 4 = very important*
- 5 = essential*

Applying Ranking Criteria

Following the assignment of the weighting factors, each selection element is evaluated according to established criteria and ranked on the simple five-point scale from 0 to 4. The detailed ranking criteria to be used, which differentiates as needed between rural and urban sites, is described following this section on **Basic Procedures**. The table below gives a suggested definition of each ranking score:

Criteria Ranking Scores

0 = unacceptable (least desirable/least cost effective)

1 = poor

2 = fair

3 = good

4 = excellent (most desirable/most cost effective)

Tabulating and Analyzing Results

Using the Site Evaluation Matrix (Appendix A) enter the criteria ranking scores for each element. Compute the total score for each site by multiplying each criteria score by the weighting factor and sum them. An example of a portion of the Site Evaluation Matrix is shown below:

Maintenance and Operating Cost Factors									
Criteria	WF	Site 1	S1 x WF	Site 2	S2 x WF	Site 3	S3 x WF	Site 4	S4 x WF
Site Drainage	3	4	12	3	9	3	9	n/a	n/a
Flooding	4	4	16	4	16	2	8	n/a	n/a
Site Erosion	4	3	12	3	12	3	12	n/a	n/a
Sun Orientation	2	2	4	1	2	1	2	n/a	n/a
Protection from Elements	2	3	6	3	6	2	4	n/a	n/a
Proximity to Natural Hazards	4	0	0	3	12	4	16	n/a	n/a
Alternative Energy Sources	3	1	3	1	3	2	6	n/a	n/a
Air Inversions/Katabatic Winds	2	4	8	4	8	4	8	n/a	n/a
TOTALS			61		68		65		n/a

The total scores for each site represent a detailed analysis; the highest score should indicate the most desirable site. If the district or community, based on factors not captured by the evaluation, desires to choose a site other than the site receiving the highest score, a narrative justification of this position will need to be developed for inclusion in the site selection report.

Ranking Criteria Elements

The following ranking criteria elements provide specific guidance to school districts in establishing a score of each associated ranking element. If a particular district has a particular criteria that is not included in the ranking criteria listed below, but is important to the district in determining the acceptability of a school site, then the district can utilize the spreadsheet available on the department's website to add that criteria to the scoring matrix. Because the department reviews and approves site selection decisions made by a school district, the department will need to be consulted if additional criteria are proposed for a site selection analysis.

Size of Site

Criteria:

The specific criteria listed below have been adapted from the *Council of Educational Facility Planners International Creating Connections Guideline*.

Selection of a school site involves many variables, all of which cannot be captured in a basic metric such as the one shown below; however, the tool below can be helpful for identifying the approximate site size necessary to accommodate a district's proposed school facility. For assistance with estimating a size or a quantity (vehicles/buses) for a particular use contact the department, or consult with a design professional.

Use	Typical Size	Actual Estimated Size
Building Footprint	Varies	
Service Area (3 dumpsters/recycling bins, loading and turning area for two trucks)	8,000 SF	
Bus Drop-off/Pick-up (including space for angled parking and driveways with appropriate turning radius)	5,500 SF/bus	
Bus Drop-off/Pick-up (parallel loading at sidewalk)	650 SF/bus	
Car Drop-off/Pick-up	250 SF/car	
Vehicle Parking	285 SF/space	
Paved Outdoor Play Area	4,500 SF (varies)	
K-2 Playground Equipment Area	3,200 SF (varies)	
3-5 Playground Equipment Area	3,200 SF (varies)	
Outdoor Learning Area	Varies	
Grassy/Natural Play Area	Varies	
Football Field	88,000 SF	
Football Field with track and field event space	225,000 SF	
Soccer	106,000 SF/field	
Total Net Square Footage		
Net to Gross Factor (10% for larger sites varying to 30% for small sites to accommodate walkways and buffers between activity areas)	10%-30% of net square footage	
Total Useable Area Required		
Number of Useable Acres Required (divide total useable area required by 43,560 SF/acre)		

See next page for evaluation criteria

Ranking Criteria Elements

Evaluation (for Site Size Criteria):	Scores:
Site size is within 30% of the calculated programmatic space requirements for the proposed facility	0
Site size is within 20% of the calculated programmatic space requirements for the proposed facility	1
Site size is within 10% of the calculated programmatic space requirements for the proposed facility	2
Site size is adequate to meet the calculated programmatic space requirements for the proposed facility	3
Site size exceeds the calculated programmatic space requirements for proposed facility and provides room for building expansion and/or activity use expansion	4

Proximity to Population to be Served

Criteria:

Ideally, all students served by the school would be in convenient, safe walking distance to the site. In communities with roads, convenient vehicle/bus travel is also important. Evaluate this criterion using the anticipated population distribution when the school is at capacity (i.e. 5 year post-occupancy). Use the following standard, evaluating for both elements and using the lowest score:

- 50% of students served are within reasonable walking distance (i.e. ¼ mile or less) and,
- 90% of students served are within a 15 minute vehicle/bus ride

Evaluation:	Scores:
Proximity of student population is 40% or more below standard	0
Proximity of student population is within 20% of standard	1
Proximity of student population is within 10% of standard	2
Proximity of student population is equal to standard	3
Proximity of student population is 10% or more above standard	4

Proximity to Future Expansion of Community

Criteria:

Occasionally, schools are constructed on sites that within 20 years are no longer adjacent to population centers and/or residential areas. This criterion assesses long-range planning and land use factors related to school sites. Use a subjective evaluation of how well the site corresponds to future expansion and land use in the community to score this criterion. Answer the question, “Is this a good long-term site for a school?”

Evaluation:	Scores:
Incompatible with future expansion	0
Significant variances with future expansion	1
Some variances with future expansion	2
Corresponds well with future expansion	3
Corresponds ideally with future expansion	4

Proximity to Important Existing Facilities

Criteria:

In some instances, a district/community can identify an existing facility (e.g. swimming pool, food service, etc.) which is shared between multiple schools and to which close proximity is essential or desired. If more than one facility is important, this criterion may have to be scored multiple times. In most cases the adjacency is important because it involves student transit. Use the following standard:

- students served are within a short walking distance to important existing facilities (i.e. 1/8 mile [660ft.] or less)

Evaluation:	Scores:
Proximity of school is 40% or more below standard	0
Proximity of school is within 20% of standard	1
Proximity of school is within 10% of standard	2
Proximity of school is equal to standard	3
Proximity of school is 10% or more above standard	4

Year-round Accessibility

Criteria:

Ideally, the site should be easily accessible during all times of the year regardless of weather and temperature effects on paths, walks or roads. In some communities, access may improve during winter due to frozen water/wetlands. In other communities, winter may cause the most difficult accessibility problems. Evaluate this criteria assuming standard amenities for site accessibility are provided (i.e. walks, roads, bridges, etc.). Costs for providing these amenities should be covered in other criteria.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Site is inaccessible during certain times of the year	0
Access is routinely interrupted by weather/temperature conditions	1
Access is periodically over swampy, unstable soils	2
Typically year-round well drained ground/road access	3
Fully accessible; only severe storms may temporarily hinder access	4

Site Topography

Criteria:

Ideally, the site should be fairly level with some topographic relief that can provide opportunities for learning area development. In some communities, choice of level property may not be available, so consideration should be given to the side that best meets the programmatic needs of the facility. Evaluate this criterion by considering the types of amenities required for the facility (i.e. playground/play area, soccer field, track, basketball court, etc.). Costs for providing these amenities should be covered in other criteria.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Site contains significant topographic relief, and cannot accommodate anticipated uses	0
Site is not level, and can only accommodate a limited number of anticipated uses	1
Site is not level, but can still accommodate all anticipated uses	2
Site is mostly level and can accommodate all anticipated uses	3
Site is level and can accommodate all anticipated uses	4

Traffic Impact, Access Needs

The following five criteria relate to traffic and access issues that may affect a potential school site. A thoughtfully situated site will allow walking, busing and driving access while minimizing crash risk between those modes of travel as well as mainline traffic. The criteria address capital and maintenance needs for road function, sight distance, access and circulation, walking routes, school zones, turn lanes, and traffic signals. The following five criteria are especially important to consider in urban and suburban site selection processes where inadequately addressed traffic issues can result in safety concerns for students.

Road Access

Criteria:

Evaluate site access options. Access to the school site from minor arterials and collectors is more compatible than access from high speed or high volume road corridors or a low volume neighborhood residential street. Consider traffic speed and volume at the point of driveway access. Request DOT/PF or local agency assistance for roadway classification and traffic volume information, even for remote areas if registered vehicles are present.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Driveway access from National Highway System, Principal Arterial, or Interstate	0
Driveway access from a low volume internal residential-only street	1
Driveway access from a Major Arterial roadway	2
Driveway access from a Minor Arterial roadway	3
Driveway access from Local Road or Collector (not generally a low volume residential-only street)	4

Visibility, Safety of Driveways

Criteria:

Driveways have the potential to create conflicts when vehicles enter the roadway, particularly where slopes, curves or obstacles prevent good sight distance. The potential for conflicts can be reduced through provision of proper sight distance and traffic control devices. Evaluate sight distance at existing intersections and identify changes that may be required to provide adequate sight distance. Request DOT/PF or local agency assistance for help reviewing minimum intersection sight distance.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Adequate intersection sight distance cannot be provided or is very difficult to provide.	0
n/a	1
Adequate intersection sight distance can be provided but requires clearing and/or earthwork.	2
n/a	3
Adequate intersection sight distance can be provided without any major work.	4

Driveway Conflicts and Internal Circulation

Criteria:

Driveway access options are limited by roadway frontage. The greater the frontage along a road, or along adjoining roads, the greater the likelihood that multiple driveways will provide options for internal site circulation of vehicular traffic (buses, visitors, students and faculty), pedestrians and bicycle traffic. Evaluate driveway access and internal circulation options. For information on how driveway separation requirements improve circulation, contact DOT/PF.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Road frontage <i>restricts</i> driveways and requires multiple travel modes to share the same access with undesired conflicts. Site <i>limits</i> internal traffic circulation options and requires mixing of travel modes. On-site storage is insufficient and will lead to undesirable queuing on the adjacent roadway.	0
Some, but not all of the above factors apply.	1
Road frontage limits driveway access options and requires some mixing of travel modes with acceptable conflicts. Site <i>allows</i> internal traffic circulation options but not complete separation of each mode. On-site storage is <i>a concern</i> and could lead to less desirable queuing on the adjacent roadway.	2
Some but not all of the above factors apply.	3
Road frontage is <i>sufficient</i> for multiple driveways to separate conflicts between non-compatible modes of travel. Site <i>allows</i> internal traffic circulation options with segregation or buffers for each mode. On-site storage is <i>adequate</i> ; no queuing is expected on the adjacent roadway	4

Safe Routes to School for Pedestrians and Bicycles

Criteria:

Safe walking routes enable students within a short distance of the school the option to walk or ride bicycles. Minor collectors and local roads with easy access to the school are best for student pedestrians and bicycles. Roads with a significant amount of traffic act as barriers to students, will require traffic control devices (signs, signals, crossing guards) and can result in conflicts if students make poor crossing decisions. Evaluate the local walking conditions and changes necessary to improve safety for students.

Evaluation:	Scores:
No walking routes are available, nor can reasonable routes be constructed.	0
Walking routes can be constructed, but significant pathway work is required. Traffic control devices could be extensive, requiring tunnels, bridges, or signalization.	1
Walking routes can be constructed at-grade without major right-of-way or road work.	2
Existing walking routes are suitable for 1/4 to 1/2 mile travel. School zone signs, a crosswalk, or a beacon system may be required.	3
Existing walking routes are suitable for 1/4 to 1/2 mile travel. No new traffic control devices are required.	4

Roadway Capacity, Safety Needs

Criteria:

Schools generate a significant amount of traffic. Increased vehicle trips to a school site may create congestion and delay for school and non-school related traffic. Turning movements create conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. Major intersection safety improvements could include adding through lanes, right-turn lanes, a significant length of road widening to accommodate left turn lanes, or a traffic signal or a roundabout. Evaluate whether increased traffic volume and turning movements can be safely accommodated. Request DOT/PF or local government guidance and technical assistance regarding traffic impacts, safety improvements and permitting.

Evaluation:	Scores:
The roadway requires major intersection and road segment improvements for long distances. Requires a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) per 17 AAC 10.060 (required typically for site generated traffic volume greater than 100 vehicles per hour).	0
The roadway requires major intersection improvements. Requires a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) per 17 AAC 10.060 (required typically for site generated traffic volume greater than 100 vehicles per hour).	1
The roadway requires widening to provide turning lanes to accommodate turning traffic demand. Requires a limited Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) to review turning demands. Site-generated traffic volume is typically between 50-99 vehicles per hour.	2
No roadway improvements are required; signing changes are needed.	3
No roadway improvements are required; existing road capacity and traffic control devices are adequate.	4

Aesthetic Value

Criteria:

Sites can be assessed for the quality of their surroundings such as vegetation, topography, views and surroundings. Because aesthetic value is subjective, it is important that the local residents establish the aesthetic criteria considering each of the categories mentioned above. Use a subjective evaluation of the aesthetic merits of the site and answer the question, “What would it take to make this site aesthetically pleasing?”

Evaluation:	Scores:
Will never be aesthetic	0
Has few natural aesthetic features and little potential	1
Has some aesthetic features; potential for more with considerable effort	2
Could have many aesthetic features with minimal efforts	3
Has many aesthetic features naturally	4

Sun Orientation

Criteria:

The site should allow designs to take full advantage of available sun angles. Locating outside play areas to receive sunlight normally makes them a more desirable place for activity. A facility can benefit from the solar gain of winter sunlight. Large stands of trees, north-facing slopes and adjacent structures can be detrimental. Evaluate this criteria based on the year-round use of the facility.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Site is in constant shadow during fall, winter and spring months	0
Site is mostly in shadow during winter months with some fall/spring sun	1
Site is mostly exposed winter sun	2
Site is exposed to year-round sun with some obstructions	3
Site is exposed to full year-round sunlight; no obstructions	4

Protection from Elements

Criteria:

The site should provide protection from prevailing winds which intensify cold temperatures, dust, driving rain and drifting snow. Topography, orientation and site vegetation relative to cold winter winds can be important both for indoor and outdoor educational activities. Sites with some type of wind protections are desirable over those exposed to harsh winds (this is especially critical in coastal areas). Evaluate this criteria based on natural features. Costs of compensating for inadequate protection should be covered in other criteria.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Site is fully exposed to prevailing winds; no obstructions	0
Site is mostly exposed to prevailing winds	1
Site is partially protected from prevailing winds; some natural barriers	2
Site is mostly protected from prevailing winds	3
Site offers full protection from prevailing winds	4

Site Drainage

Criteria:

Sites with good drainage are easier to develop and maintain. Good drainage reduces the chance of water or ice collecting around a facility which could cause undermining, decay and/or frost heave leading to structural damage. It could also make general use and occupancy of the site difficult. Evaluate this criteria based on natural features. Costs of compensating for inadequate drainage should be covered in other criteria.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Site is generally low; surrounding areas drain into it	0
Drainage collects in some areas within the site	1
Drainage collects in areas adjacent to the site	2
Site has positive drainage; water contribution from surrounding areas is easily accommodated	3
Site has positive drainage; no water contribution from surrounding areas	4

Proximity to Natural Hazards

Criteria:

Ideally, the site would have no susceptibility to damage (facilities, utilities, etc.) from natural disasters. These would include the results of “Force Majure” such as earthquakes, avalanches/landslides, volcanic activity as well as health and safety hazards such as bluffs/steep cliffs, bodies of water and sewage/garbage disposal areas. Evaluate this criteria based on natural features and the historical occurrence of those hazards listed above. Costs of compensating for hazards should be covered in other criteria.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Site in proximity to five or more hazards	0
Site is in proximity to four or fewer hazards	1
Site is in proximity to three or fewer hazards	2
Site is in proximity to one hazard	3
Site free of any potential damage/injury from natural hazards	4

Zoning/Land Use

Criteria:

Current and projected zoning and land use should be compatible with the use of the site for a school. If local regulations do not currently permit educational facilities, it could be a lengthy process to obtain a change in zoning or a conditional use permit. Evaluate this criterion according to the difficulty and associated risk.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Present/future zoning does not permit use of the site for a school	0
Not zoned for schools but change or exemption can be requested	1
Current zoning will allow schools as conditional use	2
Currently zoned for schools; not likely to change	3
Present/future zoning permits schools or no zoning restrictions exist	4

Site Soils/Foundation Conditions

Criteria:

Ideal sites contain well graded, stable soils with high soil bearing pressure. Soil conditions should allow conventional, economical foundation systems which can meet or exceed a 50 year life expectancy with little maintenance. Soil conditions which can adversely affect construction include, discontinuous permafrost, silts and clays, substantial surface or sub-surface organic and high water contents (all susceptible to frost heave). Sites should be assessed for the quality of their soil based on known conditions or on-site investigations.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Unstable soils throughout; highly specialized foundation required	0
Mostly unstable soils; specialized foundation required	1
Isolated area of the site have unstable soils, some specialized foundation likely	2
Most areas of the site have stable soils; conventional foundation possible	3
Stable soils; conventional foundation system possible	4

Availability of Water Utilities

Criteria:

Connection into an existing, reliable water supply system with adequate capacity is preferred. Sites closest to the existing system would be rated highest. When considering adequacy, don't forget fire suppression system requirements. If a new water system is required for the site, then sites should be rated as to their potential to support/provide the system. For new systems, proximity to wells, lakes or rivers may be a factor. Evaluate this criteria based on known improvements and/or natural features as described above. Costs of providing water utility should be covered in other criteria.

Evaluation:	Scores:
No existing system; no known/potential water supply near site	0
No existing water system; potential water supply near site	1
No existing water system available; known water supply at site	2
Adequate, reliable water system is available adjacent to or near the site	3
Adequate, reliable water system is available within the site	4

Availability of Sewage Utilities

Criteria:

Connection into an existing, reliable waste/sewer system with adequate capacity is preferred. Sites closest to the existing system would be rated highest. If a new sewage system is required for the site, then sites should be rated as to their potential to support/provide the system. For new systems, perking soils, space for lagoons and availability of effluent outfalls may be a factor. Evaluate this criteria based on known improvements and/or natural features as described above.

Evaluation:	Scores:
No existing system; no known/potential waste handling area near site	0
No existing sewer system; potential locations for sewer system near site	1
No existing sewer system available; known location/method avail. on site	2
Adequate, reliable sewer system is available adjacent to or near the site	3
Adequate, reliable sewer system is available within the site	4

Availability of Electrical Power

Criteria:

Connection into an existing, reliable electrical system with adequate capacity is preferred. Sites closest to the existing system would be rated highest. If a new electrical system is required for the site, then sites should be rated as to their potential to support/provide the system. For new systems, space for generators, space for fuel storage and availability of fuel may be a factor. Evaluate this criteria based on known improvements and projected requirements.

Evaluation:	Scores:
No existing system; known difficulties for generation on site	0
No existing power system; good potential for power generation near site	1
No existing power system available; known power generation at site	2
Adequate, reliable power system is available adjacent to or near the site	3
Adequate, reliable power system is available within the site	4

Availability of Fuel Storage/Distribution

Criteria:

Connection into an existing, reliable fuel storage/distribution system with adequate capacity is preferred. Sites closest to the existing system would be rated highest. If a new fuel system is required for the site, then sites should be rated as to their potential to support/provide the system. For new systems, proximity to delivery points, available land for tankage, etc. may be a factor. Evaluate this criteria based on known improvements and/or natural features as described above. Costs of providing fuel utility should be covered in other criteria.

Evaluation:	Scores:
No existing system; known difficulties for fuel storage on site	0
No existing fuel system; good potential for fuel system near site	1
No existing fuel system available; known fuel system location on site	2
Adequate, reliable fuel system is available adjacent to or near the site	3
Fuel system is not required or is available on site	4

Proximity to Fire Response Equipment

Criteria:

This may or may not influence site selection in rural areas since many villages have no organized fire protection. In areas with fire hydrants and a continuous/reliable water supply and/or a fire station, sites may be rated by response time or whether a site is within the service area. In facility design, sprinkler systems may be specified which become part of the fire protection equipment which is independent of site location except as it relates to water supply. Use the following standard:

- site is within a service area and is in close proximity to a fire station (i.e. 4 miles or less)

Evaluation:	Scores:
Proximity of site is 40% or more below standard	0
Proximity of site is within 20% of standard	1
Proximity of site is within 10% of standard	2
Proximity of site is equal to standard	3
Proximity of site is 10% or more above standard	4

Ease of Transporting Construction Materials

Criteria:

Proximity to transportation routes which can support heavy equipment and loads can affect the usability of a site for construction. This criterion is not to measure the cost of getting construction materials to a community or geographic area but evaluates the local impact of transporting materials to the site. Sites closest to the transportation route will be most easily serviced. Evaluate based on the following:

Evaluation:	Scores:
Site is inaccessible	0
Transporting materials/equipment will be very difficult	1
Transporting materials will be difficult	2
Transporting will be fairly easy, routes will need upgrading	3
Transporting of equipment/materials will be simple; on established routes	4

Site Availability

Criteria:

Land status availability is one of the most fundamental criteria for locating capital improvements. The title to the site should be free of legal encumbrances, platted and surveyed with an accurate legal description and have a single owner. Evaluate as follows:

Evaluation:	Scores:
Clear or unclear title, owner/seller not interested	0
Uncertain title/boundaries; multiple owners	1
Some encumbrances/easements, etc., multiple owners	2
Clear title, recent survey, possibly available	3
Clear title, recent survey, definitely available	4

Site Cost

Criteria:

Land parcels should be available at an affordable cost. The most favorable situation is one in which the parcel is public land available at no cost to the district or available by donation from a private entity. Obviously, the cost of some parcels may be totally beyond the available funds. Evaluate as follows:

Evaluation:	Scores:
Site is cost prohibitive	0
Site is above fair market value but within reach	1
Site is available at fair market value	2
Site is available below fair market value	3
Site is available at no cost or has a nominal administrative fee	4

Alternative Energy Sources

Criteria:

In some cases it may become feasible/cost effective to use the waste heat from an electrical generation plant, or some other low-cost alternative energy source for heating the new facility. All other criteria being equal, this may become an important factor. Evaluate as follows:

Evaluation:	Scores:
Site has no possibilities for alternative energy systems	0
n/a	1
Site is adjacent to alternative energy systems; significant effort to develop	2
n/a	3
Site is adjacent to alternative energy systems; easily developed	4

Permafrost Stability

Criteria:

The best method in dealing with permafrost is to avoid it if possible. If the whole area is underlain with permafrost, then a site with well drained, non-frost-susceptible soils is preferred since there is less chance of encountering an ice wedge/lens, which, when melted will cause unstable soil conditions. Evaluate as follows:

Evaluation:	Scores:
No soils testing; obvious signs of discontinuous permafrost	0
Soils test silt and clay, known permafrost conditions	1
Undetermined soil conditions; no obvious signs of permafrost	2
Limited soils information; most of site free of permafrost	3
Site soils tested, no permafrost present	4

Flooding

Criteria:

Flooding potential from adjacent bodies of water should be considered. Ideally, the site would not be located within a flood plain or flood-prone area.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Site floods routinely	0
Site is within flood plain boundaries	1
Site is in close proximity to flood prone areas	2
Site is in proximity to bodies of water but well above flood plain	3
Site is not in flood plain; no nearby bodies of water	4

Site Erosion

Criteria:

Sites which border on eroding river banks and eroding sea spits should be evaluated on how much and how often erosion takes place to determine if a facility would be endangered. Slopes which have been cleared of vegetation can also erode due to heavy rain. Evaluate this criteria based on natural features and the historical occurrence of those hazards listed above. Costs of compensating for hazards should be covered in other criteria.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Known erosion potential	0
n/a	1
Moderate erosion potential; mostly during construction	2
n/a	3
No erosion potential; not near water or at toes of slopes	4

Air Inversions/Katabatic Winds

Criteria:

During winter under clear sky/no wind conditions, cold air flows down hillsides settling in low-lying areas. This causes temperatures to be colder at low-lying sites (especially in the Interior where there may be little wind). In regions where this occurs often during the winter, sites which are on a hillside are preferred over sites in low-lying areas. Evaluate as follows:

Evaluation:	Scores:
Site has continuous winter Katabatic accumulations	0
Site is routinely affected by Katabatic accumulation; annually	1
Site is in areas of occasional Katabatic wind; not every season	2
Site is adjacent to areas of known Katabatic accumulation	3
Site is on a hillside above cold air accumulation areas	4

Existing Site Development

Criteria:

Vacant, undeveloped land is preferable; if developed or currently used, alternative sites must be available for existing uses. Evaluate based on the magnitude of existing uses requiring relocation and/or demolition and the simplicity of the action.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Site has many existing uses; will all be problematic to relocate/demolish	0
n/a	1
Has 2000 square feet or less in existing uses; all relocatable/demo	2
n/a	3
Site has no existing uses	4

Access to Outdoor Recreation/Learning

Criteria:

Students benefit when complimentary park and recreation resources are located near public schools. Recreation and nature areas available by walking provide opportunities to use the outdoors as an extension of the classroom. Evaluate according to the following standard:

- site is contains or is adjacent to outdoor recreation/nature area (i.e. 1/8 mile or less)

Evaluation:	Scores:
Proximity of site is 40% or more below standard	0
Proximity of site is within 20% of standard	1
Proximity of site is within 10% of standard	2
Proximity of site is equal to standard	3
Proximity of site is 10% or more above standard	4

Noise

Criteria:

Incompatible noise such as from air traffic, vehicle traffic, industrial uses, etc. is detrimental to educational delivery. Evaluate this criteria based on actual or anticipated noise factors according to the following standard:

- sound decibel level is below 65db sustained and 75db peak
- Costs for mitigating these factors will be covered in other criteria.

Evaluation:	Scores:
Sound level of site is 40% or worse than standard	0
Sound level of site is within 20% of standard	1
Sound level of site is within 10% of standard	2
Sound level of site is equal to standard	3
Sound level of site is 10% or more better than standard	4

Wetlands

Criteria:

Wetlands should be avoided due to the adverse impact on cost and schedule. Evaluate as follows:

Evaluation:	Scores:
100% of site is classified as wetlands; significant impact to building	0
Most of the site is wetlands; considerable impact to building likely	1
Some of the site is classified as wetlands; some impact to building likely	2
Some of the site is classified as wetlands; little or no impact to building	3
Site has no wetlands	4

Potential for Hazardous Materials

Criteria:

The site should be free of evidence of past use by industrial functions, unregulated storage of items containing hazardous materials or know disposals of hazards. A site assessment may be required. Evaluate as follows:

Evaluation:	Scores:
100% of site has known hazmat; significant impact to building	0
Most of the site has known/probable hazmat; considerable impact likely	1
Some of the site has known/probable hazmat; some impact likely	2
Some of the site has known/probable hazmat; little or no impact likely	3
Site has no known/potential hazmat issues	4

The Evaluation Report

There are many formats for reporting the results of a site investigation. Reports can range from basic tabulations and narratives with a few maps showing the sites being evaluated to high-powered multi-media presentations incorporating aerial photography, video footage, color graphics and detailed site plans. Appendices can range from a few simple support documents to detailed reports covering everything from archeology to zoning maps. Regardless of the visual and graphic development, a good site investigation report should include the following:

Introduction and Executive Summary

The introduction should describe the purpose and scope of the investigation listing the type and size of planned facilities which the site would need to support and a brief description of the sites. Toward the front of the report, a summary which indicates which site was selected and the basic rationale for the selection should be provided.

Maps and Graphics

Because of the type of information normally processed in a site investigation, graphic representations are essential. For instance, a metes and bounds narrative of the property may very well be an accurate description of the site's boundaries but a site plan with a graphic representation of those bearings and distances communicates more effectively, the shape and size of the site. Similarly, the sentence, "a stream crosses the property from the north to the south," offers a general description of a key site feature where the same stream drawn on a site plan offers an instant evaluation of its impact on placing a building on the site.

It is helpful not only to have graphic representation of each site and its immediate surroundings showing roadways, vegetation, adjacent structures, etc., but also a smaller scale map showing each of the potential sites and their relationship to one another as well as to key area landmarks. Appendix B shows an example of a site graphic for a rural village. On one simple sheet the following items are indicated: each site, bodies of water, compass directions, roads/paths, vegetation, topography, existing structures and site improvements, utility systems, prevailing winds, winter sun angles and natural and man-made hazards.

Aerial photographs, site cross-sections, and photographic panoramas are all useful and fairly standard graphic tools which assisting not only in describing the results of the site investigation but are often instrumental in making the evaluation itself.

Evaluation Matrix and Narratives

In addition to graphics, tabulated data is often one of the best ways to condense information and allow comparison across a specific category. The tabulations shown in Appendix A and/or the spreadsheet available on the department's website offer suggested formats for this type of information.

Appendix A

Site Evaluation Matrix

Social and Land Use Factors

Criteria	WF	Site 1	S1 xWF	Site 2	S2 xWF	Site 3	S3 xWF	Site 4	S4 xWF
Size of Site									
Proximity to Population to be Served									
Proximity to Future Expansion of Community									
Proximity to Important Existing Facilities									
•									
•									
<i>Year-round Accessibility</i>									
Site Topography									
Road Access									
Visibility, Safety of Driveways									
<i>Driveway Conflicts and Internal Circulation</i>									
<i>Safe Routes to School for Pedestrians and Bicycles</i>									
<i>Roadway Capacity, Safety Needs</i>									
Aesthetic Value									
<i>Sun Orientation</i>									
<i>Protection from Elements</i>									
<i>Site Drainage</i>									
<i>Proximity to Natural Hazards</i>									
Zoning/Land Use									
Proximity to Fire Response Equipment									
<i>Flooding</i>									
<i>Existing Site Development</i>									
Access to Outdoor Recreation/Learning									
Noise									
<i>Wetlands</i>									
<i>Potential for Hazardous Materials</i>									

TOTALS

Note: Italicized Items are also evaluated in either Construction Cost Factors or Maintenance and Operating Cost Factors

Appendix A - Site Evaluation Matrix

Construction Cost Factors

Criteria	WF	Site 1	S1 xWF	Site 2	S2 xWF	Site 3	S3 xWF	Site 4	S4 xWF
Soils/Foundation Conditions									
Permafrost Stability									
Availability of Water Utilities									
Availability of Sewer Utilities									
Availability of Electric Power									
Availability of Fuel Storage/Distribution									
Year-round Accessibility									
Driveway Conflicts and Internal Circulation									
<i>Safe Routes to School for Pedestrians and Bicycles</i>									
Roadway Capacity, Safety Needs									
Ease of Transporting Construction Materials									
Site Availability									
Site Cost									
<i>Site Drainage</i>									
<i>Proximity to Natural Hazards</i>									
<i>Site Erosion</i>									
Existing Site Development									
Wetlands									
Potential for Hazardous Materials									

TOTALS

Note: Italicized Items are also evaluated in Maintenance and Operating Cost Factors

Appendix A - Site Evaluation Matrix

Maintenance and Operating Cost Factors

Criteria	WF	Site 1	S1 xWF	Site 2	S2 xWF	Site 3	S3 xWF	Site 4	S4 xWF
Safe Routes to School for Pedestrians and Bicycles									
Site Drainage									
Flooding									
Site Erosion									
Sun Orientation									
Protection from Elements									
Proximity to Natural Hazards									
Alternative Energy Sources									
Air Inversions/Katabatic Winds									

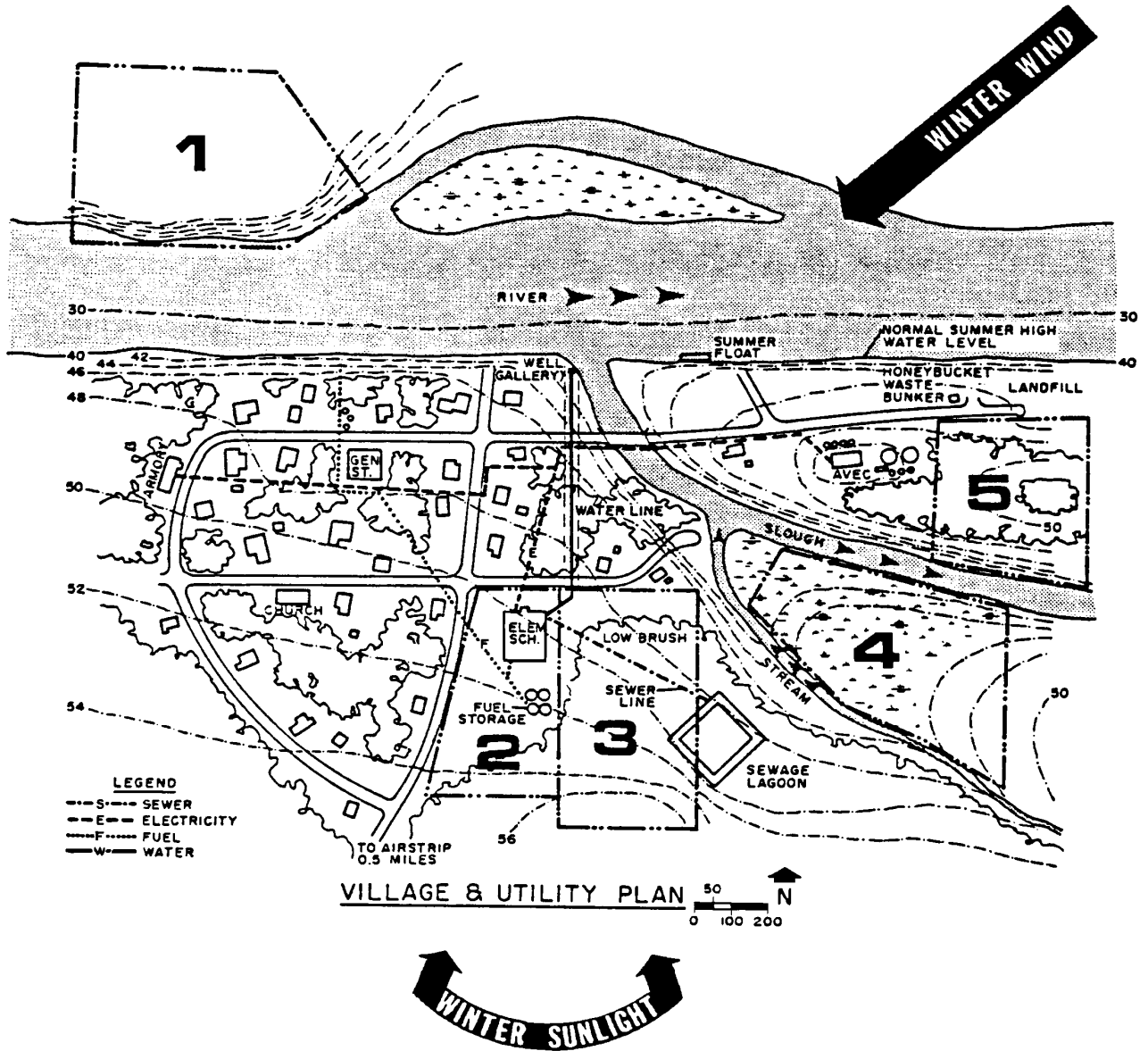
TOTALS

Site Evaluation Summary Table

Criteria	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4
Social and Land Use Factors				
Construction Cost Factors				
Maintenance and Operating Cost Factors				

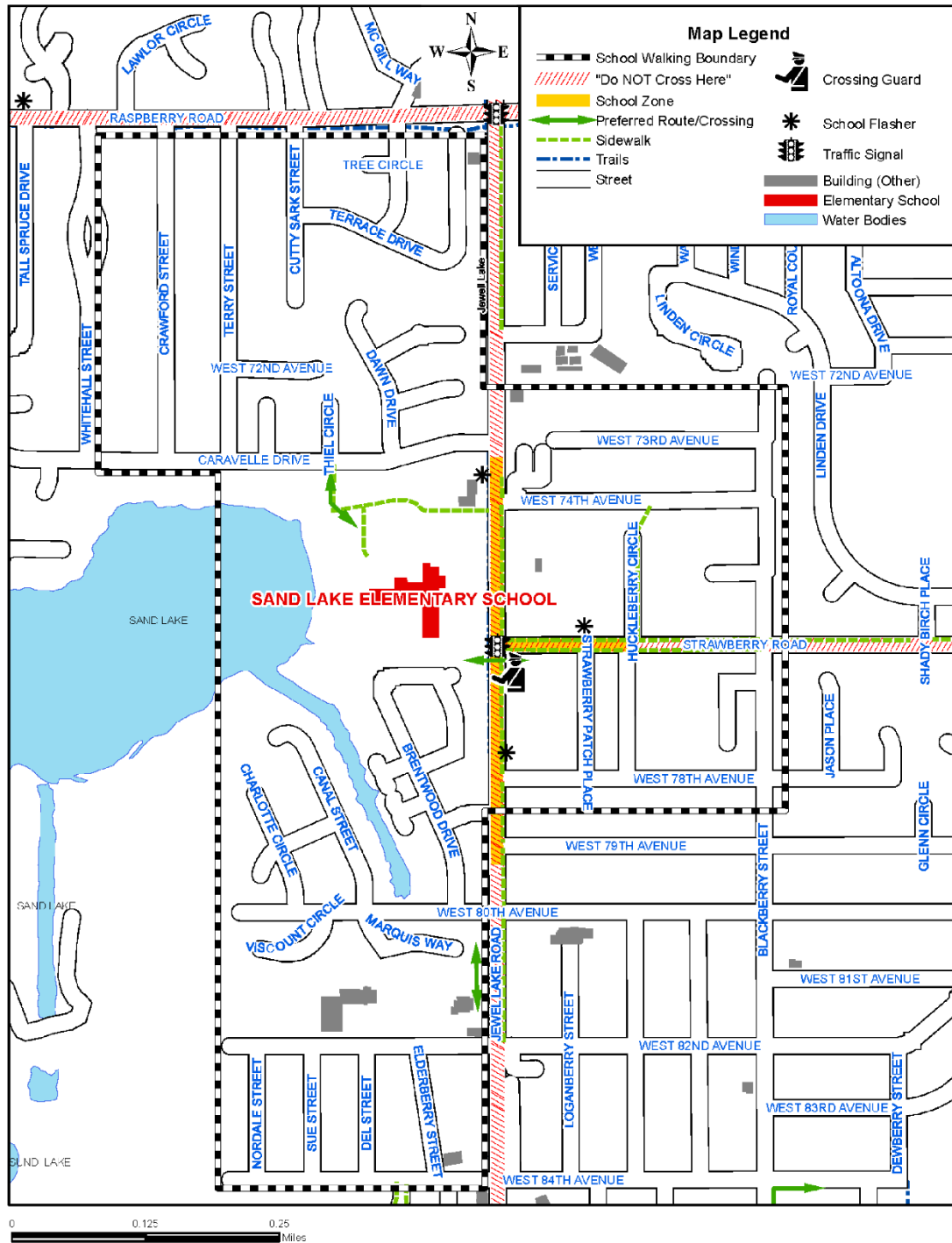
GRAND TOTALS

Appendix B Sample Site Graphic Analysis



SAMPLE

Appendix C Suburban School Layout



SAMPLE