



## 11. EDUCATION & SCHOOLS

DRAFT

### *LONG-TERM GOAL:*

**Preserve and enhance Hamilton's role as the center of public primary and secondary education for the local school district and regional center of post-secondary education that is accessible to the community at large so the opportunity for life-long learning is provided for the citizens of the City of Hamilton.**

### *INTRODUCTION:*

The City of Hamilton is served by the Hamilton City School District. Currently there are 18 principal public school buildings that house pupils located throughout the City. There is one high school (Hamilton HS), one freshman school, two middle schools, one alternate school and 13 elementary schools. In the fall of 2007, construction will begin on four of the eight new elementary schools that will replace the current 13 elementary schools by 2010-11. The school district garnered a “Continuous Improvement” rating and passed 19 of 30 indicators as outlined in the State Report card in the 2006-2007 school year. In addition, there are also several private schools located throughout the City of Hamilton including St. Peter in Chains, St. Joseph, St. Ann, St. Julie Billiart, Immanuel Lutheran, Hamilton Christian, Badin HS, and Richard Allen School. There is also a branch campus of Miami University of Ohio, located just south of downtown, with over 3,500 full and part-time students.

One of the key components to regional economic vitality is a skilled and educated workforce. More diversity of job skills and educational attainment within the region should create a more diverse job base that is able to adapt to changes in the economy.

Long-term economic changes in the region have led to decreases in employment in the manufacturing sector of the economy, with a corresponding growth in the education, service, and health care sectors. In order to stay competitive in the increasingly global economy the region needs to create a highly educated workforce with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

*“Strategic Regional Issue #21: Economic vitality depends on an education, skilled workforce.”*  
(OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.78)

In addition to the delivery of educational services, school facilities sometimes serve as the center of residential neighborhoods. This is especially true of Hamilton which has a long history of neighborhood based public elementary schools and playgrounds. As population densities and household sizes have changed some schools have seen populations increase while others have remained steady or declined. This has led to the consolidation of many smaller elementary schools into newer and larger facilities. Which has led to an excess of vacant school facilities, many of which have served as an anchor in many neighborhoods.

At the most basic level, the home environment and the neighborhood directly impact education and school quality. The relationship between schools and surrounding neighborhoods is well established. The OKI Strategic Regional Policy Plan noted that *“Distressed public school*



*districts affect and are affected by the surrounding neighborhoods.” (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.66) By the same measure, well performing schools affect and are affected by their surrounding neighborhood.*

*“Schools are a powerful prophecy for communities. Deepening poverty and other socioeconomic changes show up in schools before they do in neighborhoods and in elementary schools before junior high and high schools, as evidenced by the numbers of students eligible for free lunches. Elementary schools enrollment patterns sound an early warning of impending flight by the middle class, the first group to leave a neighborhood when schools fail.” (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.66)*

*“Perceived school quality is a key factor in attracting or retaining middle-class residents (and the businesses that cater to them) in our communities. Neighborhood stability also helps in maintaining property values, which in turn fund schools. When the perception of a school declines, it can set in motion a potentially vicious circle that ultimately affects the entire community.” (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.67)*

### **11.1 Overall Objectives:**

- A. The City of Hamilton should continue to champion effective Pre-K to 12 public education for all children within the City.
- B. The City of Hamilton should continue to support the continued presence and future expansion of the Miami University-Hamilton campus.
- C. The City of Hamilton should cooperatively work with the Hamilton City School District and other educational facilities in providing the highest level of educational services to the community that enhance the quality of life for the citizens of the City of Hamilton.



**Wilson Middle School**



***POLICIES, STRATEGIES and ACTIONS:***

**11.2 Economic Development**

**Objectives:**

- A. To produce and offer an adaptable and skilled work force for existing and prospective businesses through area educational facilities.
- B. Offer a high quality education for all residents of the City of Hamilton both young and old, keeping the intellectual levels of the residents high and vibrant.
- C. Maintain a high standard for education that keeps the City of Hamilton working towards the goal of a highly educated workforce capable of adapting to a changing job climate.

**Strategies:**

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Education and Schools section, the following strategies should be pursued by the City of Hamilton:

- *“Economic vitality depends on an educated, skilled workforce.” (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.78)*
- *“Without a skilled, educated workforce, businesses will not choose to locate in the region, which, in turn, effects the diversification of the job base, the maintenance of healthy industry clusters, the redevelopment of brownfields and other components of the economy.” (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.78)*
- *“The ability to get and keep a good job requires a range of basic skills that are necessary to meet workplace expectations. These may include skills as basic as a positive attitude and reliability/punctuality, as well as problem-solving and other cognitive skills, oral communication skills, and interpersonal and teamwork skills.” (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.79)*
- Educational opportunities for workforce development should include “soft skills” such as non-technical skills, abilities, and traits needed to function in the work environment.

**Actions:**

- A. The City of Hamilton should promote an alliance between area businesses and all area educational facilities to develop school-to-work programs that offer basic skills such as reading, writing, math, computer literacy, as well as simple communication and work ethic skills. To build a trained workforce, students should be informed of a variety of opportunities beyond high school and not just those that involve attending a university. Education programs should be developed which teach basic technological skills.



“Encourage educational counselors to emphasize alternatives to college education and establish a county-wide Technical High School.” (Hamilton Vision 2020, “Steering A Course to the Future” p.15)

- B. The City of Hamilton, along with the Chamber of Commerce, should examine ways to best avoid “brain drain” associated with young adults choosing to leave the area for places with more to offer in terms of opportunity and quality of life.

*“We also need to do a better job convincing our young adults to stay in the region after graduation, particularly the college educated. As an economic development committee in Philadelphia noted, ‘In today’s global economy, talent is highly mobile’, drifting towards the places with the most to offer in terms of opportunity and quality of life. Between 1990 and 2000, the young adult population (ages 20-34) in the OKI region declined 10.6 percent (-46,000). This ‘brain drain’ phenomenon is particularly impacting the technology-based portion of the economy, but it is also an issue in other economic sectors.” (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.80)*

According to the US Bureau of the Census, between 1990 and 2000, the City of Hamilton lost 2,059 residents between the ages of 20-34 years representing a –13.6 percent decrease.

### **11.3 Redevelopment and Infill Development**

With the passage of “Rebuilding Ohio’s Schools” by the Ohio General Assembly in 2000, there has been and continues a trend toward public school construction and rehabilitation as well as private schools throughout the state. With declining enrollments and specific construction requirements that favor consolidation of school facilities over renovation of individual schools, there have been a number of closures of once vibrant schools located in dense urban neighborhoods. Hamilton is not immune to this trend.

#### **Objectives:**

- A. If redevelopment and infill opportunities arise, educational facilities should be strategically placed throughout the City of Hamilton to provide a high level of service to residents.
- B. New and renovated educational facilities should be scaled to the neighborhood in order to achieve a more compact, pedestrian oriented development pattern that efficiently and safely serves the neighborhood where the school is located.
- C. The City of Hamilton and the School District should coordinate on identifying and designating future land uses to the vacant school facilities that are conducive to the stability of the neighborhood where they are located.

“Schools are part of the glue that holds communities together. As Darrell Rud, recent president of the National Association of Elementary School Principals put it, ‘You take out the school, and



that's the beginning of the decline of the neighborhood. You've got to have a school to have a neighborhood.' The school introduces people who would otherwise remain strangers to each other. In so doing, it helps build a sense of community, which is central to solving society's bigger challenges, education included." (Beumont and Pianca p.46)

The City of Hamilton should "Promote stable neighborhood schools as a focal point for all adults, children, civic groups, and businesses" (Smart Scorecard for Development Projects, Congress for New Urbanism and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2002)

**Strategies:**

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Education and Schools section, the following strategies should be jointly pursued by the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton City School District:

- Gaining the knowledge about the long-term benefits of neighborhood-centered schools such as long-term neighborhood stability, walkability, health and safety and how these factors positively influence educational and quality of life outcomes.

**Actions:**

- A. The City of Hamilton should encourage educational facilities that are neighborhood based and highly accessible that serve existing and future residents of the city.
- B. The City of Hamilton should work with educational providers on researching planning and development trends related to the benefits of neighborhood-based schools and their suitability in the City of Hamilton.
- C. The City of Hamilton and the School District should ensure that the future land uses of any vacant school facilities or sites are conducive to the stability of the neighborhood where they are located.



**11.4 Smart Growth School Development and Redevelopment**

**Objectives:**

- A. The City of Hamilton and educational providers in the city should focus on maintaining the viability of existing neighborhoods through the use and promotion of smart growth based schools. These schools could maintain neighborhood stability and most importantly can help to create a sustainable tax base for the city and schools.

**Strategies:**

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan’s Education and Schools section, the following strategies should be jointly pursued by the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton City School District:

- The establishment of new or redeveloped smart growth based schools in selected areas of the community could be used as a tool to revitalize and repopulate areas of town that have seen reductions in overall population and school age children. The smart growth concept recognizes the strong connection between development and quality of life.

**“What is a Smart Growth School?”**

Smart growth schools are diverse because they grow out of the needs of individual communities; they share these common characteristics:

- They are small in size and thus fit gracefully into the neighborhoods they serve.”
- They encourage broad community involvement in school facility planning.
- They provide high quality education.
- They are located within a neighborhood and are safe for children to walk or bike to.
- They act as a neighborhood center and support community use and participation during and after school hours.
- They are well designed and fit with the scale and design of the surrounding neighborhood.
- They make good use of existing resources, including older and historic school buildings, whenever possible. (McCann and Beumont p.2)

*“Local governments will use the goals, objectives, and policies of their comprehensive plan to encourage mixed use, transit-friendly development, where appropriate.” (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.64)*

**Actions:**

- A. The City of Hamilton should work directly with the education providers to ensure that schools are smart growth based schools appropriate in design and context to the neighborhood they serve.



## **11.5 School Location Patterns that Support Multiple Transportation Choices**

### **Objectives:**

- A. Schools in the City of Hamilton should be highly accessible and support multiple modes of transportation options.

### **Strategies:**

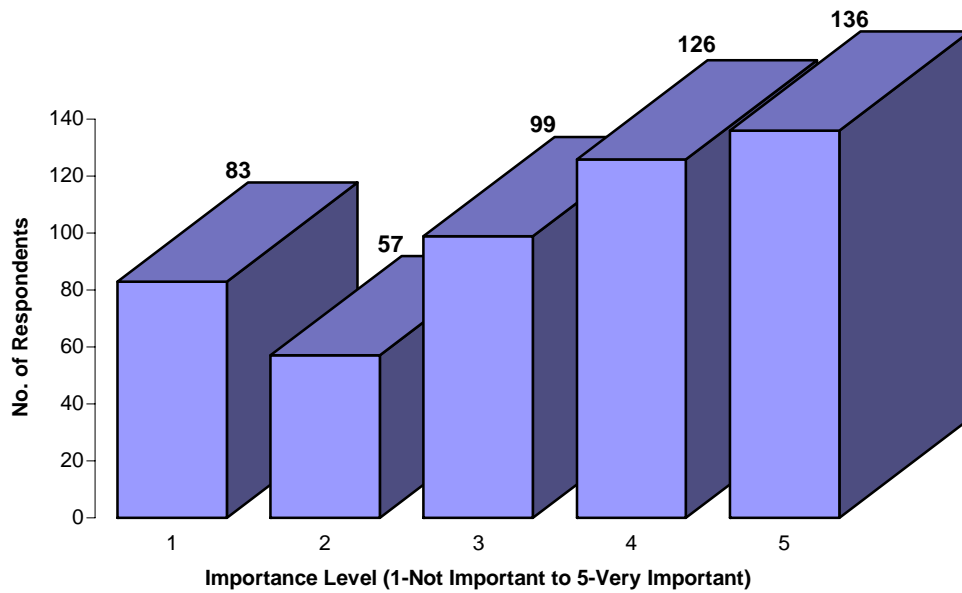
In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Education and Schools section, the following strategies should be jointly pursued by the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton City School District:

- Identify locations throughout the City of Hamilton that are missing sidewalks, or are in need of repair, in order to facilitate pedestrian movement between neighborhoods, schools, and public facilities.
- The City of Hamilton should partner/coordinate with education providers to ensure that all schools and facilities are interconnected with neighborhoods; to facilitate pedestrian accessibility; promote walking among the student population; to reduce bus transportation costs; and vehicular traffic.
- The City of Hamilton and education providers should work together to promote joint/shared uses of recreation facilities, and programs, by integrating schools facilities, park facilities and the surrounding neighborhoods through appropriate land use and site planning.

*“Local governments will consolidate public facilities and services to achieve economies of scale where feasible, or establish equitable inter-local agreements to provide for more efficient delivery of public facilities and services.” (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.99)*



**Figure 11A: Importance of Walkability to School**  
respondents aged 20 - 45 yrs.



Source: Vision 2020 Update, Resident Survey 2006

**Actions:**

- A. The City of Hamilton in conjunction with education providers should annually program funds for enhancing pedestrian accessibility between complimentary land uses such as school facilities and residential areas.
- B. The City of Hamilton in conjunction with education providers should create a Master Plan for the Safe Routes To School Program.



## **11.6 Coordination of Public Facilities and Services**

### **Objectives:**

- A. Schools are vital public facilities and provide a critical service to the community therefore they should be coordinated with land use planning and development in order to provide the greatest return and benefit to the community.
- B. *“In 2020, public facilities and services will be well coordinated and determined prior to land development and redevelopment. Such public facilities and services will include transportation, water, sewer, parks and storm water management systems.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.18)
- C. *“By 2012, new development will be guided toward areas of the region where centers of population and employment already exist, and where public facilities and services, roadways and other infrastructure have been expanded or are planned for expansion as outlined in local comprehensive plans.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.104)

### **Strategies:**

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan’s Education and Schools section, the following strategies should be jointly pursued by the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton City School District:

- Both the City of Hamilton and education providers should continually monitor the pattern and pace of development to ensure that adequate public facilities and services are provided to future development. In addition, the City of Hamilton should adhere to the future land use map to ensure that future land use patterns do not create barriers to the provision of public services.

### **Actions:**

- A. The City of Hamilton and education providers should work together to ensure that all schools are accessible from all existing and future areas of development within the city.
- B. The City of Hamilton should work on developing and sharing information related to its Capital Improvements Plans (CIP) for all public facilities and services to ensure that future improvements are coordinated for maximum efficiency and to achieve the greatest return on public investments as they relate to education facilities.
- C. Implement the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan regarding the creation of partnerships between the City of Hamilton, education facilities, and other entities for the provision of community recreation services.



## **11.7 University Commerce Park Opportunities**

### **Objectives:**

- A. To create an economically viable University Commerce Park, the City of Hamilton should partner/coordinate with Miami University-Hamilton campus, and other interests, on the future development and expansion of the campus to create a mixed use, academic, research/technology, business, and light-industrial focused development area.

### **Strategies:**

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Education and Schools section, the following strategies should be pursued by the City of Hamilton:

- The University Commerce Park area represents a unique development opportunity because of its proximity to the Miami University-Hamilton campus, Vora Technology Park, and Great Miami River. The future South Hamilton Crossing (Grand Boulevard/Marshall Avenue extension) will greatly increase accessibility to the area. The area would support commercial, research/technology, residential, office, light-industrial and educational land uses that will become a singular interconnected, viable community.

### **Actions:**

- A. Undertake a detailed study of University Commerce Park, Vora Technology Park, Miami University-Hamilton Campus, Lindenwald, and the nearby Riverfront areas, in coordination with the future South Hamilton Crossing to direct and encourage land uses and development in accordance with the Future Land Use Map.
- B. Create a mixed used overlay-zoning district to facilitate the development of the University/Technology Zone Mixed Use area.



## **11.8 Environment/Green Build**

### **Objectives:**

“The term “green building” describes more than just an actual building. “Green building” is a concept that includes the design of the structure, site selection, building methods, building materials and landscaping practices. Green building may also be referred to as “sustainable design” or “high-performance building.” (Ohio EPA, “Pollution Prevention by Building Green” p.1)

- A. Education facilities should use Green Building techniques for future renovations and new facilities, accessory open spaces, parks, athletic and recreational facilities.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “The built environment has a vast impact on the environment, human health, and the economy. By adopting green building strategies, we can maximize both economic and environmental performance. Green construction methods can be integrated into buildings at any stage, from design and construction, to renovation and deconstruction. However, the most significant benefits can be obtained if the design and construction team takes an integrated approach from the earliest stages of a building project. Potential benefits of green building can include:”

- **Environmental benefits**
    - “Enhance and protect biodiversity and ecosystems”
    - “Improve air and water quality”
    - “Reduce waste streams”
    - “Conserve and restore natural resources”
  - **Economic benefits**
    - “Reduce operating costs”
    - “Create, expand, and shape markets for green product and services”
    - “Improve occupant productivity”
    - “Optimize life-cycle economic performance”
  - **Social benefits**
    - “Enhance occupant comfort and health”
    - “Heighten aesthetic qualities”
    - “Minimize strain on local infrastructure”
    - “Improve overall quality of life”
- (Why Build Green? <http://www.epa.gov/greenbuilding/pubs/whybuild.htm>)



**Strategies:**

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Education and Schools section, the following strategies should be jointly pursued by the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton City School District:

- Green Build techniques should be used on school projects (such as facilities, grounds, etc.) in order to maximize the efficiency of benefits that the citizens receive.
- *“Local governments will enable the use of environmentally sensitive building practices<sup>56</sup> to integrate growth with protection of the region’s natural systems.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.56)
- *“**Environmentally sensitive building practices** typically involve fewer materials, less energy consumption, less pollution, less natural habitat loss and better indoor air quality.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.59)
- “This report documents the financial costs and benefits of green schools compared to conventional schools. This national review of 30 green schools demonstrates that green schools cost less than 2% more than conventional schools – or about \$3 per square foot (\$3/ft<sup>2</sup>) – but provide financial benefits that are 20 times as large. Greening school design provides an extraordinarily cost-effective way to enhance student learning, reduce health and operational costs and, ultimately, increase school quality and competitiveness.” (Kats p.4)

**Actions:**

- A. Education providers should use Green Building techniques for future renovations and new facilities, accessory open spaces, parks, athletic and recreational facilities.



## **11.9 Fiscal Responsibility**

### **Objectives:**

- A. The City of Hamilton should discourage education facility construction projects that create long-term financial liabilities for the city, such as roadway projects or utility extensions that are necessitated as a result of school construction along unimproved roadways or areas not served by public utilities.

### **Strategies:**

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Education and Schools section, the following strategies should be pursued by the City of Hamilton:

- Educate themselves and education providers on how the simple principle of sound, stable neighborhoods maintain property values that fund school activities.

*“Neighborhood stability also helps in maintaining property values, which in turn fund schools”.*  
(OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.67)

- The City of Hamilton should consider the long-term fiscal impacts of land use decisions by education providers, especially when considering deviations from the Future Land Use Map.

### **Actions:**

- A. The City of Hamilton should work with education providers to ensure that the locations of future facilities are not detrimental to the fiscal health of the city.
- B. The City of Hamilton should work closely with education providers to ensure that the reuse or development of vacated school sites is not detrimental to the overall fiscal health of the city.



## **11.10 Intergovernmental Cooperation**

### **Objectives:**

- A. They City of Hamilton should coordinate with education providers on the many issues that could affect the quality of life in the City's neighborhoods.

### **Strategies:**

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Education and Schools section, the following strategies should be jointly pursued by the City of Hamilton and its education providers:

- Actions that encourage local neighborhood organizations and governments to work together with education providers to improve neighborhoods and increase stability should be made.
- *Local governments and school districts will work together to identify and resolve crime and safety issues that affect surrounding neighborhoods, where appropriate. (OKI, Regional Strategic Policy Plan p.67)*
- Priority should be placed on clarifying perceptions of local school districts. *When the perception of a school declines, it can set in motion a potentially vicious circle that ultimately affects the entire community. (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.67)*
- The City of Hamilton and Hamilton School Board serve approximately the same population, therefore it is necessary for the two organizations to work together to promote and achieve the best possible use of publicly owned property, especially parks, open space, recreation facilities, and programs in which both governmental units have interests.

### **Actions:**

- A. Form a cooperative effort among the Economic Development Department, Chamber of Commerce and the School Board to develop educational programs oriented to career development and advancement particularly in technically oriented fields in demand by local employers.
- B. The City's Public Works and Planning Department should work closely with the Hamilton School District and with private schools to provide safe routes to schools via improvements in roadways, pedestrian ways, sidewalks, bicycle paths, etc.
- C. Encourage good communication between stakeholders and schools to better serve the needs of the neighborhood and promote a positive image. *Local governments will work with their school districts to address the actual and perceived problems associated with their students and the surrounding neighborhoods. (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.67)*



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## **Education & Schools Action List**

### **Economic Development:**

- A. The City of Hamilton should promote an alliance between area businesses and all area educational facilities to develop school-to-work programs that offer basic skills such as reading, writing, math, computer literacy, as well as simple communication and work ethic skills. To build a trained workforce, students should be informed of a variety of opportunities beyond high school and not just those that involve attending a university. Education programs should be developed which teach basic technological skills. “Encourage educational counselors to emphasize alternatives to college education and establish a county-wide Technical High School.” (Hamilton Vision 2020, “Steering A Course to the Future” p.15)
- B. The City of Hamilton, along with the Chamber of Commerce, should examine ways to best avoid “brain drain” associated with young adults choosing to leave the area for places with more to offer in terms of opportunity and quality of life.

### **Redevelopment and Infill Development:**

- A. The City of Hamilton should encourage educational facilities that are neighborhood based and highly accessible that serve existing and future residents of the city.
- B. The City of Hamilton should work with educational providers on researching planning and development trends related to the benefits of neighborhood-based schools and their suitability in the City of Hamilton.
- C. The City of Hamilton and the School District should ensure that the future land uses of any vacant school facilities or sites are conducive to the stability of the neighborhood where they are located.

### **Smart Growth School Development and Redevelopment**

- A. The City of Hamilton should work directly with the education providers to ensure that schools are smart growth based schools appropriate in design and context to the neighborhood they serve.

### **School Location Patterns that Support Multiple Transportation Choices**

- A. The City of Hamilton in conjunction with education providers should annually program funds for enhancing pedestrian accessibility between complimentary land uses such as school facilities and residential areas.
- B. The City of Hamilton in conjunction with education providers should create a Master Plan for the Safe Routes To School Program.



**Coordination of Public Facilities and Services**

- A. The City of Hamilton and education providers should work together to ensure that all schools are accessible from all existing and future areas of development within the city.
- B. The City of Hamilton should work on developing and sharing information related to its Capital Improvements Plans (CIP) for all public facilities and services to ensure that future improvements are coordinated for maximum efficiency and to achieve the greatest return on public investments as they relate to education facilities.
- C. Implement the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan regarding the creation of partnerships between the City of Hamilton, education facilities, and other entities for the provision of community recreation services.

**University Commerce Park Opportunities**

- A. Undertake a detailed study of University Commerce Park, Vora Technology Park, Miami University-Hamilton Campus, Lindenwald, and the nearby Riverfront areas, in coordination with the future South Hamilton Crossing to direct and encourage land uses and development in accordance with the Future Land Use Map.
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**Environment/Green Build**

- A. Education providers should use Green Building techniques for future renovations and new facilities, accessory open spaces, parks, athletic and recreational facilities.

**Fiscal Responsibility**

- A. The City of Hamilton should work with education providers to ensure that the locations of future facilities are not detrimental to the fiscal health of the city.
- B. The City of Hamilton should work closely with education providers to ensure that the reuse or development of vacated school sites is not detrimental to the overall fiscal health of the city.

**Intergovernmental Cooperation**

- A. Form a cooperative effort among the Economic Development Department, Chamber of Commerce and the School Board to develop educational programs oriented to career development and advancement particularly in technically oriented fields in demand by local employers.



- B. The City's Public Works and Planning Department should work closely with the Hamilton School District and with private schools to provide safe routes to schools via improvements in roadways, pedestrian ways, sidewalks, bicycle paths, etc.
  
- C. Encourage good communication between stakeholders and schools to better serve the needs of the neighborhood and promote a positive image. *Local governments will work with their school districts to address the actual and perceived problems associated with their students and the surrounding neighborhoods.* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.67)



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