



Arlington
Public
Schools



Update on Planning Unit Boundaries

August 2017

MORE Seats for
Students

Agenda

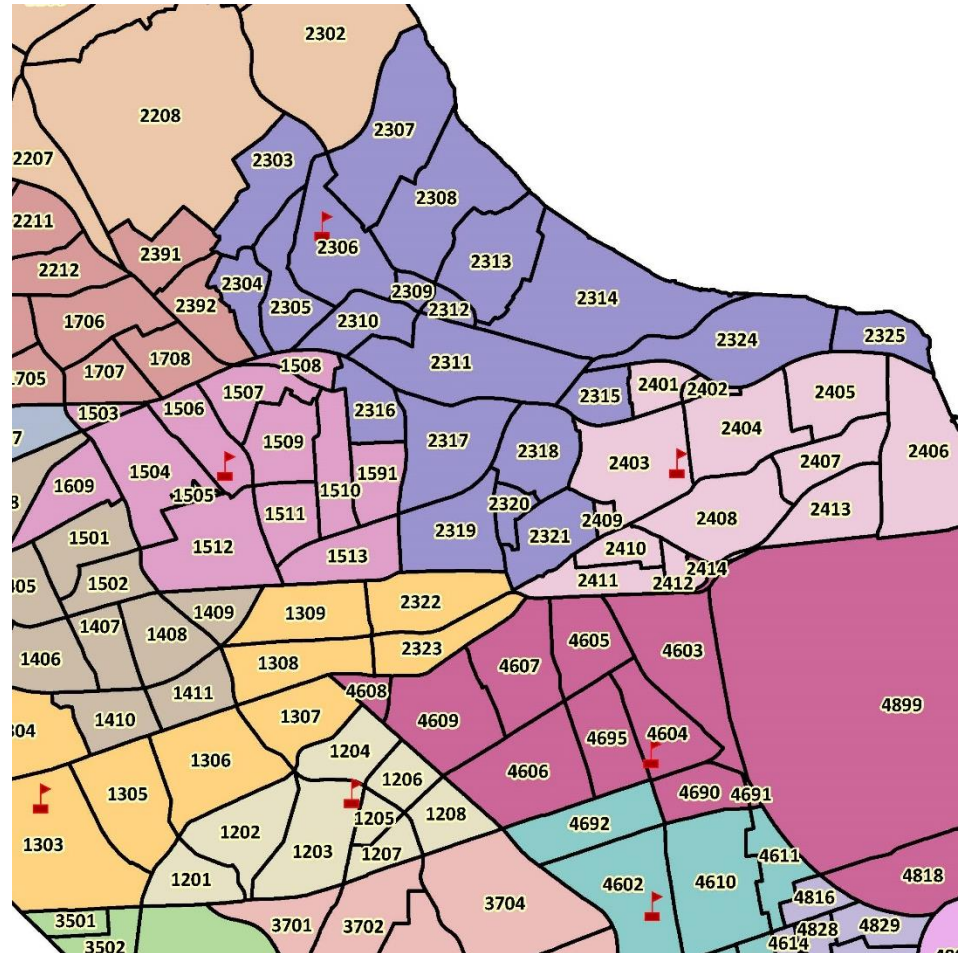
- Background
- Planning Unit Study
- Consultant's Assessment & Evaluation
- Recommended Planning Unit Adjustments
- Next Steps

- Over the past 5 school years total enrollment increased by nearly 4,300 students from 21,841 to 26,152 students.
- School boundary changes are inevitable as new schools are being constructed to accommodate our growing student body.
- Enrollment growth in the district has grown such that the number of elementary students residing in a planning unit varies from 0 to 294.
 - Planning units are the building blocks of neighborhood school attendance boundaries

- When planning units (PU's) are too large they become difficult to reassign in a boundary change process.
- Large planning units can limit the number of boundary change configurations available in the decision-making process.
- We need to re-size planning units so they're not too large, but also take into consideration the sense of neighborhood and school walkability.

What are Planning Units?

- The building blocks of neighborhood school attendance boundaries
- APS Planning units were created in 2000-01 based on a Fairfax County model
- Currently 216 planning units county-wide
- Bounded by existing landmarks, large apartment buildings, garden apartment complexes and/or major roads



- APS issued an RFP to provide professional services for **evaluation** of and **recommendations** for attendance zone boundaries
- Cropper GIS was selected to perform the planning unit study
- The firm's expertise is in demographic studies, K-12 school redistricting, long-range facility planning, and GIS Implementation/Training.

Cropper Client List

- **Alexandria City Public Schools**, Virginia
- **Henrico County Public Schools**, Virginia
- **Richmond City Schools**, Virginia
- Allegheny County Public Schools, Virginia
- Union County Public Schools, North Carolina
- Brunswick County Public Schools, North Carolina
- Charleston County Public Schools, South Carolina
- **U.S. Department of Justice**, Civil Rights Division
- Baltimore County Public Schools, Maryland
- Frederick County Public Schools, Maryland
- Billings Public Schools, Montana
- Helena Public Schools, Montana
- Elmhurst School District 205, Illinois
- Community Consolidated School District 59, Illinois
- DeKalb District 428, Illinois
- Downers Grove District 58, Illinois
- Morton School District 709, Illinois
- Unit 5 School District, Illinois
- Marion Community Unit Schools #2, Illinois
- Champaign Community Unit Schools #4, Illinois
- Ohio School Facilities Commission, Ohio
- Akron Public Schools, Ohio
- Hamilton City Schools, Ohio
- Lakota Local Schools, Ohio
- South-Western City Schools, Ohio
- Westerville City Schools, Ohio
- Wellesley Public Schools, Massachusetts
- Nantucket Public Schools, Massachusetts
- Warwick Public Schools, Rhode Island
- Barrington Public Schools, Rhode Island
- Saratoga Springs Public Schools, New York
- Corning Painted Post School District, New York
- Buffalo Public Schools, New York
- Atlanta Public Schools, Georgia
- Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools, Georgia
- Cobb County Schools, Georgia
- DeKalb County Schools, Georgia
- Baton Rouge Parish Schools System, Louisiana
- Meridian City Schools, Mississippi

Why update planning units now?

- Proactively respond to community concerns of planning units aligning better with neighborhoods and walk zones
- Familiarize the community with the updated planning unit boundaries before the start of next school year
- **Middle school boundary change process** slated for **Fall 2017**, will **reassign nearly 1,000 middle students** due to the opening of the new middle school at Stratford.
- **Elementary boundary change process** slated **Winter 2017**, will **reassign hundreds of elementary students** due to the opening of the new elementary school at the Jefferson site and the Montessori program move opening up seats at Drew.

- **APS 3 to 5 Year Action Plan**
 - Help families, community, and staff understand the bigger picture
- **APS Capital Improvement Plan**
 - Completed opposite years of AFSAP
 - New schools require boundary changes to balance enrollment and relieve crowding



Study Areas

The building blocks for creating school attendance boundaries

Planning
Units

Arlington
Co., VA

Planning
Zones

Loudoun
Co., VA

School
Analysis
Zones

Montgomery
Co., MD

Census*
Tracts

Henrico Co.,
VA

Planning
Blocks

City of
Alexandria,
VA

*Note: Does not align perfectly with U.S. Census tracts.

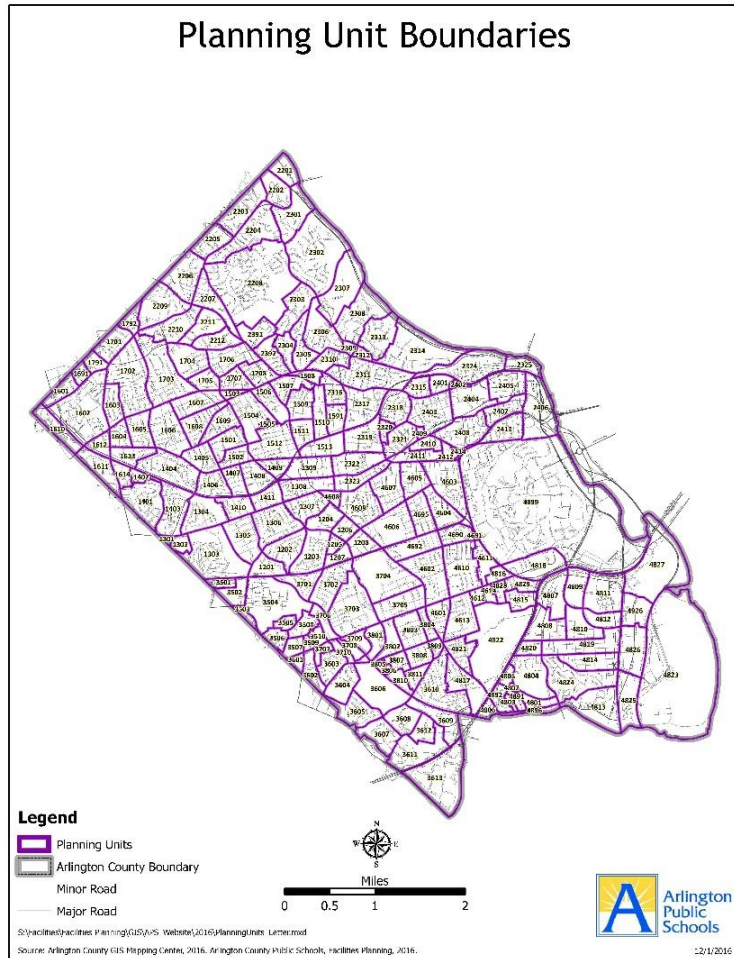
Consultant's Assessment of Existing Planning Units



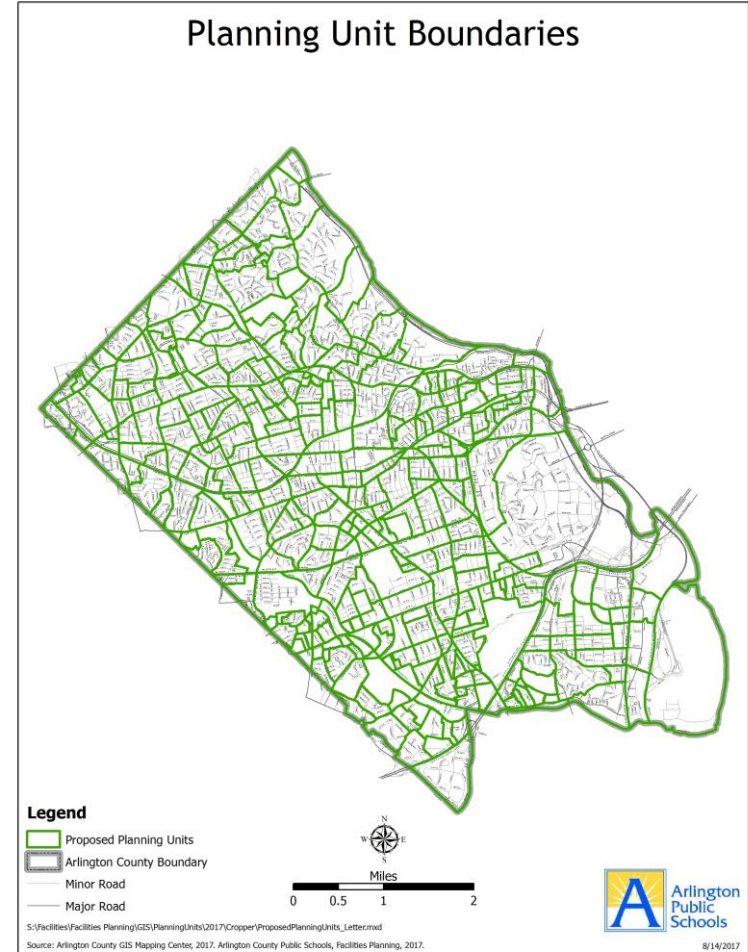
- **Meets industry standards in most cases**
- Some planning units should be further subdivided to create more flexibility for upcoming boundary processes

Map of Current vs Recommended

Current Planning Units



Recommended Planning Units



Planning Unit Comparison

Current PU Boundaries

- 216 planning units

Average students per unit

- Elementary Students : 59
- Middle Students: 25
- High Students: 31

Recommended PU Boundaries

- 346 planning units

Average students per unit

- Elementary Students: 37
- Middle Students: 16
- High Students: 19

Note:

Planning unit adjustments took into consideration existing attendance boundaries, student population totals, civic association boundaries, and alignment of both sides of roads for selected cul-de-sacs.

Additional planning unit adjustments wherever possible to further:

- Split oversized planning units
- Align with both sides of minor roads in the same planning unit
- Align with census blocks
- Align with civic association boundaries

Planning Unit Numbering System

Because large planning units were split into smaller planning units, it was necessary to add an extra digit to the previous planning unit boundaries to denote the “parent” planning unit that the “child” planning unit(s) originated from.

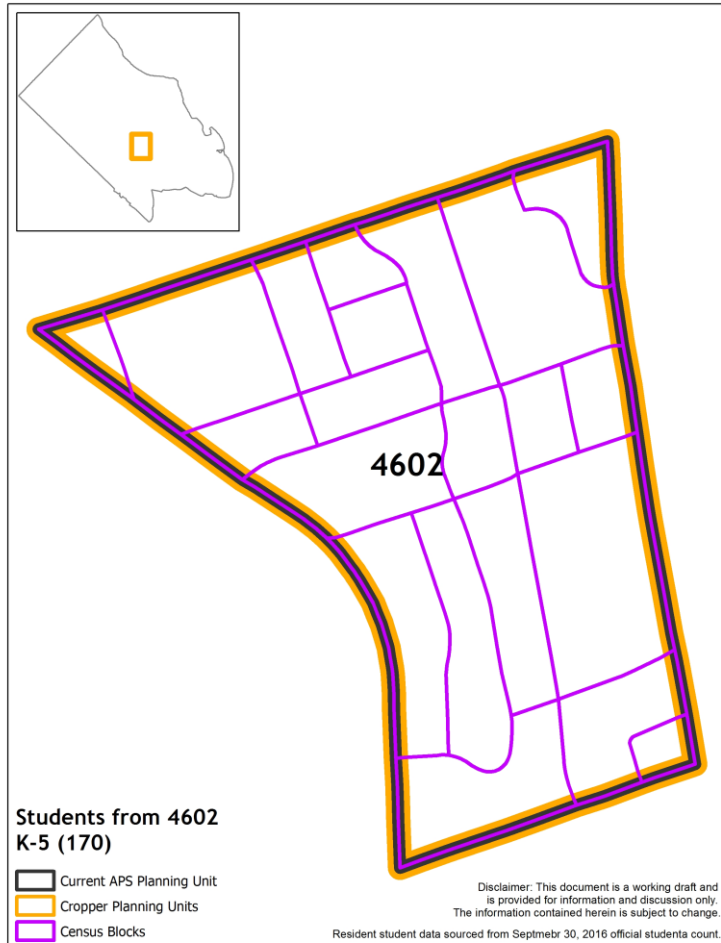
Example of planning unit numbering system:



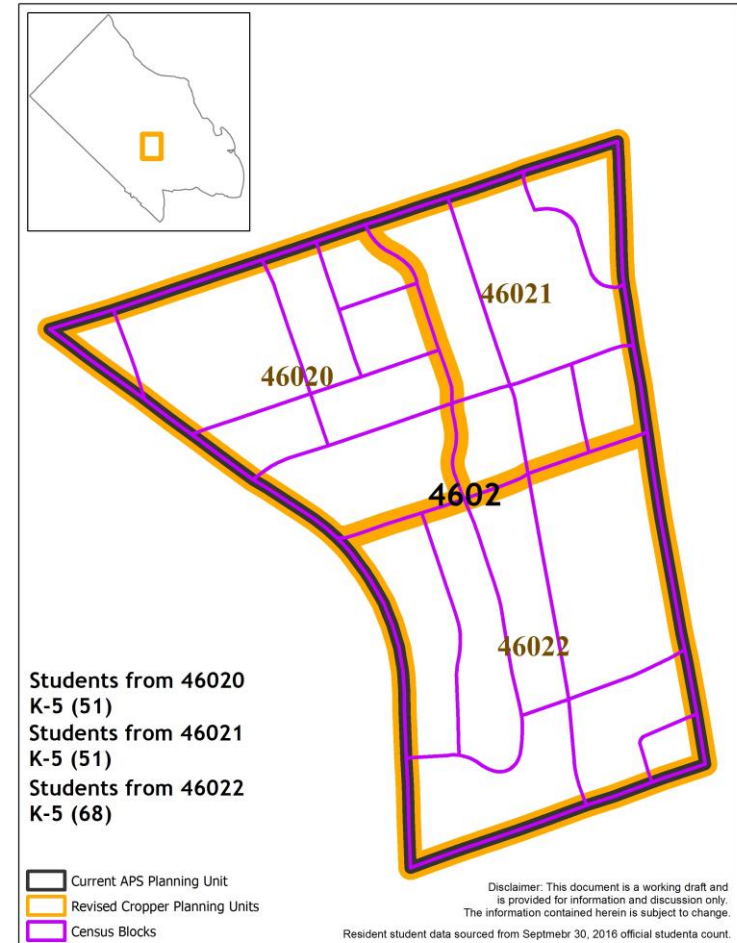
| PU Number (Current) | PU Split | PU Number (Proposed) |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2208 | Yes, into 5 planning units total | 2208 <u>0</u> |
| | | 2208 <u>1</u> |
| | | 2208 <u>2</u> |
| | | 22083 |
| | | 2208 <u>4</u> |
| | | 2208 <u>5</u> |

Cut – Census Block Alignment

Before

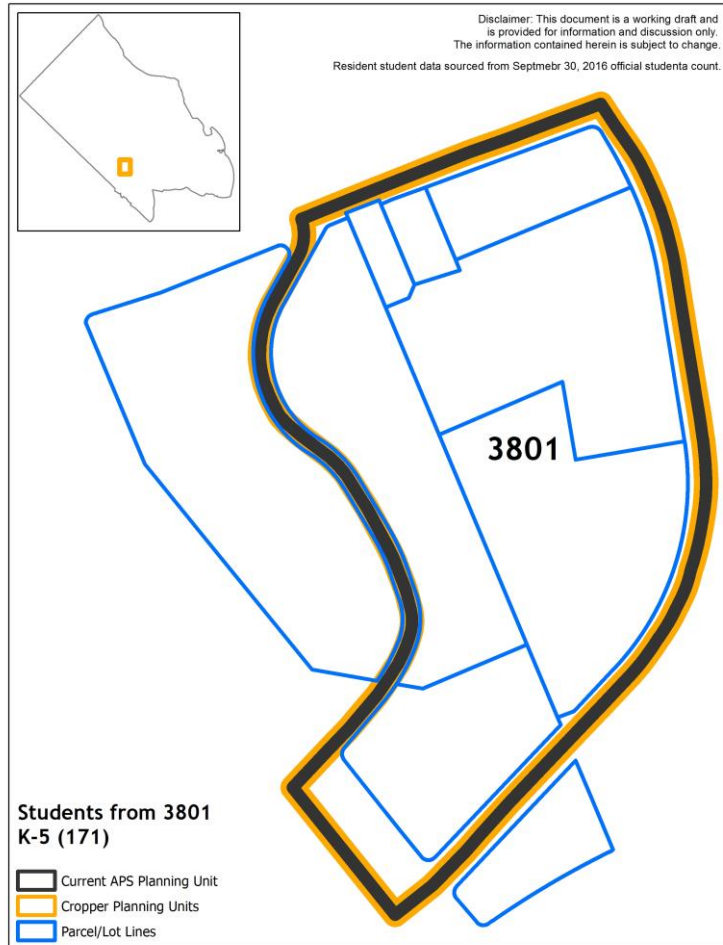


After

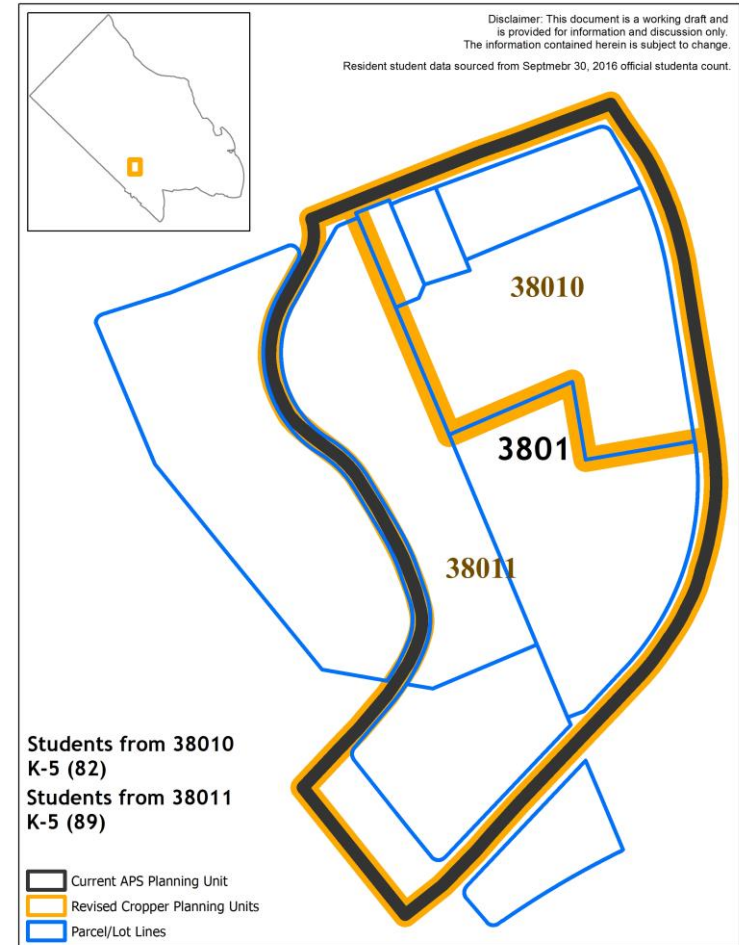


Cut – Parcel/Lot Alignment

Before

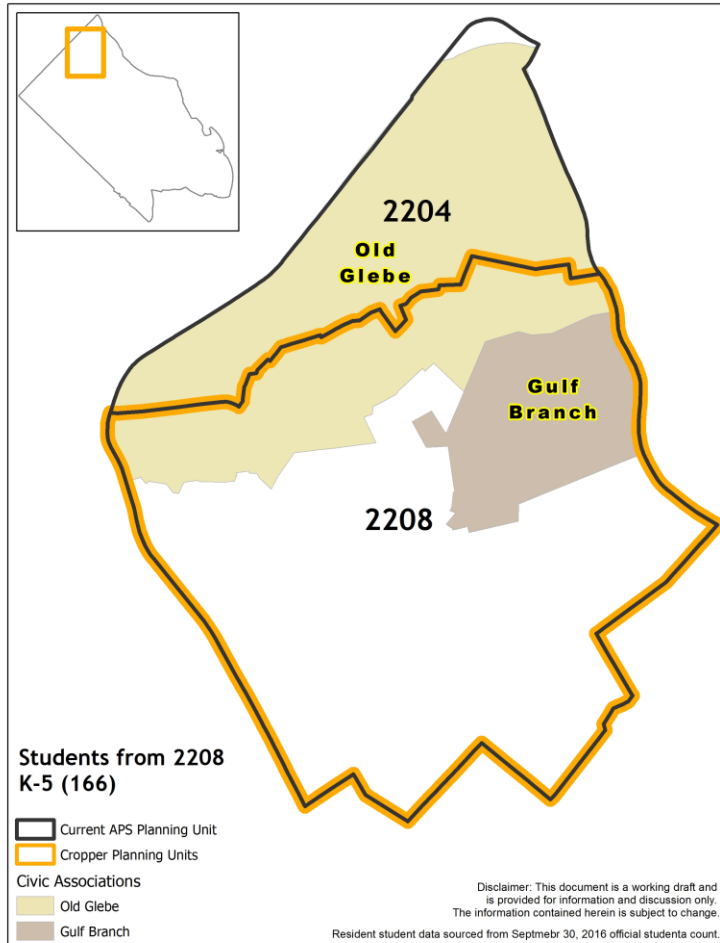


After

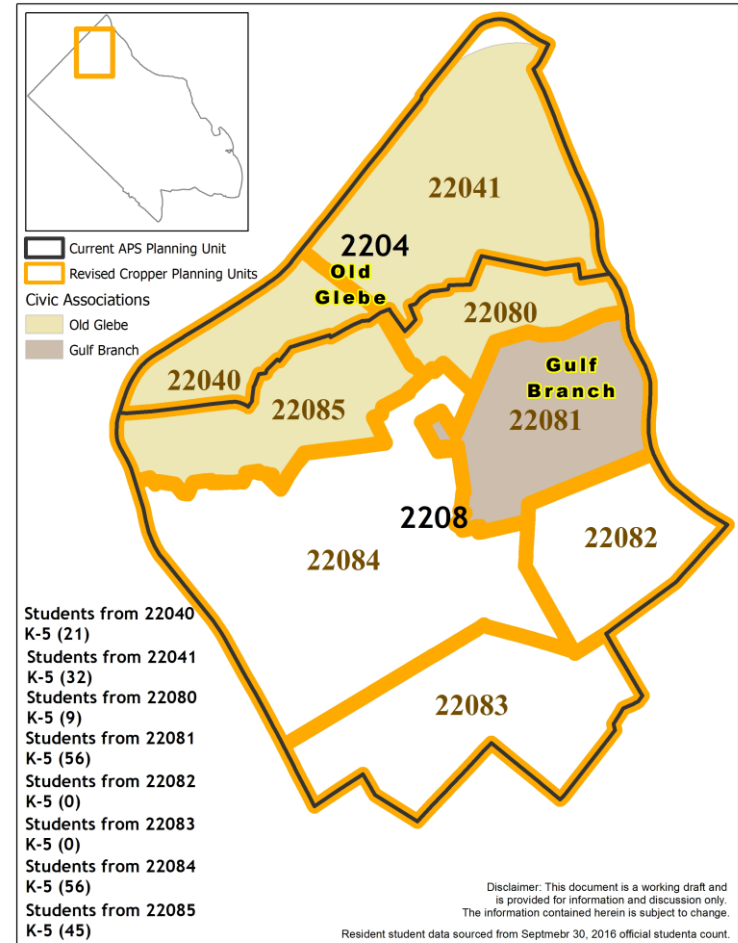


Cut - Civic Association Alignment

Before



After



- Determine when to make the change
- Communication to public
- Execute plan

Staff Recommendation:

Implement the consultant's proposed planning unit boundaries for the upcoming middle and elementary boundary change processes this school year.



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