

OPENING, CLOSING, SITING WORKING GROUP: MEETING 3

**April 25, 2017
Cross-Sector
Collaboration
Task Force
Meeting 13**

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WHERE WE LEFT OFF – AGREEING TO FOCUS ON COMMON CONCERNS

**PCS perspective of the
problem**

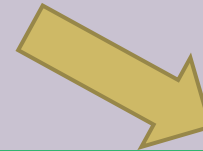
**DCPS perspective of
the problem**

- No transparency of information from each sector on how they decide to open, close, or locate schools
- Little to no advance notice so other sector can plan when other sector opens, closes, or locates.
- Lack of meaningful community engagement and input into the planning process

**Public/community
perspective of the
problem**

WORKING GROUP: PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS

Discuss the Principles and Goals related to the Working Group's subject area



Formulate recommendations



Develop and discuss possible policy solutions



Define (and refine) the problem we want to solve



Ask probing questions about what we know now; brainstorm theories of action; determine what further information we need

MEETING GOALS

- Examine current facilities policies and processes in DC.
- Examine highlights from the Office of Planning current planning information.

PCSB: CURRENT OPENING, CLOSING, SITING PROCESSES



DC PCSB processes for opening and closing schools

Process for approving a new public charter school facility

- Process
 - o Public charter school leads community engagement in new facility's location
 - o Formal community engagement (30 business days before public hearing)
 - DC PCSB opens public comment on new facility location on website
 - DC Register is notified of new facility location
 - ANC is notified of new facility location
 - o Public hearing at DC PCSB Board meeting
 - o Board votes to approve a charter amendment for the school to operate a facility at the DC PCSB Board meeting a month following the public hearing

Process for enrollment ceiling increase

- Process
 - o LEA submits a request to increase its enrollment ceiling, which is the cap on the number of students for whom a school may be funded in a given year
 - o DC PCSB opens public comment on enrollment ceiling increase request on website and notifies ANCs in advance of the public hearing
 - o Public hearing on the enrollment ceiling increase
 - o Board votes to approve a charter amendment with the higher enrollment ceiling at the meeting a month following the public hearing, in consideration of facility availability, history of meeting projections, financial performance, school academic performance, and waitlists, among other factors

Note: Replication typically involves approval of both an enrollment ceiling increase and a new facility

Process for approving a new charter

- DC PCSB's charter application cycle and public outreach
 - o New charter applications are accepted twice a year, in fall and spring
 - o ANCs and Council are notified of applications received during each cycle
 - o DC PCSB hosts a Charter Application Town Hall to inform members of the community about charter applications that were received and the charter application process
- Process: DC PCSB staff evaluates each application based on four elements
 1. A written application, based on the Charter Application Guidelines
 2. Site visits to the operator's existing school(s), when applicable
 3. Capacity interviews, which are question-and-answer-style discussions between DC PCSB staff and the applicant
 4. Public hearings, which are opportunities for the DC PCSB Board and the public to hear from the applicants as well as members of the public
- Based on evidence gathered throughout the application process, DC PCSB reviews applicant groups based on five criteria:
 1. Demonstrated need for the school
 2. Sufficient progress in developing the plan
 3. Consistency of the mission and philosophy
 4. Inclusiveness
 5. Founding group ability

- Location of new public charter schools
 - o Most charters haven't finalized their location when they apply, but indicate broadly where they'd like to locate¹
 - Most applicants work with Building Hope to find their first facility. Building Hope operates the Charter School Incubator Initiative, developed in partnership with OSSE, that provides space for new schools.
 - o Identifying a facility becomes a condition for full approval
 - o Immediately after the board votes to conditionally approve an application, PCSB places the applicant in contact with the DME in case there are any public facilities available
 - o After a facility is identified, conditionally approved charter LEAs follow the process for approving an amendment to add a new public charter school facility

¹ School applications are typically submitted 18 months prior to a school's planned opening. It is not financially feasible for startup groups to secure a facility this far in advance, particularly given the low rate at which DC PCSB approves new applicants.

Process for closing a public charter school

- Background
 - o Public charter schools can close for reasons of poor performance (failure to meet the school's goals), failure to comply with the law or the terms of the school's charter, and/or fiscal mismanagement/insolvency.
 - o Every effort is made to resolve a school closure decision before PK-12 lottery deadlines when relevant. School closures are typically effective June 30, allowing the school to finish out the school year
 - o Whenever possible, DC PCSB supports takeovers of closing LEAs by another LEA (including DCPS), allowing the children to remain in the building but replacing the organization running the school
- Process
 1. At a public Board meeting, DC PCSB Board votes to initiate the charter revocation process
 2. The school is then entitled to request a public hearing, which typically takes place at the school
 3. The DC PCSB Board then votes on revocation within 30 days of an informal hearing if held, or initial vote to begin revocation process
 4. DC PCSB works with OSSE and the school's Board of Trustees and leadership to close the school and track student enrollment in following year

SCHOOL OPENINGS, CLOSURES, AND SITINGS AT DCPS



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 11th, 2017

School Openings, Closures, and Sitings at DCPS



Key Questions Addressed

- How has DCPS managed the opening, closure, and siting of schools in the past?
- How could DCPS manage the opening, closure, and siting of schools moving forward?
 - District-wide process
 - School-or community-specific process
- Key Takeaways and Considerations

Past Processes: Context on 2013 Closures

Framed as “right-sizing”

- We had too many buildings for the number of students
- We were spending too much on building operations and fixed costs
- We were not taking advantage of economies of scale that could allow more resources to go to instruction and services

Happened alongside 2013 MFP process

- Purposeful connection to facility planning
- Included assessment of facility condition in decision-making

More focus on facilities and standard enrollment thresholds than in past years

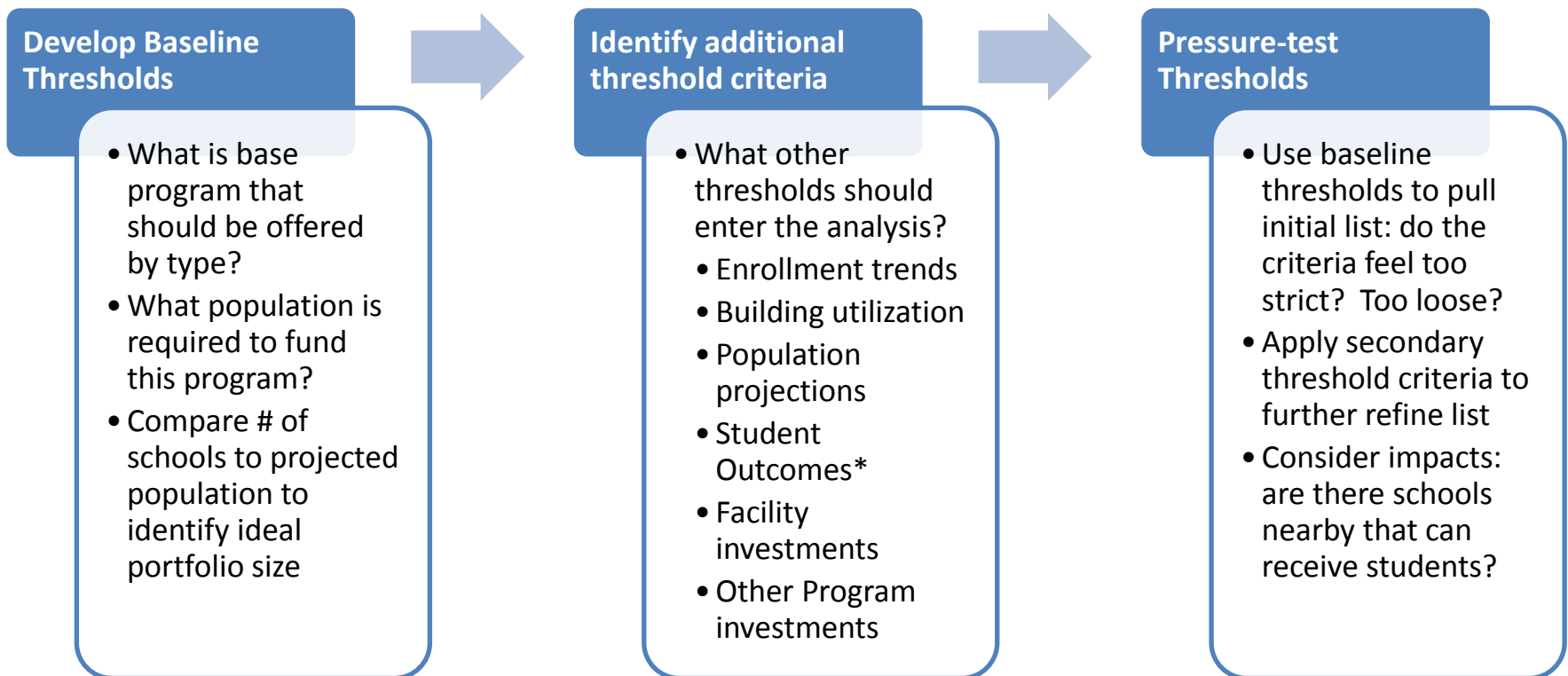
- Thresholds prioritized facility condition, utilization, and enrollment baselines
- Used industry standards/averages to build baselines
- Less focus on walkability
- Included indicator for program investments

Led into 2014 Boundaries and Feeders Process

- Closure processes largely re-assigned boundaries, did not re-draw
- Needed broader process to re-align feeders and boundaries after many closures
- Boundaries and Feeders also looked at areas of growth in city and programmatic gaps in proposing new schools and feeder changes

Defining the Universe of Potential Closures

DCPS Started with a district-wide analysis to identify the initial list of potential closures.

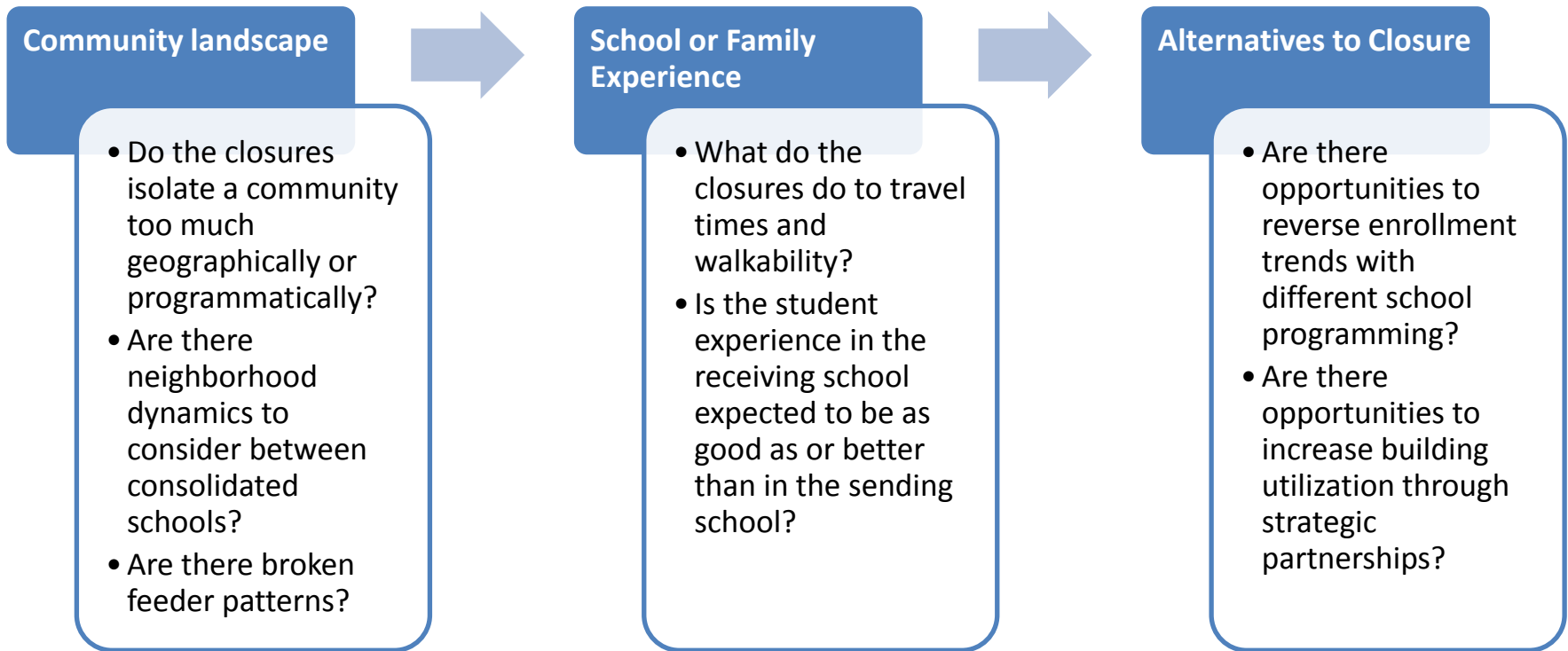


Relevant resource: Internal deliberation documents, facilities planning decks

*Review of 2012 materials indicate student outcomes was not a criteria included specifically in closure analysis

School and Community-Specific Feedback

After coming up with proposed closures, DCPS engaged the community for school, community, and family-specific context, as well as potential alternatives to closure.



Relevant resource: Consolidation and Re-organization Process Feedback presentations, forums, materials

*Review of 2012 materials indicate student outcomes was not a criteria included specifically in closure analysis

Past Processes: School Openings

After rounds of closures, DCPS has opened several new schools since 2008. Most openings were recommendations from the DME Boundaries and Feeders Process, reflecting both enrollment and facility analysis, as well as community feedback on

Many School Openings focused on re-structuring middle grades

- After 2008 closures, DCPS middle schools in Wards 4 and 5 closed; middle grades were consolidated into PK3-8 ECs.
- Community feedback in 2014 Boundaries and Feeders Process and prior strategic engagements (Ward 5 Great Schools Initiative) pushed back on this, calling for re-alignment to Elementary – Middle - High School feeder pattern
- This led to the planned and implemented openings of McKinley and Brookland Middle Schools in Ward 5 and MacFarland Middle School and New North (Coolidge) Middle School in Ward 4.
- Also proposed in 2014 B&F is Shaw MS (Ward 6), re-structured as standalone middle from 6-12 Cardozo EC

We've also looked at population growth to re-open schools

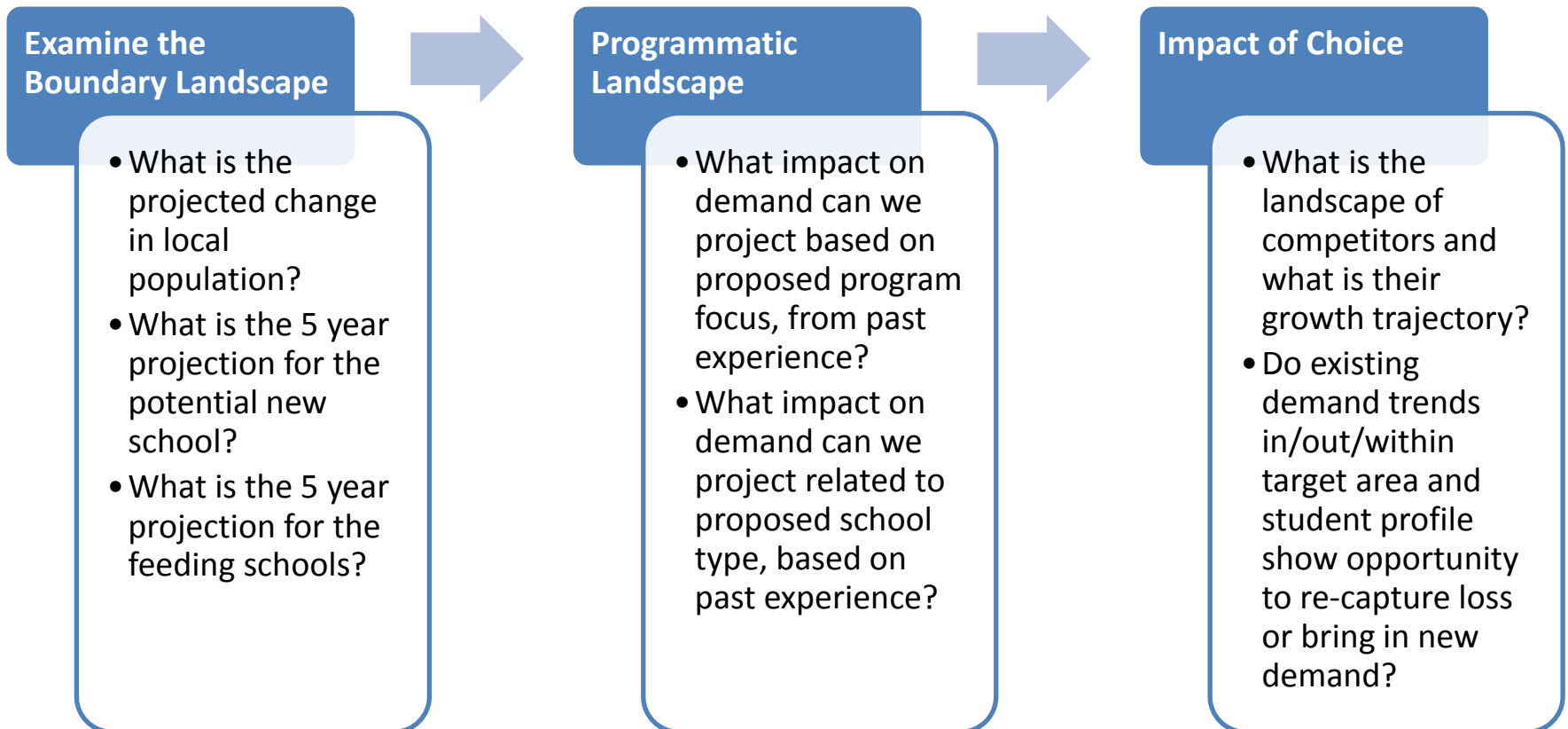
- Van Ness ES was opened in 2015 in anticipation of new growth in Capital Riverfront
- Marshall, Ferebee-Hope, and Kenilworth ES are closed schools that the boundary process has indicated may need to be reopened
- Population projections in the center-city, Petworth, Fort Totten, and Brightwood areas should be analyzed more specifically for potential expansion needs

Other Openings and Re-envisioning Projects have focused on programmatic rationale

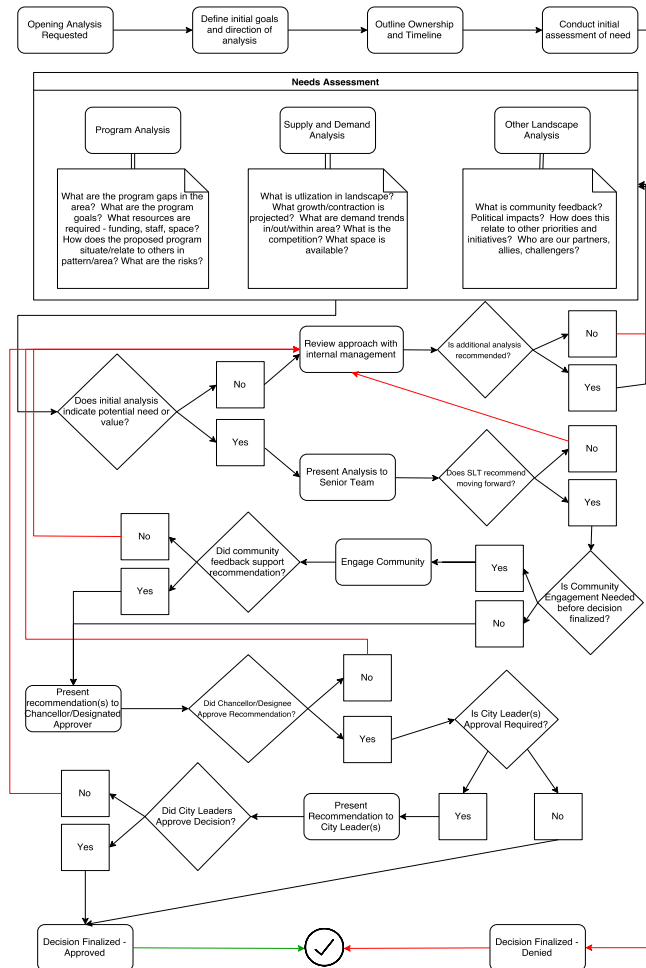
- MacFarland's Dual Language program was started early to provide a feeder pattern for 5th grade Dual Language classes
- Ron Brown HS was opened as part of an initiative to better support our young men of color
- Roosevelt and Coolidge are a focus of "re-envisionment" to increase enrollment and student outcomes and prevent move towards closures

Past Processes: Analyzing a Rationale for Opening

To explore opening a new school, DCPS has in the past developed an internal “portfolio decision” document to analyze a potential opening. Rationale analysis was largely focused on identifying sufficient enrollment demand for the new school.



Past Processes: Opening Decision Map



- Outside of the 2014 Boundaries and Feeders process, the decision-making process for Openings has largely occurred “one-off” – each school decision was made independently, not as part of a wider school portfolio assessment
- While over-simplified and more nuanced in practice, most decisions can be mapped as:
 - Initial analysis and proposal
 - Chief-level review
 - Community Engagement
 - Plan adjustments
 - Senior/Chancellor-level review
 - City leader review
 - Final decision

Looking Ahead: Potential for Coordinated District-wide Processes

Currently, there are two existing citywide processes focused on planning: the Master Facilities Plan, occurring every 5 years, and Boundaries and Feeders Revision Process, currently recommended to occur every 10 years.

Each could be enhancing by adding or incorporating a comprehensive academic plan that sets baseline expectations for school size, academic programming, and specialty offerings across DCPS (and potentially cross-sector).

Master Facilities
Planning

Boundaries and
Feeders Planning

*Comprehensive
Academic Plan
(ESSA accountability
informed)*

All Planning should be informed by, include, and be implemented in coordination with significant community engagement.

OFFICE OF PLANNING: HIGHLIGHTS FROM CURRENT PLANNING INFORMATION

FROM THE OFFICE OF PLANNING: *FORECASTING THE DISTRICT'S GROWTH*

- Analysis conducted approximately every 2 years; most recent analysis approved and adopted on November 9, 2016
- Forecasts err on the high side and represent “the intersection between demand and the supply’s ability to deliver built capacity that can absorb the demand”
- Includes forecasts for populations, households, and jobs
- To view the complete qualitative assumptions of the forecasts and for more information on the Office of Planning’s DC Forecasts, visit <https://planning.dc.gov/node/1212966>

FOLLOW-UP DATA AND INFORMATION

DME WORKING ON THESE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- What are examples of districts that have independent authorizers and frameworks/policies around coordinated opening/closing/siting for the traditional public and charter schools?
 - What are the student and district-wide outcomes for these districts?
 - What's the rate of increase in new charter school seat openings in these new cities?
 - What are the outcomes in these cities? How many schools has Philadelphia closed using its rightsizing policy?
- In districts with multiple authorizers, how are they making decisions about openings and closings across multiple authorizers?
- What does Denver do about transportation since all of its schools are choice?
- Is there a commitment in Denver to a certain outcome from the enrollment zone policy?
- How do they draw the enrollment zones in Denver? Are these zone drawn based on old attendance zones or are they based on there being more schools in some areas than in others?

DENVER ENROLLMENT ZONES

Goals/Outcomes

- Main goal when planning: great schools in every neighborhood
- Align enrollment zones with portfolio planning (i.e. planning with an eye toward existing “choice gaps”)
- Create enrollment zones where it is practical
- Consider walkability when drawing enrollment zones

Policies

- Students are guaranteed a seat in their enrollment zone
- Zones are drawn based on agreement to avoid “gerrymandering”
- Zones are designed to largely fill up with students living in that particular enrollment zone; designed to avoid having students cross zones to find schools that meet their needs

NEXT STEPS