



NASHVILLE AREA

Metropolitan Planning Organization

## MEDIA ADVISORY

### **Media Invited: National Experts to Present How-To on Locating Schools to Promote Children's Health, Reduce Congestion**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 15, 2010

**Media Contact:** Mary Beth Ikard, APR  
615.880.2452 | [ikard@NashvilleMPO.org](mailto:ikard@NashvilleMPO.org)

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.**— Nearly two-thirds of American children access their schools solely by automobile or bus, even though 35 percent of K-8 students live within just two miles of their school. School-related travel choices have a major impact on traffic congestion, air pollution, school district budgets, health outcomes, and quality-of-life. Through collaboration on school siting, the Nashville Area MPO is committed to helping Middle Tennessee communities build schools that better serve and support students, educators, parents, *and* communities.

**WHAT:** The Middle Tennessee region's **first-ever Symposium on School Siting**

**WHO:** National experts on school siting, including:

- ✓ Dr. David Salvesen, a researcher on collaborative school planning & Deputy Director, University of North Carolina Center for Sustainable Community Design (speaker)
- ✓ Matthew Dalbey, Smart Growth Program, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (speaker)
- ✓ Sharon Z. Roerty, Executive Director, National Center for Bicycling & Walking

A variety of key regional community stakeholders on the school siting issue, including:

- ✓ Betsy Crossley, Mayor, City of Brentwood
- ✓ Scott Foster, Mayor, City of Hendersonville
- ✓ Anthony Holt, Sumner County Executive
- ✓ Veronica Gunn, Chief Medical Officer, Tennessee State Dept. of Health
- ✓ Rick Canada, Director—Nutrition, Physical Activity & Obesity, Tenn. State Dept. of Health
- ✓ Jason Golden, COO & General Counsel, Williamson County Schools
- ✓ Don W. Morgan, Director, Center for Physical Activity & Health in Youth
- ✓ Kevin Fortney, Director—Facilities & Construction, Williamson County Schools
- ✓ Joe A. Edgens, Executive Director, Facilities & Operations, Metro Nashville Public Schools
- ✓ Arnold VonHagen, Director of Planning & Construction, Metro Nashville Public Schools

**WHEN:** Tuesday, January 19, 2010; 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Martin Professional Development Center, 2400 Fairfax Avenue; Nashville, Tenn.

**WHY:** In 1969, less than 20 percent of children arrived at school by private vehicle, with 40-plus percent arriving by walking or biking. By 2001, 50 percent of children were arriving at school by private vehicle, with only a mere 20 percent walking or biking. Meanwhile, an estimated 19 to 30 percent of Tennessee school students are overweight, and 25 to 43 percent of Tennessee school students are at risk for being overweight. With the average child getting less than 15 minutes of vigorous activity a day, factors such as school location play a *significant* role in decreased rates of *routine* physical activity – school siting policy changes may help to increase the number of children who are able to walk or bike to school. Tennessee ranks 48th among states for overall health, and received a grade of 'F' from *Report Card: State Efforts to Control Childhood Obesity*.