

## INFORMATION SHEET – A GUIDE TO SCHOOL MASTER PLANS

This guide provides a check-list of things to consider in the development of a Facilities Master Plan for a new or existing school.

Proposed school projects must be consistent with sound Educational and Facilities Planning. A Facilities Master Plan is a vision for the future physical development of a school, its buildings, other site infrastructure, and provision of services.

A Facilities Master Plan must be driven by a well-developed Educational Plan for the school. (*Refer also to the SAIS BGA Policy and Guidelines*)

### EDUCATIONAL PLAN

Undertaken by the school management (senior staff / Board) in consultation with other stakeholders as necessary (which could include staff, parents, students and the wider community).

An Educational Plan should include consideration of the following:

- Mission and vision. The core values, philosophy and goals for the school.
- Desired education outcomes.
- Statutory requirements and changes (eg National Curriculum)
- Religious beliefs or philosophy to be embraced.
- Teaching and learning pedagogy.
- Year levels to be catered for.
- Sub-divisional groupings (eg early learning, middle schooling).
- Class sizes.
- Integration / separation of subject areas (eg specialist faculties to be together or dispersed).
- Desired enrolment growth, maximum enrolment.
- Future plans for expansion in year levels, streams etc.
- Any unique curriculum offerings or programs (eg Montessori, Reggio Emilia or International Baccalaureate).
- Any specialisation in particular curricular programs.
- Relationships and programs undertaken with the local community (eg local business, community groups, church).
- Context within the community that the school exists.
- Implications of any anticipated changes to any of the above over time.
- Understanding the difference between educational trends and fads.

Much of this information may already be covered in existing documents such as State Registration requirements, but it is important to have considered them, as the site and Facilities Planning must be based on the education needs.

The school's Business Plan for expenditure on capital works also needs to be considered to ensure that any Facilities Plans have a sound financial basis.

### FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

Undertaken by Planning, architectural and building design professionals in conjunction with school management. It will be necessary to work closely with the designers to meet the requirements of the Education Plan. It is important for the school to be confident in insisting on an outcome that it is comfortable with. The best plans come from a close collaboration between educators and designers who appreciate each other's skills.

A Facilities Master Plan will have different considerations for a new site, compared with one that contains existing buildings.

A good Master Plan flows from a clear understanding of the Education Plan and an analysis of the site features and constraints. Consideration of the following should be given by those undertaking the Master Planning:

- Site Planning
  - Existing site features – land slopes, water courses, stormwater flows, significant trees and other plantings - on the site and on adjoining sites.
  - Neighbouring properties, their current and potential developments and any impact that may have on the school.
  - Existing buildings and their suitability for inclusion in current and future development.

- Other existing site infrastructure.
  - Any existing site easements.
  - Water, sewer, stormwater, electricity and gas services at the site boundaries - their locations and capacities to meet future development needs on the site.
  - IT services – copper cabling, optical fibre cabling, wireless coverage
  - Public entrance locations and the image to be created for the school.
  - Desired access points for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles.
  - Local Government Development Plan requirements and constraints.
  - Preferred building locations, including room for expansion with permanent and temporary buildings.
  - Locations of formal and informal playing areas (grassed and paved), including their desirable orientations (north-south preferred).
  - Locations of and relationships between general learning, specialist learning, administration and recreation buildings.
  - Car parking access and provisions, and service / emergency vehicle access.
  - Student pick-up and set-down.
  - Bicycle and pedestrian access and paths.
  - Separation of pedestrian and vehicle access routes.
  - Disability access requirements around the site and to buildings.
  - Shed and shelter locations and requirements.
  - Play grounds, seating / eating areas.
  - Desirable views from buildings.
  - Site security and any fencing requirements.
  - Summer and winter winds (take advantage of desirable ones and protect from undesirable ones).
  - Consideration of sites for relocatable / temporary buildings and their ease of being installed and removed.
- Building Planning
    - Single and multi-storey options and implications.
    - Building orientations and proportions for desirable natural passive environmental design provisions.
    - Locations of building entrances.
    - Relationships between buildings.
    - Relationships between buildings and outdoor areas.
    - Implications of staging new building and redevelopment projects, including builder's access for future building works.
    - Assessment of existing buildings for suitability for redevelopment or demolition.
    - Security and safety issues.
    - Compliance with SAIS-BGA building standards
    - Understanding the difference between building design trends and fads.

**Not all of the above will need a detailed assessment at the time of developing a Master Plan, but should at least be considered as to their implications.**

The simplicity or complexity of a Facilities Master Plan will be determined by the size of the school, its stage of development and the clarity of the Education Plan for the future. A satisfactory Master Plan could be a simple line diagram indicating likely placement of future facilities, or it could be a detailed, complex map of future development.

Ensure that all stakeholders are included in the conversations at the various levels of development of the Education and Facilities Plans. This could include parents and students where appropriate.

A Master Plan is a broad framework of anticipated future needs and developments at a particular point in time, and should be regularly reviewed and updated. Don't be afraid to change it - it is a living document. As such it should not include too much detailed information, as this will reduce the desire to make changes. The Master Plan must be current and relevant to be useful.

A Master Plan should also be costed by a Quantity Surveyor (QS) to allow it to be synchronised with a school's Business Plan. Costing the stages or key components will enhance the annual Capital Expenditure Budget and make the Financial Forecasts more valuable.

A Facilities Master Plan should be used as the basis to determine the scope of work for any proposed building project and to brief the architect / building designer accordingly.

A Master Plan can be used as a marketing tool for the school.

*Originally prepared by Andrew Tidswell, and updated by him in February 2015.*

If at any time you have questions about the above process, please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Officer on (08) 8179 1406.