

SMART GROWTH IN ACTION

Moore Square Museums Magnet Middle School

WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA



For the past several decades, the national trend in school construction has been big buildings on large sites, often on the outskirts of town. Increasingly, however, communities are realizing that taking a school out of a community can have unforeseen repercussions, ranging from lower home values to increased traffic congestion to loss of green space. In response, citizens, parents, and school administrators are calling for schools that fit the needs of individual communities. These people recognize that schools do more than house children for the day. They affect home-buying decisions and traffic patterns. They present opportunities to create neighborhood centers for education and civic life. The Moore Square Museums Magnet Middle School exemplifies this approach to school siting.

The Moore Square Museums Magnet Middle School is a new facility on a four-acre city block on the east side of downtown Raleigh (by contrast, the typical acreage for a comparable middle school in Raleigh and other cities in North Carolina is 25 acres or more). The school is in the larger Downtown East Residential Redevelopment Area, an area targeted for housing and community development. The site was assembled by removing several blighted and vacant structures. Despite the relatively small lot size, students have access to a full-sized gymnasium and two playing fields for daily physical education classes as well as intramural sports.

The school is drawing new residents and other redevelopment to the area, helping to stabilize the community. The school accommodates about 500 students in grades six through eight, many of whom applied specifically to attend the school. Its downtown location allows students to explore the cultural venues of the city. The school's partnerships with several museums and arts facilities enrich the curriculum with unique learning opportunities. Traditional downtown uses, including business, residential, and religious, also add to the stimulating learning environment. Only one block away from the school, Capital Area Transit system's bus center extends access to the school beyond adjacent neighborhoods, creating a socially and economically diverse student body. The school's location also allows students to get plenty of exercise as they walk to local museums as part of their daily routines.

The Moore Square Museums Magnet Middle School has generated substantial community support for increasing downtown investment, expanding residential opportunities within the city, and concentrating sensitive development within areas of existing infrastructure and service provision. The school won the 2003 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement in the Public Schools category (see www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/sg_awards_publication_final_10_17.htm).

SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES RALEIGH MAGNET MIDDLE SCHOOLS

#1	Includes Mixed Land Uses	
#2	Exhibits Compact Building Design	★
#3	Provides Range of Housing Types	
#4	Promotes Walkable Neighborhoods	✓
#5	Exhibits a Distinct Sense of Place	
#6	Preserves Open Space	✓
#7	Utilizes Existing Development	✓
#8	Provides Transportation Choices	✓
#9	Practices Fair Decision-making	✓
#10	Promotes Stakeholder Participation	✓

QUICK FACTS

Contact: George Chapman, Planning Director
City of Raleigh Planning Department
919-890-3654
george.chapman@ci.raleigh.nc.us

Location: Raleigh, North Carolina
Website: <http://mooresquarems.wcpss.net/>
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