

# KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS

ANDREW JOHNSON BUILDING

*Buzz Thomas, Interim Superintendent*



## Memorandum

To: Chair and Members  
Knox County Board of Education

From: Buzz Thomas *BZ*  
Interim Superintendent

Date: February 24, 2017

Subject: Preliminary Middle School Zoning Proposal

### **Background**

In 2015, the Board of Education approved the construction of two new middle schools in Knox County. Those schools are under construction in the Gibbs and Hardin Valley communities and are scheduled to open in August 2018. This necessitates redrawing the middle school attendance zones to assign students to these schools. It also presents an opportunity to examine other middle school zoning concerns that may exist in the areas affected by the development of the two new school attendance zones.

### **Public Comment and Zone Planning Considerations**

In preparation for developing the new school zoning plan recommendation, we conducted six public meetings to hear parent and community concerns and suggestions. We have also received a number of comments and concerns submitted via a special e-mail address that was created for this purpose. While the insight offered was broad and varied, parent concerns generally focused on the following areas:

- Providing alignment with elementary and high school attendance zones to the extent possible
- Developing zones that would assign students to schools closest to their homes

- Ensuring there was a level of “grandfathering” of upper grade level students and their siblings to their current middle school
- Limiting the number of students affected by the rezoning proposal to the least number feasible

In addition to the specific comments we received regarding the middle school zones, we also received a number of comments about other zoning issues that parents, students and community members have identified. We received comments concerning the far southwest section of the Hardin Valley Academy zone and the community’s desire to see this area rezoned to Farragut High School. Community members also expressed an interest in examining the Dogwood Elementary School zone with an eye to rezoning students in the northernmost portion of the zone to Green and Sarah Moore Green Elementary Schools. While I do not believe it is appropriate to consider these actions as part of the middle school zoning process, I do believe the Board should have a community discussion about the prudence and desirability of these actions in the fall of 2017.

The feedback of our parents, teachers and community members has been incredibly valuable in developing this preliminary proposal. In addition to this public input there are several other factors that we must also consider as we develop school zones. These include:

- Functional capacity of the affected schools
- Population trends and projected enrollment
- Ensuring adequate capacity for potential future enrollment growth
- Location of Parent Responsibility Zones (PRZ)
- Time and distance factors for transportation
- Natural and manmade boundaries that affect school access
- Location of the new school facilities

Based on these factors and the significant community comment, we have developed a preliminary re-zoning proposal. This proposal establishes attendance zones for the new Hardin Valley and Gibbs Middle Schools and adjusts the attendance zones for Farragut, Karns, Holston,

Carter, Vine and South-Doyle Middle Schools. Since we are developing school zones for two new middle schools and recommending adjustments to several others, I will address the recommendations in three geographic groups.

Additionally, this plan proposes to allow the “grandfathering” of rising eighth grade students, and their siblings currently enrolled in middle school, if they apply for a “grandfathering transfer” back to their original school. This “grandfathering transfer” would not include transportation provided by the Knox County Schools. Under this proposal, eligible families would need to apply for the grandfathering transfer by the end of the regular student transfer window in February of 2018.

#### **Hardin Valley, Karns and Farragut Middle Schools**

The new Hardin Valley Middle School will have a capacity of approximately 1200 students, and its location on Hardin Valley Road is well within the existing Karns Middle School zone. This obviously necessitates a change to the Karns Middle School attendance zone. There are only a few impediments to access or transportation that would affect this zone development. However, we believe it is important to address the continuity of student progression through the various grade levels to the extent possible. We must also consider current enrollment at the other middle schools in the area as well as future projected population growth and enrollment.

The Attachment A map depicts the zone proposed for the new Hardin Valley Middle School. The zone encompasses all of the current Hardin Valley Elementary School zone. It also includes that portion of the Ball Camp Elementary School zone which is east of Pellissippi Parkway and north of Lovell Road to the intersection of Ball Camp Byington Road and Middlebrook Pike moving eastward on Middlebrook Pike to the intersection of Hoyle Beals Drive, along the rear boundaries of parcels situated along Trails End Road, Nutgrove Lane, Campfire Drive, Totanka Drive, Wayside Road, and Bisbee Lane.

The new HVMS zone would continue along the rear boundaries of parcels situated along Hitching Post Drive to the intersection with Ball Camp Pike and along the rear boundaries of parcels situated along Daybreak Drive and Ball Camp School Road and then along the rear of the

northern boundaries of parcels situated along Middlebrook Pike to the intersection with Ball Camp Byington Road and Hardin Valley Road.

Additionally, the proposed zone would encompass all of the current Farragut Middle School zone that is north of I-40/75 and that portion of the zone south of I-40/75 west of Pelissippi Parkway and north of Kingston Pike and east of Lovell Road. All students in this area are currently zoned to attend Hardin Valley Academy.

These actions would reduce the population of Karns Middle School to about 900 and Farragut Middle School to about 1300 based on projections for 2018. It would also zone most of the projected population growth for the area into Hardin Valley Middle School. The total initial projected student population for Hardin Valley Middle School would be about 850 students.

#### **Gibbs and Holston Middle Schools**

The new Gibbs Middle School will have a capacity of approximately 600 students. Its location on Tazewell Pike is deep within the current Holston Middle School zone necessitating a change to this zone.

The Attachment B map depicts the zone proposed for the new Gibbs Middle School. The zone encompasses all of the current Gibbs and Corryton Elementary School zones. All students in this area currently are zoned for Holston Middle School. This action would zone approximately 500 students to Gibbs Middle School based on projections for 2018.

#### **Vine, Carter, South-Doyle and Holston Middle Schools**

During the community meetings in November, December and January, we heard clearly from many community members that it is important for children to attend “their community school.” Opening the new Gibbs Middle School presents an opportunity for us to examine the Vine, Carter, Holston and South-Doyle Middle Schools’ attendance zones in an effort to provide students an educational experience in closer proximity to their homes. It also allows us to reduce the student population at Carter Middle School to a size that is much closer to the school’s intended capacity.

The Attachment C map depicts the proposed zones for Vine, Carter, South-Doyle and Holston Middle Schools. Most of the students who live north of the Tennessee River and who are currently zoned to South-Doyle Middle School would be rezoned to attend Vine Middle School. Many of these students live within the 1.5 mile Parent Responsibility Zone (PRZ) for Vine Middle School. The exceptions would be those students residing on parcels located on Boyd's Bridge Pike from the Holston River to Holston Hills Road continuing north on Holston Hills Road and west to include both sides of Riverview Drive until the intersection of Riverview Road and Brooks Avenue who will be rezoned to Holston Middle School.

Additionally, parts of the current Carter and Holston Middle School zones will be rezoned to Vine Middle School. This area begins at the railroad tracks on Prosser Road and runs along Lakeside Avenue to the intersection with Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, then proceeds east to the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue and Fern Street. It then continues south along the rear of the parcels on the west side of Fern Street to the intersection of Beaman Lake Road and Skyline Drive. From this point it proceeds west to include parcels adjacent to Skyline Drive, Cherry Hill Avenue and Andes Road to its intersection with Boyd's Bridge Pike.

In another recommended action depicted on the Attachment C map, students zoned for Carter Middle School who reside west of the Holston River and not part of the rezoning to Vine Middle School would be rezoned to Holston Middle School. This action will reduce the student population at Carter Middle School to a number more consistent with its intended capacity and will assign all students residing in the Holston Middle School Parent Responsibility Zone (PRZ) to Holston Middle School.

These actions would bring the approximate student population for Vine Middle School to about 550 students, South-Doyle Middle School to about 850 students, Holston Middle School to about 575 students, and Carter Middle School to 650 based on the projections for 2018.

### Resulting Attendance Zone Enrollment/Population Projections

The table below illustrates the various schools' current and projected enrollment:

Middle School	Enrollment as of January 2017	Approximate Projected Re-zoned Enrollment for 2018
Hardin Valley	0	850
Farragut	1436	1300
Karns	1485	900
Gibbs	0	500
Vine	333	550
Holston	874	575
South-Doyle	989	850
Carter	828	650

### Proposed “Grandfather” Provisions and Process

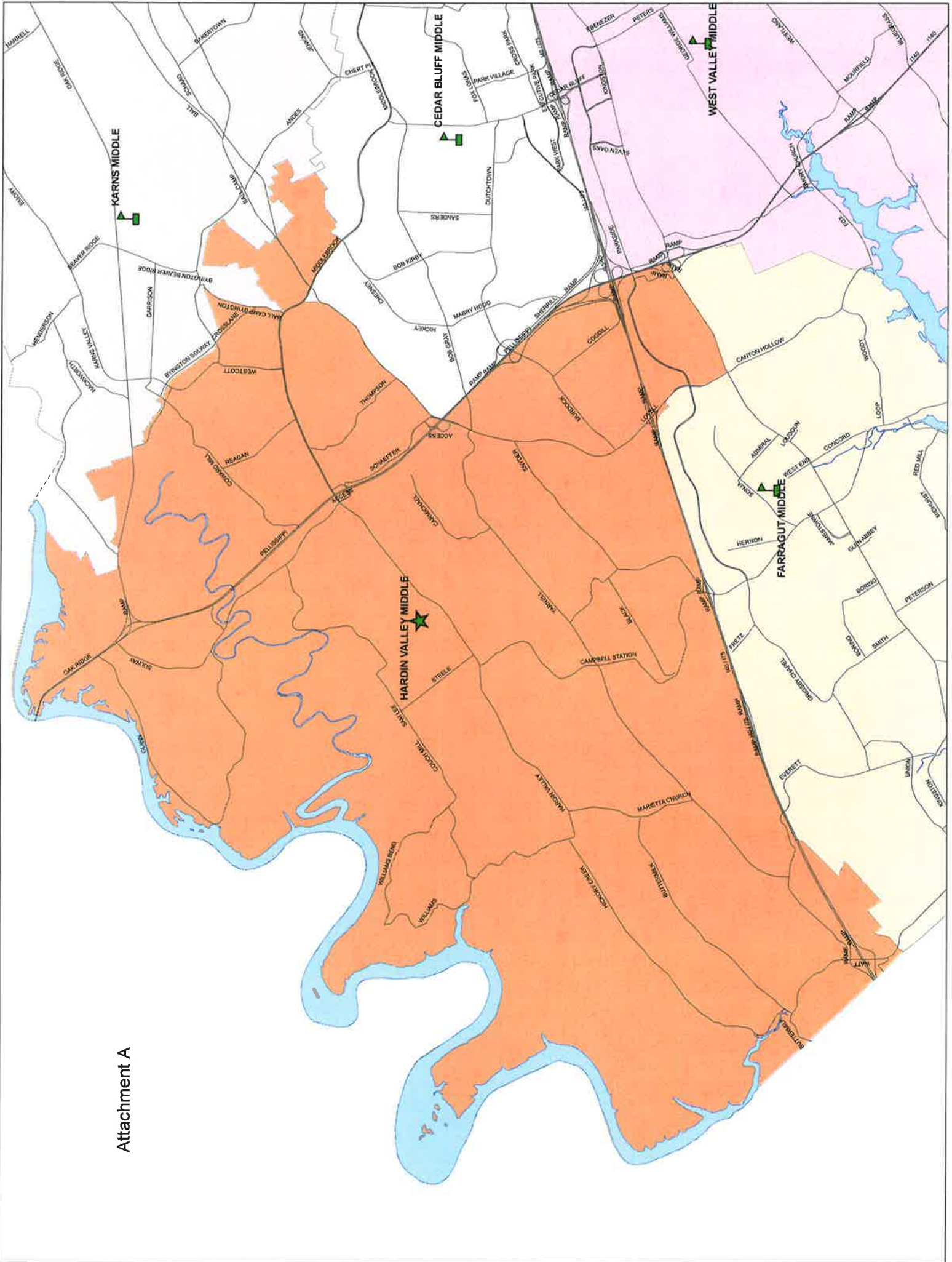
We received significant comment in community meetings on the issue of whether some population of students who were re-zoned to another school should be allowed to remain at their current school. A strong preference was expressed around allowing re-zoned rising eighth grade students to remain at their current school, commonly known as “grandfathering.” Additionally, parents expressed an interest in allowing siblings of grandfathered students to remain at the current school.

While grandfathering certainly can create significant logistical and planning challenges, there can also be considerable value in the practice. For that reason, we are proposing a process that allows for grandfathering, within the context of a controlled procedure that will limit uncertainty and enable effective planning. This “grandfathering transfer” would allow rising eighth graders (and their middle school enrolled siblings) who have been re-zoned to apply to remain at their current school. Families would be required to apply for this grandfathering transfer by the end of the regular student transfer window in February 2018. Otherwise, their children would be required to attend the school to which they are newly zoned. Transportation would not be provided to students who are granted grandfathering transfers.

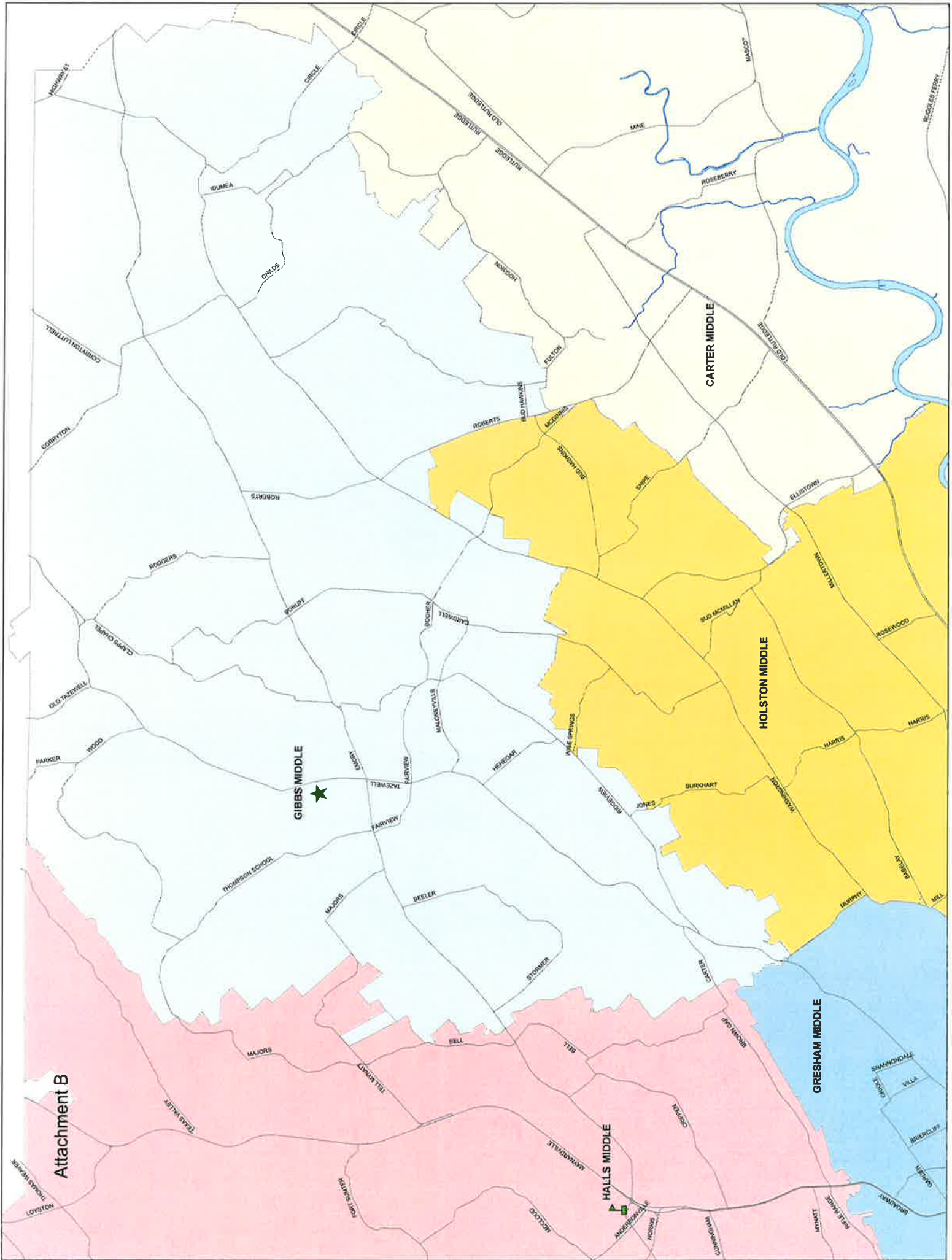
**Conclusion**

The construction of two new middle schools in Knox County is proceeding as scheduled. We still expect to open these new schools in August 2018. With these new schools comes the opportunity and challenge of drawing new enrollment zone lines for middle schools in several areas of Knox County. We have been deliberate about soliciting and listening to input from parents and other stakeholders and have integrated that feedback into this preliminary proposal. In the coming weeks, we will again seek community comment and bring a final recommendation to the Board of Education later in the spring.

Attachment A







Attachment B

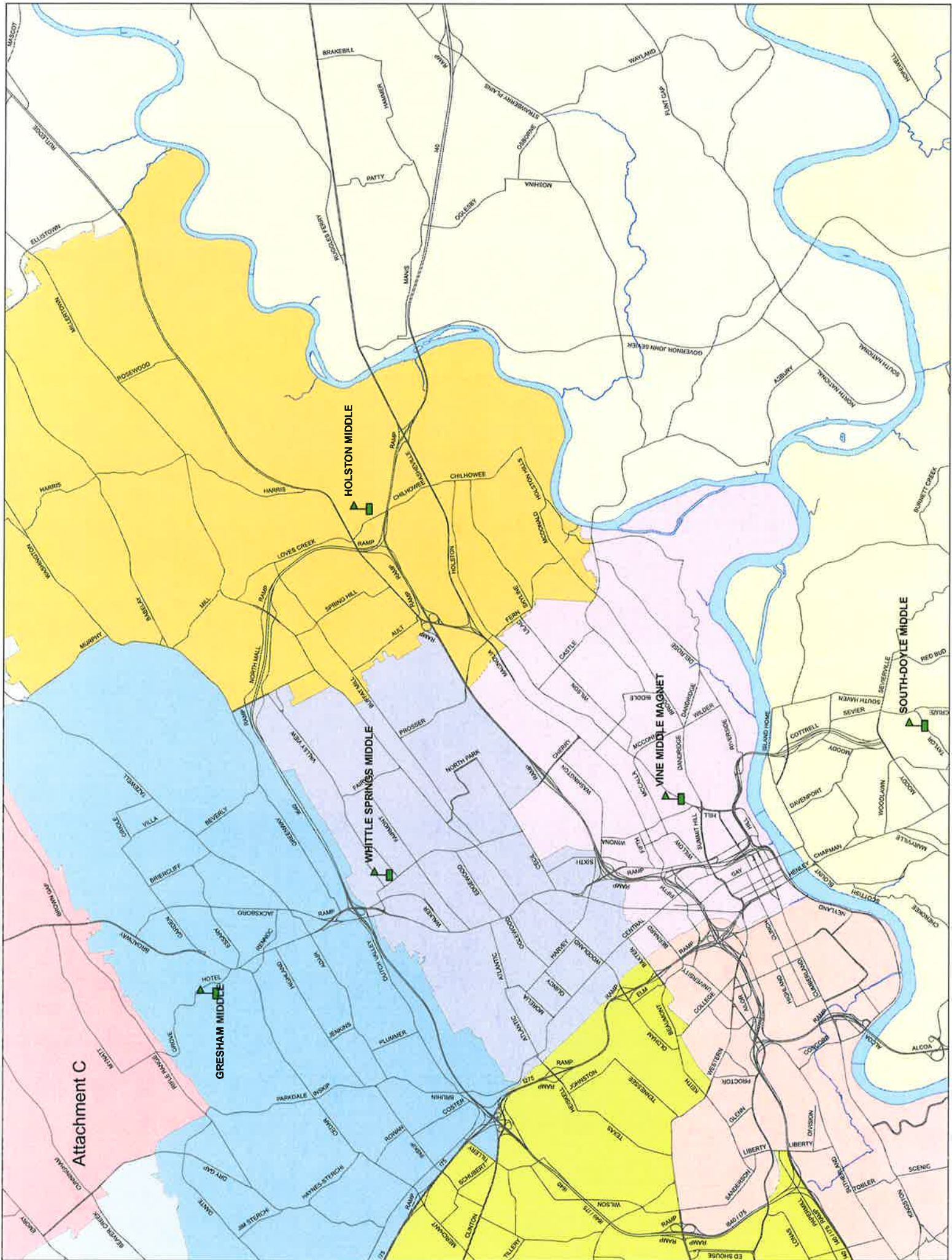
GIBBS MIDDLE

CARTER MIDDLE

HOLSTON MIDDLE

HALLS MIDDLE

GRESHAM MIDDLE



Attachment C