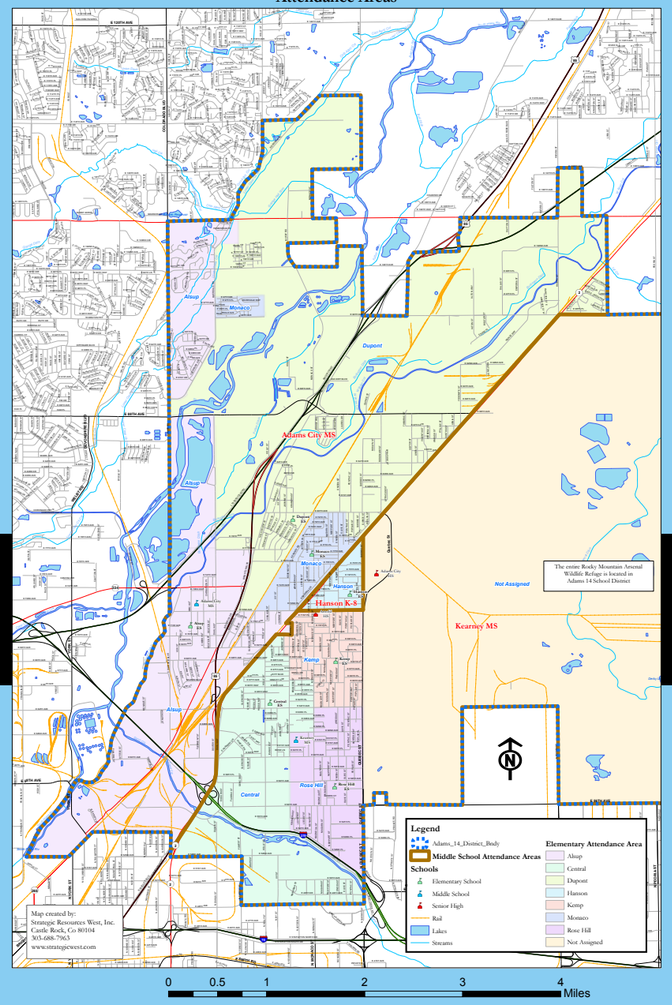

learning landscapes
building community through play

Adams 14 Elementary Schools
Learning Landscapes

MASTER PLAN

Alsup Elementary
Central Elementary
Dupont Elementary
Kemp Elementary
Monaco Elementary
Rose Hill Elementary
Hanson K-8

COLORADO HEALTH FOUNDATION

ADAMS 14
Inspire. Educate. Empower.

Spring 2011

Hanson PreK-8

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Section One 1

Executive Summary

- Introduction
- Adams 14 Background
- Master Plan Intent and Process
- Recommendations
- Learning Landscapes Background

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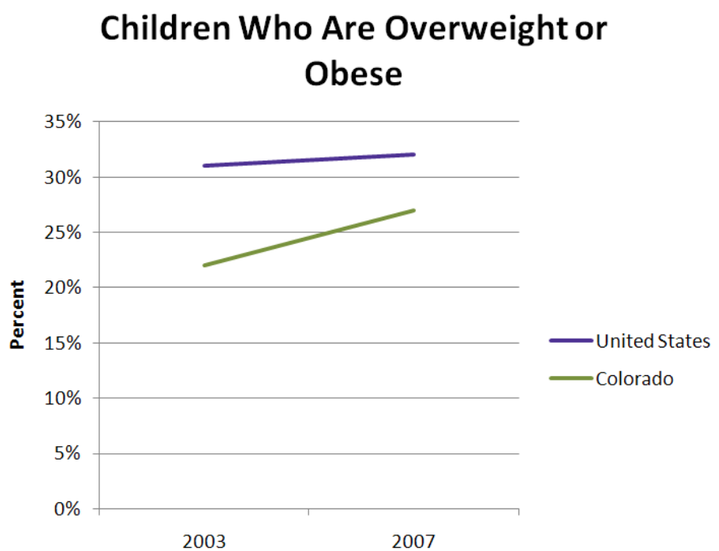
Introduction

Schoolyards provide an opportunity for the built environment to promote increased physical activity for children and the surrounding community. In addition, studies show that well-planned and equipped schoolyards increase physical activity while also enhancing the learning environment resulting in improved achievement. Such play areas provide physical and mental challenges that translate to improved health and learning attention. Furthermore, with proper design, these areas themselves become outdoor classrooms or learning landscapes and fulfill, a secondary goal for many schools to become a positive focal point of the neighborhood, place to gather and to meet, a place to enjoy, a place that enhances the community's appearance.



Graph: Colorado Children's Campaign

Improving schoolyards is a proactive way to benefit health at the community level. The surge in childhood obesity, in recent years, threatens the future health of Colorado. According to the Colorado Health Report Card published by the Colorado Health Foundation, "Colorado ranks 23rd among the states in the category of childhood obesity dropping in rank from 3rd to 23rd in just four years. The current ranking signals a rapid increase in the prevalence of childhood obesity that negatively impacts the overall health and well-being of Colorado's children. Preventing and combating the childhood obesity epidemic will require a multi-faceted approach. "It means changing behaviors around food intake, physical activity and our residential community. It means addressing the environment in schools and rethinking our culture to emphasize good health" says James O. Hill Professor of Pediatrics and Medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

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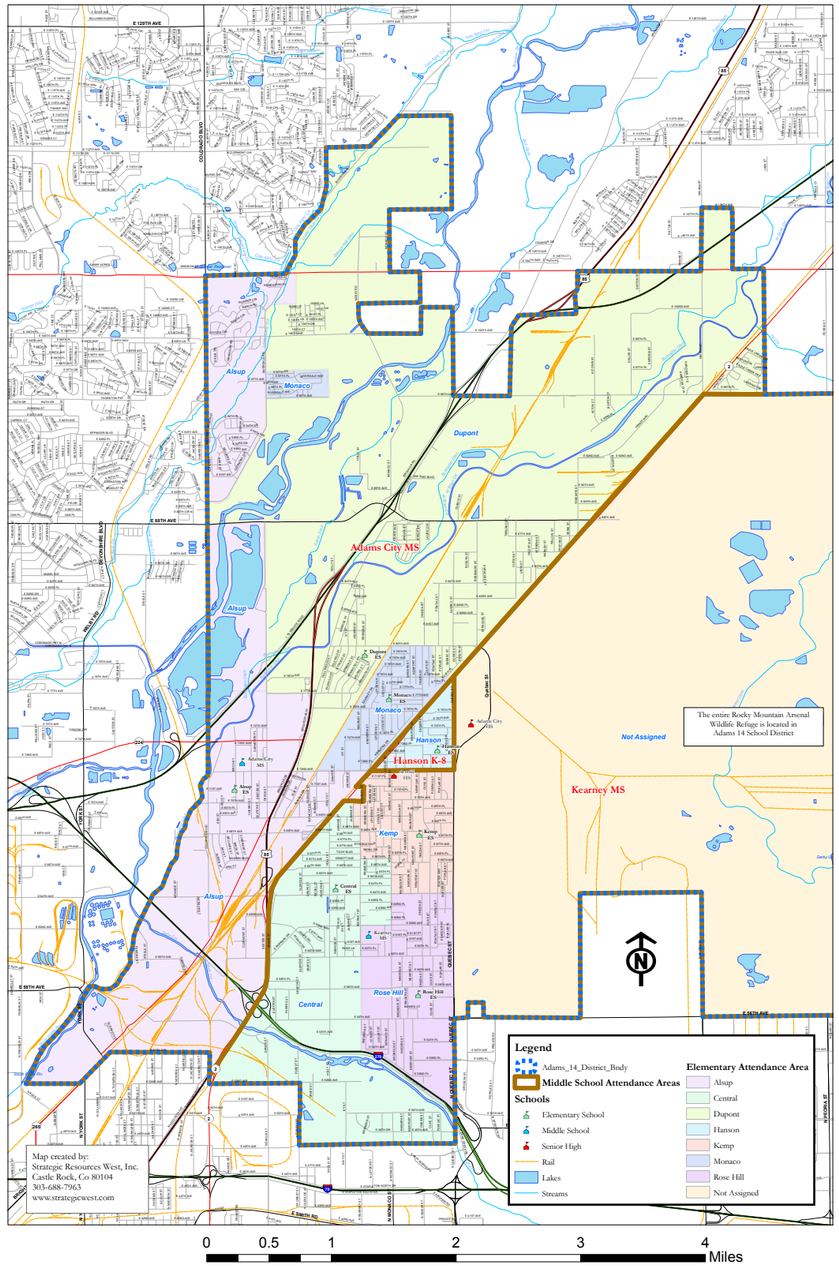
In January 2011 the Adams County School District 14 was awarded an Active Play Areas planning grant from the Colorado Health Foundation. The Colorado Health Foundation believes that if kids are a part of a "healthy school" including but not limited to access to physical activity and healthy foods, then they will be more likely to learn better and maintain a healthy lifestyle throughout life. In addition, The Foundation upholds that thoughtful design of a new or renovated activity space at the children's school can promote greater levels of moderate or vigorous physical activity and decrease sedentary activity.

The Active Play Areas planning grant provided an opportunity for the school district to partner with Learning Landscapes at the University of Colorado Denver to develop seven elementary school Active Play Area Master Plans.

The Learning Landscape program within the Colorado Center for Community Development at the College of Architecture and Planning seeks to strengthen elementary schools and their surrounding neighborhoods by designing playgrounds to promote physical activity and social interaction. With over ninety schoolyard renovations complete, the success of this program is founded on a mutual respect of aesthetic, maintainability, safety, and recreational issues.

Colorado Health Foundation The Foundation seeks to fund active play spaces for schools designed to promote play and other forms of physical activity. This includes field/ground designs or markings that facilitate games and other forms of movement.
Healthy Schools & Healthy Communities
Vision:
Colorado will become the healthiest state in the nation.
Mission:
To improve the health and health care of Coloradans by increasing access to quality health care and encouraging healthy lifestyle choices.
The Foundation's seven Funding Strategies are:
1. Develop healthy schools -- Expand the number of public schools and preschools that provide health care services, have health and nutrition education, physical education, healthy food in cafeterias and vending machines, and opportunities for physical activity.
2. Promote healthy communities -- Expand access to healthy and affordable foods; provide safe options for physical activity; teach individuals how to manage their chronic disease; and engage parents in raising healthy kids.
Numeric milestones used to gauge progress toward the Foundation's goals.
The 12 Measurable Results are:
1. Increase the number of children and adults who engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity.
2. Increase the number of children and adults who eat adequate amounts of fruits and vegetables daily.
4. Increase the number of underserved Coloradans who have convenient access to recreational exercise and fruits and vegetables.

Adams 14 School District
Elementary and Middle School
Attendance Areas



Adams County School District 14

Adams 14, located in Commerce City, is Colorado's 23rd largest school district, serving nearly 7,000 students and 33,000 residents annually. Adams 14 strives to ensure academic success for every student by providing highly effective classroom instruction, supplemental enrichment opportunities and parent/family collaboration opportunities.

Commerce City is a highly-industrialized community bisected by industry and busy roadways, with limited walkable and accessible play spaces. Schools and neighboring communities become little 'islands' unto themselves, establishing a premium on available areas to play and recreate.

The Adams-14 community has a high population of low income residents with 82 percent of students in the district qualify for free or reduced lunch. Additionally, 81 percent of students are Hispanic, with 57 percent identifying Spanish or another language as their primary language.

Total Enrollment 6,702
- 77% Hispanic
- 18% Anglo
- 3% African American
- 2% American Indian

Hispanic children in Colorado are three times more likely to be obese, further emphasizing the importance of providing quality play spaces.
(Colorado Health Report Card)

**We learn, we Move, we enjoy healthy foods,
it is part of who we are!**

Wellness

Adams 14 schools are engaged in a number of wellness initiatives, including school gardens, youth farmers' markets, the flat fourteeners running program and serving healthier cafeteria foods. Adams 14 decision makers believe that healthy students are healthy learners. The District is developing a culture of school wellness and active play areas.

Increasing physical activity not only aligns with the District's Wellness initiatives but with the surrounding community's as well. Commerce City is one of 16 Colorado municipalities recognized by the White House as a "Let's Move City," for its ability to promote and provide services that reduce childhood obesity. "Commerce City believes in promoting the health and well-being of all residents by offering services and amenities that promote an active lifestyle," said Mayor Paul Natale. (Commerce City Press Release February 5, 2011)

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Existing Challenges
Adams County School District 14 is an urban school district facing challenges common to other urban districts. The infrastructure is aging – the average facility age is over 50 years - and maintenance funding is limited leaving little if any budget available to improve schoolyards and play areas. Several Physical Education teachers and District Administrators have commented on the lack of play areas and equipment available for their students to be active. They have shared observations of students sitting around at recess and after school because they lack quality equipment and active play areas. The Adams 14 operations team agrees that the District's playgrounds and active play areas are the most neglected of all of initiatives, due to lack of funding. Most A-14 elementary schools require moderate to extensive renovations or upgrades to meet adequate playground standards. These include replacing playground equipment, providing American with Disability

Act [ADA] accessibility, and providing an outdoor classroom learning environment. Playgrounds lacking appropriate choices for children tend to become arenas for bullying and teasing. Recess should be a positive experience that compliments academic development, a place where children develop their emotional, physical and social skills.

In 1997 the District updated play equipment at several school sites. The equipment installed during this time consisted of one play space for all age groups at each school. Although these spaces were designed to be appropriate for ages 5-12, there is a lack of physically challenging equipment for intermediate students. In addition, updates made to play spaces in 1997 predated the expansion of Adams 14's early childhood programs. Thus, amendments and improvements to play facilities do not accommodate the District's youngest learners. As a consequence, Adams 14's playgrounds are grossly underserved preschool students with outsized, outdated and often unsafe equipment.

Related Efforts and Integration

In spring 2010 the District worked with consultants H+L Architecture to develop a district-wide facilities master plan. The Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan focuses on the conditions of building and the interior of the schools. The two master planning projects complement each other well and provide the school district with a comprehensive facility and grounds plan.

The Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan lists 3 major Educational Planning Goals to direct improvements. Implementation of the Active Play Areas Master Plan will specifically help to reach *Goal # 3 for Neighborhood Schools*.

Goal 3: Neighborhood Schools
Intent: *Providing structures that encourage school-community connections.*

- Welcoming architecture
- Safety and security
- Respect pride in neighborhood schools
- Student engagement
- Parents/community
- Curb appeal
- Early Childhood Center (age-appropriate equipment and safety)

Schoolyards have the ability to provide a safe welcoming space for students and community, raise neighborhood pride, and provide curb appeal for the school.

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Intent of the Master Plan
The master plan is intended to serve as a roadmap for proactively developing strategies and tactics needed to develop sound, safe and active play areas that are proven to increase activity for its students and surrounding community members. The purpose of the master plan is for A-14 to be strategically poised to capture opportunities to improve and expand play areas as they become available. The A-14 Active Play Areas Master Plan is intended as a tool for schools, parents, and district administration to seek funding for future schoolyard renovations and wellness initiatives.

The master plan is a written report and plan that sets forth the structure for future campus improvements. Each school has a vision that speaks to the desires of the school and surrounding community. The vision is further delineated into goals that identify the major components for implementation. These goals are defined through the use of text and imagery. A programmatic list of uses is also developed. Lastly, each master plan sets forth the aesthetic ordering system suggested for use during the design phase to organize the programmatic uses. This plan will provide a framework for fund raising and future construction.

Planning Process
The Master Plan process took place from February to June 2011 and involved input at both the district level as well as the individual school level. At the district level the collaborative process was guided by the Grants and communication office, the Wellness Coordinator, and the Facility Management division. Learning Landscapes staff consulted with the district team members to ensure the individual school master plans aligned with the existing facility master plan, and the over all vision for the District. The team also discussed strategies for phasing, sustainable maintenance and funding for implementation.

At the school level the collaborative process was guided by schoolyard improvement committees and facilitated by Learning Landscapes staff. The schoolyard committees were generally comprised of the principal, PE teacher, and pre-k teacher, members of the school's wellness team, parents, and teachers. The team members helped to identify issues with the existing sites, formed a vision and goals to guide the planning process, gathered information and feedback from people outside the committee, provided feedback on iterations of the plan, administered photo surveys and collected student art work.

This two-tiered collaborative effort allowed the individual schools to develop a schoolyard master plan to reflect the history, culture and curriculum unique to each school and at the same time aligned the needs of the individual school with those of the District.

The planning process consisted of the following tasks:

- Schoolyard Committee Meetings
- Site inventory and analysis
- Play equipment assessment
- Schoolyard use assessment
- Community engagement
- Photo surveys and student drawings
- Master Plan recommendations
- Cost Estimates and prioritization

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Recommendations
Improved play facilities will serve multiple purposes in not only engaging Adams 14 students, but also the entire community. The following are recommendations for implementation of the Active Play Areas Master Plan at each Adams-14 elementary school.

- Install New Age Appropriate Play Equipment
  - To increase physical activity for all ages and to provide a variety of safe, challenging activities for all students.
- Install Running Tracks and Walking Paths
  - To provide opportunities for students, teachers, staff and community to track their distance and encourage each other to get moving.
- Install Climbing Structures
  - To increase upper body strength and coordination.
- Improve ADA Accessibility
  - Each play area should be accessible to all the students in the school. It is important for all students and community members regardless of mobility, to be able to interact and be active with one another.
- Provide More Hard Surface Games with Educational interactive elements
  - At each school, the design committees requested more color on the schoolyard. Students are excited by the color and it sparks their creativity during play.
- Install Vegetable Gardens
  - To promote healthy eating, community stewardship, educational opportunities, and food literacy.
- Develop Outdoor Learning Environments
  - Spaces for teachers to bring students outside and to practice inquiry and to interact with the landscape as an educational system
- Develop Community Gathering Spaces
  - Welcoming the neighborhood to gather, play, and exercise in these public areas will help build support stewardship of the community. It is important for the students to have a safe place to be active not just during recess but also afterschool and on the weekends.
- Increase Opportunities for Shade
  - To protect students and visitors from the intense Colorado sun and to provide additional gathering spaces for community members

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LEARNING LANDSCAPE HISTORY
The first Learning Landscape was built at Bromwell elementary school in 1998 as a result of a six-year collaboration of parents, elementary students, staff, faculty, neighbors, local businesses and University of Colorado Denver (UCD) landscape architecture graduate students. The vast expanse of asphalt and pea gravel on the Bromwell playground resembled a prison yard, not an environment encouraging activity and child development. Bromwell parents and community members took action to transform the schoolyard into an active and aesthetically pleasing place for learning and physical activity.

Bromwell's schoolyard renovation project coincided with the end of mandatory busing at Denver Public Schools (DPS). Cessation of mandatory busing meant a renewed interest in Denver neighborhood schools and soon the Bromwell Learning Landscape project evolved into a citywide urban initiative evoking social change and physical transformation of public grounds.

UCD encourages faculty to connect the campus to the community. Landscape Architecture Professor, Lois Brink's Learning Landscapes course proved a tremendous opportunity for civic engagement. Through Learning Landscapes, UCD graduate students are able to stretch the boundaries of landscape design, engage the community and gain real-world design experience. In 1999 (UCD) College of Architecture and Planning entered into a formal agreement to plan, design, and help build Learning Landscapes at DPS elementary schools throughout the district. The partnership between UCD and DPS has resulted in the transformation of 81 neglected public elementary schoolyards into Learning Landscape Playgrounds.

In 2008 Denver voters expressed satisfaction with the program by passing a multi-million dollar bond initiative to fund the redevelopment of every DPS elementary schoolyard into a learning landscape by 2013.

WHAT WE DO
With a budget of approximately $450,000 per playground, Learning Landscapes leads UCD students, elementary schools and community members in the redesign of schoolyards into fun multi-use parks designed to reflect the culture of the surrounding community. The Learning Landscapes project helps reconnect communities with neighborhood schools. The graduate students get meaningful, hands-on experience working with the community to create master plans and designs for a Learning Landscapes schoolyard.

HOW WE DO IT
By listening and actively involving the school community throughout the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of the Learning Landscape schoolyard.
Each school is asked to form a Learning Landscape team to help inform design and programming decisions as well as keep a watchful eye for vandalism and maintenance issues after construction is complete. The Learning Landscapes team recruits students, parents and surrounding community help to build, maintain and improve the Learning Landscape. Each new learning landscapes has a volunteer build day where the school and community volunteers develop a sense of ownership and civic pride by creating outdoor artwork planting gardens, laying sod or building play equipment.

We document and distribute site-specific resources for educators and community members on the outdoor educational elements unique to each Learning Landscape schoolyard. Promoting the programmatic use of the Learning Landscape is critical for the long-term viability and sustainability of these projects.

Community Involvement
Inevitably each site is used by the community when the schools are not in session. As such we feel it is important to work with community leaders to get feed back on the communities needs and desires to determine how the communities use the site and what other organizations help maintain the site - like the Parks and Recreation, softball leagues, soccer leagues, gardening clubs, etc.

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Outdoor Art

Gateways

Climbing Structures

Shade Structures

Grass Fields

Outdoor Classroom

Habitat & Vegetable Garden

Age Appropriate Play Equipment

Maps & Hard Surface Games

A **learning landscape** is a multi-use park for outdoor learning, discovery, creativity and play that celebrates the unique character of the **school and community**.

Learning Landscapes are comprised of grass playing fields, age-appropriate play equipment, trees, shade structures, gateways, artwork, class room gardens, traditional play elements and non-traditional play elements among other things.

Learning Landscapes function as local public parks providing much needed open space and social gathering places while fostering neighborhood pride for local communities.

Educational Elements tend to be focused on the unique curriculum of each school. Educational elements also tend to be derived from the schools theme, mascot, motto, etc. These components come in the shape of games that are super imposed on the hard court surfaces and or words, poems, mathematical formulas etc. These educational elements can be tied to the schools curriculum whereby school teachers can use these elements by bringing their class rooms outside. Or the learning components are simply whimsical things that all the kids to use their imaginations while playing hopscotch, tether ball, what have you.

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Section Two 2

- School Background
- Existing Conditions
- Playground Assessment

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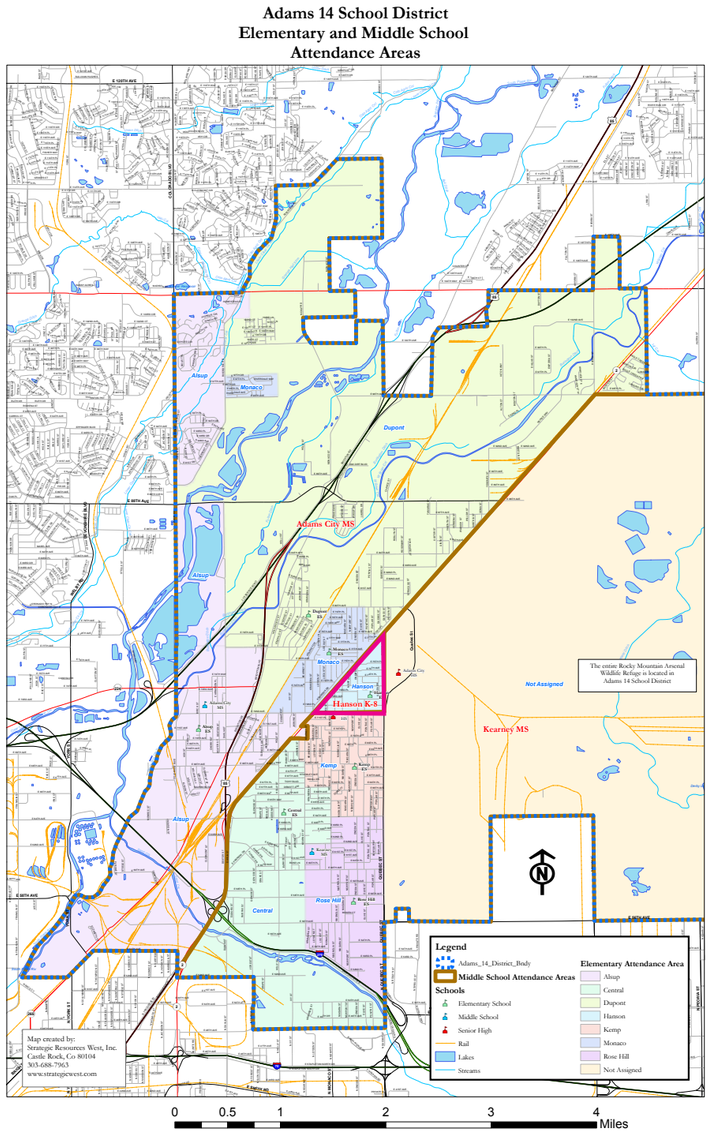

LOCATION AND HISTORY

Hanson PreK-8 school is located on 73rd Ave, a small, residential street in East-Central Commerce City, Adams County, CO. Hanson is the only school in the Adams-14 School District that combines preschool, elementary and middle school grades into one school creating advantages as well as some unique challenges. As of Spring 2011 the enrollment was 496 students out of a maximum of 705. The school mascot is the hawk and the school color is royal blue.

The school was originally constructed in 1968 as an elementary school, and the middle school section on the east side was added in 2008. The Preschool section on the southwest side of the school was also added recently. The total site is approximately 8.2 acres, taking up the southern half of the block bounded by 73rd Avenue to the south, 74th Avenue to the north, Oneida Street to the West, and Quebec Street to the east.

Adams City High School is located across Quebec Parkway, a busy north-south thoroughfare east of Hanson. A tunnel below Quebec Parkway provides a pedestrian connection for high school students, which has increased the number of high school students walking by or sometimes through the Hanson Schoolyard.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

The neighborhood around Hanson is mostly comprised of relatively dense single-family detached housing on small neighborhood streets. There is a small mobile home park north of 75th Place, and some retail and commercial buildings around the intersection of Monaco Street and 72nd Place a few blocks east of Hanson. This intersection recently underwent some street treatments including landscaping and colored brick paving creating a more pedestrian friendly retail center. The only potential area for significant population growth around the school site is east of Quebec Street (just east of the school site), which, other than the Adams City High School, is completely undeveloped grassland. This land is part of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Refuge which was estab

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SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

Spring 2011 Enrollment: 496 students
Maximum Enrollment: 705 students

Male Students: 255
Female Students: 241

Free/Reduced Lunch: 86% of students
English is not primary language: 77% of students

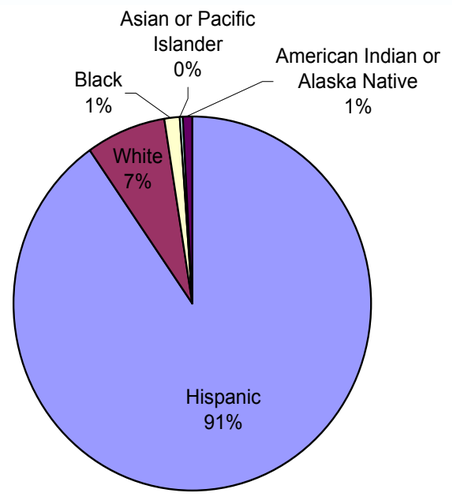
Racial Make-up of Students:
Hispanic: 90.3%
White: 7.1%
Black: 1.4%
American Indian or Alaska Native: 0.7%
Asian or Pacific Islander: 0.4%

Grade Distribution of Students:
Preschool: 32 (max 40)
Kindergarten: 45
1st grade: 49
2nd grade: 59
3rd grade: 67
4th grade: 52
5th grade: 53
6th grade: 53
7th grade: 53
8th grade: 45

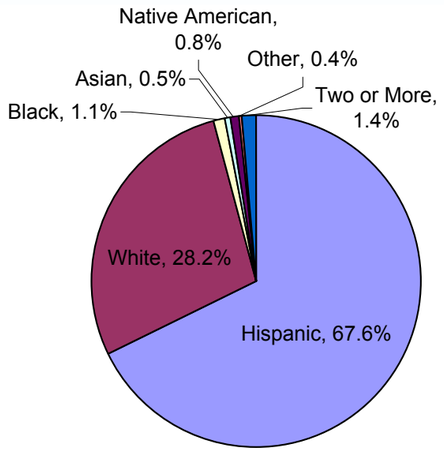
SURROUNDING AREA DEMOGRAPHICS

As of the 2010 Census there were approximately 1533 people living in the Hanson PreK-8 school attendance area, with 93% of units occupied. According to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey estimate, the average income of the area was $40,000/yr, and 55% of units were owner-occupied compared to 45% rented.

2010 Hanson Pre K-8 Demographic Breakdown



Surrounding Area Demographic Breakdown



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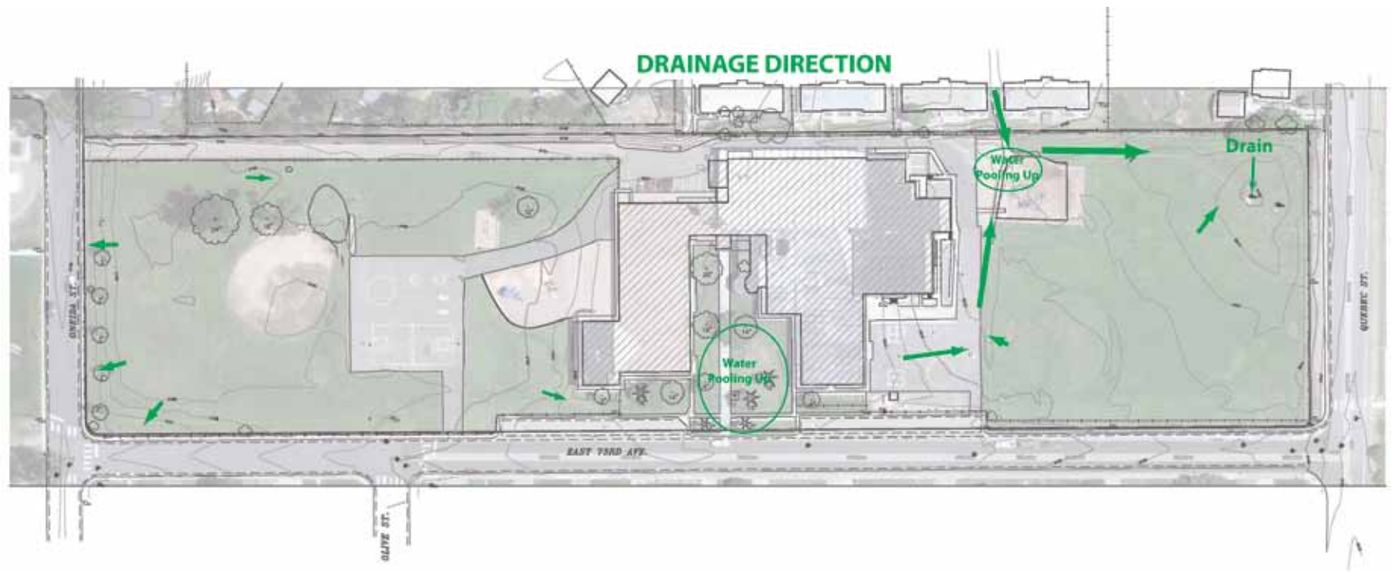
Site Inventory

Existing Conditions:

EQUIPMENT & MATERIALS
The Hanson PreK-8 schoolyard is divided by the school into two sides, the west side and east side. Currently the west side is used by Pre-K-3rd grade and has a play pit with two structures, swings, a basketball court, tetherball poles, a paved play area adjacent to the basketball court, lots of grass fields and a small baseball diamond on the far west side of schoolyard. The east side is used by grades 4-8 and includes a basketball court, foursquare, a jungle-gym, swings and a large field just big enough for a regulation-sized middle school soccer field.

ADA ACCESSIBILITY
All four primary entrances to the school are ADA accessible, including the front, east, west and Pre-K entrances. Most entrances are level with the ground, with the exception of the east side, which is accessible via a concrete ramp recently installed. Some of the individual room entrances/exits that would be used during a fire emergency are not ADA accessible including the raised exits at the northeast part of the school.

DRAINAGE
Teachers reported water pooling up in the front entryway which maintenance addressed while this plan was being written. This area should be monitored to make sure these drainage issues have indeed been solved. As of writing this report, there were no reported drainage issues on the west side and most of the drainage problems exist on east side and rear ally of the school. Water from the rear alley behind the school, the east basketball court, and from an adjacent housing complex north of the school flows to a large concrete drain at the northeast corner of the schoolyard (see drainage map). There is an elevated structure associated with this drain that protrudes into the middle of a grass field often used for soccer. The open concrete drain adjacent to the play pit on the east side often gets clogged by nearby gravel causing water to pool. Additionally the rear ally is shaded by the school creating a hazardous situation because ice often forms and stays here.



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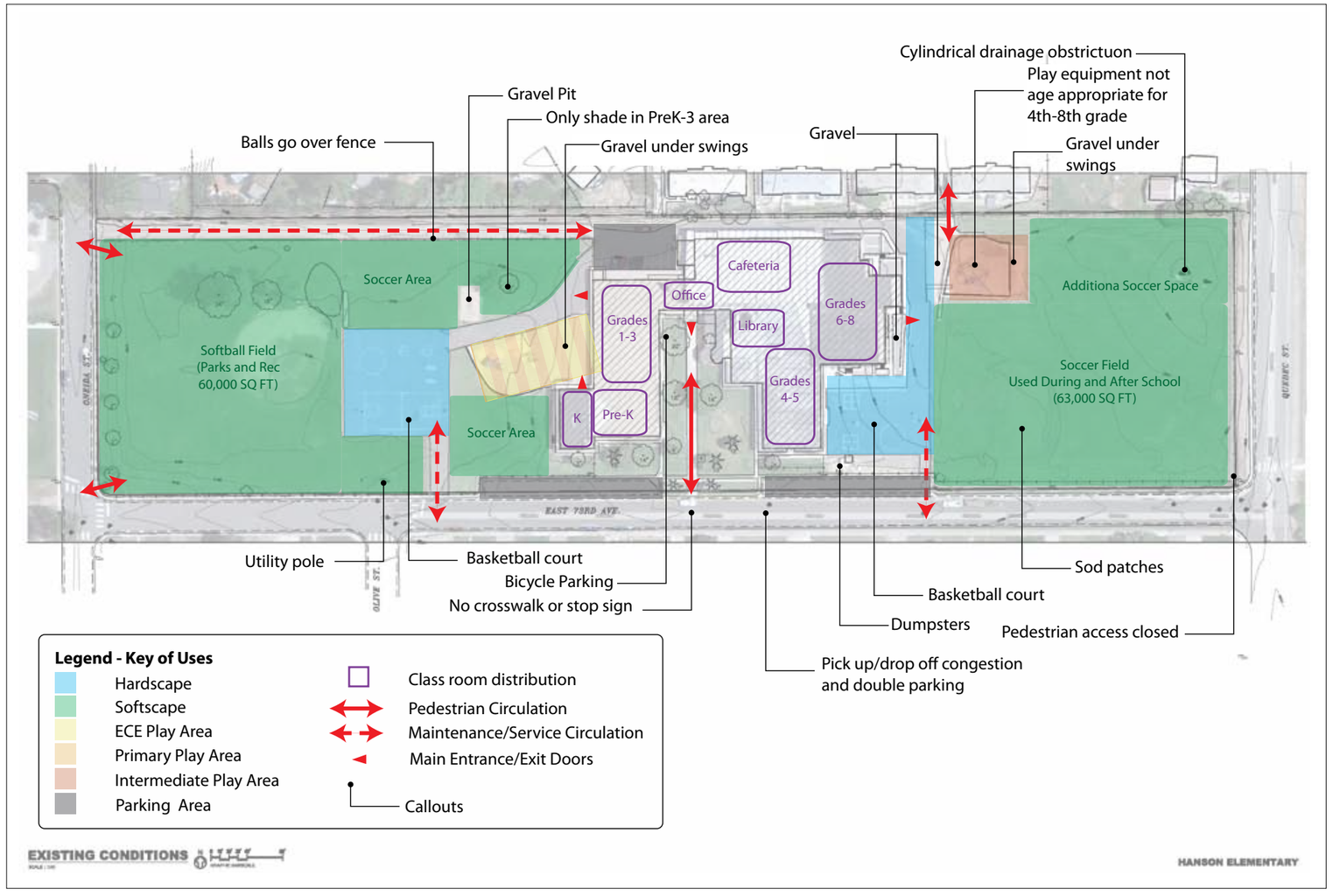
EXISTING CONDITIONS MAP



SAFETY

- No stop sign or crosswalk at front entrance, combined with double parked cars during pick-up/drop-off times creates a safety hazard for students.
- Students are often getting cut up from the gravel under swings and a couple other spots on both sides of the school. Both parents and teachers want the gravel removed.
- Gravel near the east ramp and in the play pits on both sides also gets kicked onto the pavement creating a slipping hazard.
- There is some safety concern with high school students walking through the schoolyard from the nearby underpass. Some of this has been alleviated by closing the east pedestrian entrance to the schoolyard.
- Play equipment is not age appropriate for the older students on the east side causing some safety concern because the students use the equipment inappropriately.

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CIRCULATION & SITE ACCESSIBILITY
The main entrance of the school is accessed by vehicles along 73rd Avenue. Except for the pick-up/drop-off area directly in front of the school that can only support a few cars as a time, there is no good pick-up/drop-off area.

There is no school bus service at Hanson presumably because the catchment area is so small. For this same reason many people access the school by walking through one of three pedestrian openings in the surrounding fence (see existing conditions map). The southeast opening was closed after Adams City High School opened across Quebec Pkwy to deter high school students from walking through the schoolyard.

Delivery trucks and kitchen staff use the rear alley entrance (off Oneida Street) that directly accesses the cafeteria and is only wide enough for one vehicle at a time. There are also two maintenance entrances off 73rd Ave, one on the east and one on the west side. A 12-foot wide zone from these two entrances to the rear alley must be kept clear and remain paved for maintenance purposes.

Students in grades K-8 access the schoolyard during recess from two main entrances that lead from the main hallway in the school. One entrance is on the east (for grades 4-8) and is one on the west (grades K-3) allowing students to enter/exit from the side of the school where their respective classes are held. Preschoolers access the schoolyard directly from there classroom just south of the swings on the west side.

PARKING
There are 36 parking spaces including two handicap accessible spaces along 73rd Avenue in front of the school. There is also room for additional on-street parallel parking along the two blocks of 73rd Avenue that front the school. In addition there are nine off-street parking spaces, including one handicap accessible space at the rear of the school that is used primarily by the kitchen staff, the principal and one or two administrative staff.

Including on-street parallel parking spaces, there is generally enough parking for school staff and visitors, but issues arise during drop-off/pick-up times as cars are often double-parked and there is heavy congestion. For this reason both parents and teachers would like to see additional parking. If additional parking for staff is made available, the current perpendicular spots in front of the school could be converted to pick-up/drop-off only.

ENVIRONMENT-PLANT CONDITIONS
Most of the east side of the schoolyard is a grass field and there are no trees on this side. The front area of the school is mostly grass and there are a few medium size trees. A couple of trees closest to the school entrance were recently removed because of problems caused by the tree's fruit.

The west side can be split into two areas, the eastern half that contains the play pits, pavement, a few grass fields and one medium size tree that supplants most of the much needed shade for students. The western half of the west side contains a small baseball diamond. It is roughly 200 feet to the fence in left field and 220 feet to where the field slopes down in right field. There is a string of very mature trees just north of the field that provide a very nice shaded area and as a string of recently planted

MAINTENANCE
The entire schoolyard is equipped with irrigation systems, however the gravel area adjacent to the ADA ramp on the east side cannot easily be watered meaning maintenance-free landscaping is needed there. The most difficult maintenance aspect is keeping the concrete drain near the play pit on the east side and all the paved areas clear of gravel and other debris. There are also sod patches on the east soccer field because parts of the new grass that was planted over an old baseball diamond did not take.

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PLAYGROUND ASSESSMENT

EAST SIDE

The play equipment on the east is suitable for ages as young as five and is not appropriate for the age group that currently uses this side of the schoolyard (4th-8th grade). The equipment is estimated to be 10-15 years old and meets all current codes. There is a recently installed concrete ramp that allows wheelchairs to access the wood fiber-filled play pit that is 3000 square feet.

There are also six swings in a 1800 square foot play pit that are well used. The play pit under the swings is gravel-filled and therefore does not meet ADA accessibility requirements. There is also a roughly 2,250 square foot gravel area just west of the playground equipment that is unused. There are no signs indicating the ages that should use the equipment. Additionally the basketball court is sloped downward west to east, has no painted features and is cracked in many places. The backboard and rims are also in need of repair.

WEST SIDE

There are two sets of play equipment on the west side that share one large wood fiber-filled play pit that is about 5,000 square feet and meets ADA accessibility requirements. Both pieces of play equipment are suitable for children as young as preschool age and meet all current codes, however there is no fenced-in preschool area and no signs indicating the ages the equipment is appropriate for. The brown set of equipment is a little older than the blue set and has had some issues with bolts loosening that regularly need to be tightened by maintenance.

There are six swings that are well used and up to code adjacent to the play equipment, but the swing-set pit is filled with gravel, which is non-compliant with ADA accessibility requirements. The swing-set pit is about 3,300 square feet.

There is an additional pit with gravel north of the paved walk area that is 20ft. x 40ft. and has no play equipment. The basketball court and hoops are in decent condition

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Section Three 3

- Design Advisory Team
- Vision, Goals, Wish List
- Ordering System
- Master Plan

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DESIGN ADVISORY TEAM

The design advisory team played a critical role in creating the Hanson PreK-8 Schoolyard Master Plan. The team would meet with Learning Landscape's staff about once every couple weeks during the planning process to discuss issues, concerns, desires and other important information regarding the schoolyard. At each meeting various scenarios, proposals, and questions were brought to the table based on the previous meeting and other research for feedback and input that helped refine the vision, goals and layout for the master plan.

The design team was made up of nine members including the principal, the parent liaison for the school, the district wellness coordinator, and the six members of the wellness team. This included the PE teacher, the health clerk and three teachers and a paraprofessional from various grades. Attendance at each meeting varied between four and seven people as not all members were able to attend each meeting.

CONSTITUENTS ISSUES, NEEDS, AND DESIRES

EAST SIDE SPECIFIC

- School staff agree that play equipment on the east side is not appropriate for the age group, particularly the small slides and bridge feature.
- The basketball court on the east side slopes downward from west to east causing cracking in the pavement and making it awkward to play a full court game. Paint on the backboard is also peeling and in need of repair.
- The school staff expressed a desire to have more paved areas for games as it is currently gets very crowed on the paved areas when the fields are covered in snow.
- The school needs to maintain a regulation-size middle school soccer field (150 feet by 300 feet). This is best suited at the current location. Additionally, soccer is extremely popular among students and the school does not want to compromise any of the existing green space on the east side for other purposes.
- The north side of the east schoolyard abuts several

neighboring homes and yards. The school staff does not want certain sports activities in this area in order to avoid the conflict of balls going into neighbors' yards.

WEST SIDE SPECIFIC

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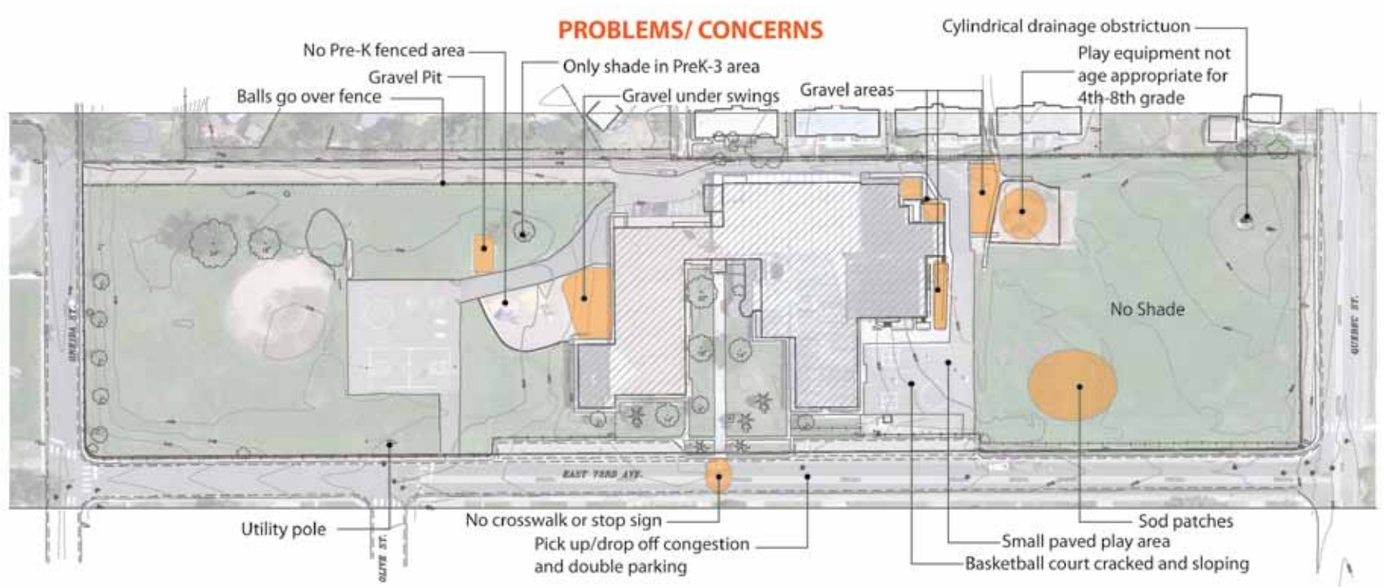
- The most pressing need on this side is for a fenced-in preschool play area that is located in such a manner that it could be expanded if needed over time and is close to the preschool classroom door.
- Although the younger students that use this side of the schoolyard do not need as much space for soccer and there is a little more space to spare than the east side, it is still really important to the students to have sufficient grass space for soccer. Additionally the teachers like the idea of having multiple grass fields that are separated to limit conflicts with different age groups playing soccer.
- Teachers desire an outdoor classroom on this side of the school that is relatively close to the school itself to limit time wasted getting students outside and making it easier for students that might have to use the restroom during class.

- Both parents and teachers desire more climbing structures for the students on this side of the schoolyard.
- The small baseball field on the far west side of the schoolyard currently has home plate in the northeast corner facing southwest. Depending on who uses the field, teachers did express an interest in reorienting the field so that home plate is in the southwest corner. This would allow more grass to be available for soccer closer to the school.
- Teachers expressed the issue that soccer balls often get kicked over the north fence onto the service access road.

SCHOOL WIDE

- Both parents and school staff would like to see all of the gravel on both sides of the school removed because it often gets kicked or washed down onto the pavement creating a tripping hazard and clogs drains on the east side causing water to pool. Parents particularly want the gravel removed from the play pits to prevent students from getting scuffed up. There are currently four places on the east side where gravel is located, along the side of the ADA ramp, in the raised area at the rear of the school, adjacent to the playground pit and in the swing set pit. There are two places with gravel on the west side, under the swings and in another pit with no play equipment just north of the paved walkway
- Teachers and parents strongly desire color paving including maps and four-square for both sides of the school.
- Teachers and parents desire creating additional shade for both sides of the school. This is particularly true on the west side where on hot days the younger students often huddle under the only tree close to the school.
- Both parents and school staff desire a walking path around some part of the schoolyard. They agree that the best location for this is probably around the ball field on the west side where there is more room, more shade, it is near a quieter street and has pleasant mountain views.
- Both school staff and parents desire additional parking. They both addressed issues of double parking, congestion and concern for the safety of students crossing 73rd Avenue during pick-up and drop-off times.
- The swings are popular among students on both sides of the school and all parties would like to retain the swings.
- Some school staff raised concern of high school students from nearby Adams City High School walking through the schoolyard and the possibility of outdoor art or other new structures being defaced with graffiti.
- The twelve-foot wide paved maintenance paths on both sides of the school that connect 73rd Avenue to the rear alleyway must be kept clear of obstruction.



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DEFINING THE SCHOOL'S VISION

Over the course of several meetings with the design teamm, including parents and teachers, the Learning Landscapes staff helped the school formulate the following vision and list of goals based on the school's desires and needs.

VISION

"Create an attractive and inviting play space that encourages active and educational play for the students and community."

GOALS

1. Enhance the schoolyard facilities in a manner that engages students and encourages physical activity.
2. Provide play equipment and play space that is safe and appropriate to all age groups.
3. Increase the amount of shade and gathering spaces to foster positive social activity and opportunities for outdoor learning.
4. Create a unique identity for the schoolyard on each side of the building that reflects the change from younger to older grades.
5. Beautify the schoolyard by incorporating art, appropriate colors and other elements that students can take pride in.
6. Preserve adequate space for soccer in a manner that will accommodate the new equipment and transition well to the existing grounds.
7. Maintain the schoolyard as a hub and resource for the community that everyone can take pride in.

WISH LIST

Based off input from teachers, parents and students.

EAST SIDE

- Improve basketball court (redusce the slope if possible, add pavement, stripping, and repair backboard).
- Additional pavement (including adding color, foursquare, maps, etc.)
- Age-appropriate playground equipment
- Maintain swings
- More shade
- Maintain large soccer field and grass
- Remove gravel

WEST SIDE

- Fenced-in preschool area (must accommodate at least 40 students ~3,000 square-feet).
- More shade (at least a shade structure).
- Outdoor classroom (preferably located close to doors)
- More/better climbing equipment
- Color & educational paving
- Grass for soccer (can be smaller dispersed fields).
- Swings
- Running path (around at least the baseball field).
- Additional parking

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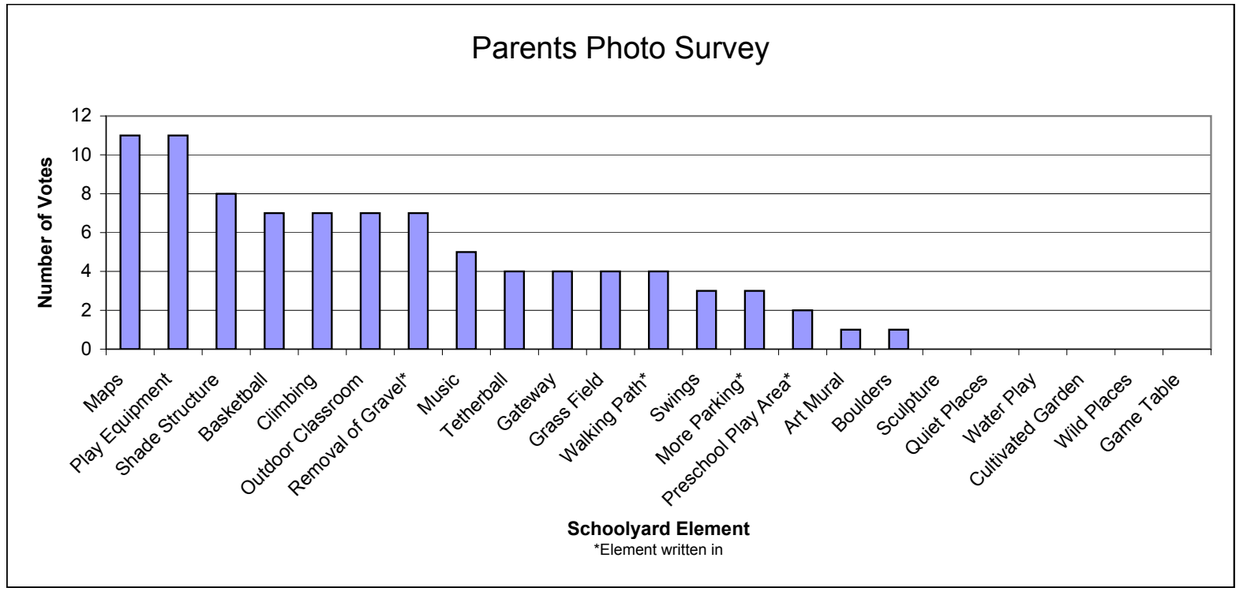
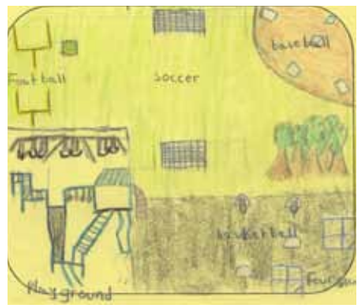


PARENT INPUT

Parents were given a photo survey of example playground elements and asked to list the top five they would like to see at Hanson. The results of 14 total surveys are shown to the left. Maps and play equipment were the most common choices. Four other items were written in including removal of the gravel, a walking path, more parking and an enclosed pre-school area.

STUDENT DRAWINGS

Students were asked to draw their dream playground. Examples of a few drawings are included here in addition to a "wordle" showing all the elements students included in their drawings. The larger the word, the more common students included this element in their image of a dream playground.



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Order Systems are a unique way of organizing the site in a sort of abstract way. We look at unique influences of each school and neighborhood for inspiration. As such, the ordering systems tend to become an abstraction that unifies a number of different influences and can act as a philosophical manta of sorts. In some cases the ordering systems might be interpreted literally an in other cases they remain a thematic device. Either way, the ordering systems are an important part of a Learning Landscape and can offer the whimsy and inspiration that these sites and their users desire by keeping the ideas fresh and fun.

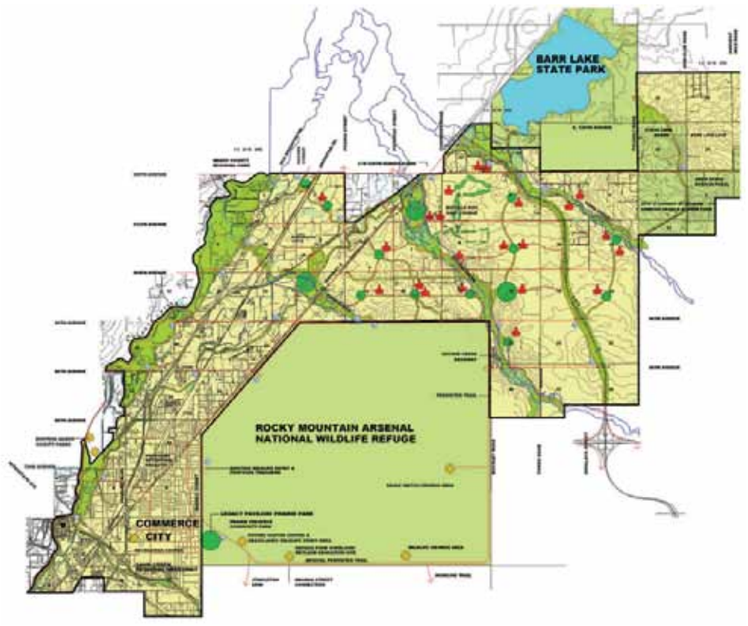
School Demographics
School Curriculum
School Motto
School Mascot
Neighborhood Influences

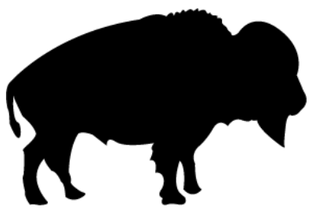
HANSON ORDERING SYSTEM

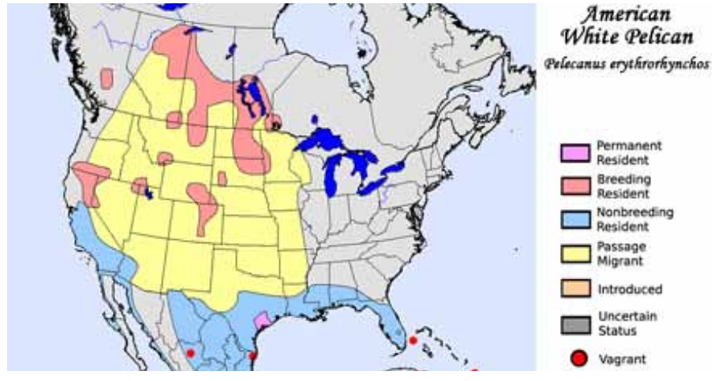
The Hanson ordering system is based off the adjacent Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, which when fully restored will be one of the largest native short-grass praire grasslands in the country. The refuge is home to a variety of wildlife including bison, mule deer, cyotes, praire dogs, eagles, burrowing owls, pelicans and hawks. Given that the mascot of Hanson is the Hawk, this further reinforces the schools link to the wildlife refuge.

Concepts for an ordering system could include American White Pelican migration patterns, bison heard organization, or other mammal footprints.

In addition sculptures, designs or other subtle elements of the wildlife and refuge could be incorporated in to the design of the schoolyard in such a way that it would reflect the change from younger grades on the east side to older grades on west side. Incorporation of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge will not only help connect the school to the surrounding natural environment, but can be used to spark students intrest and learning opportunites related to wildlife and the local natural environment.







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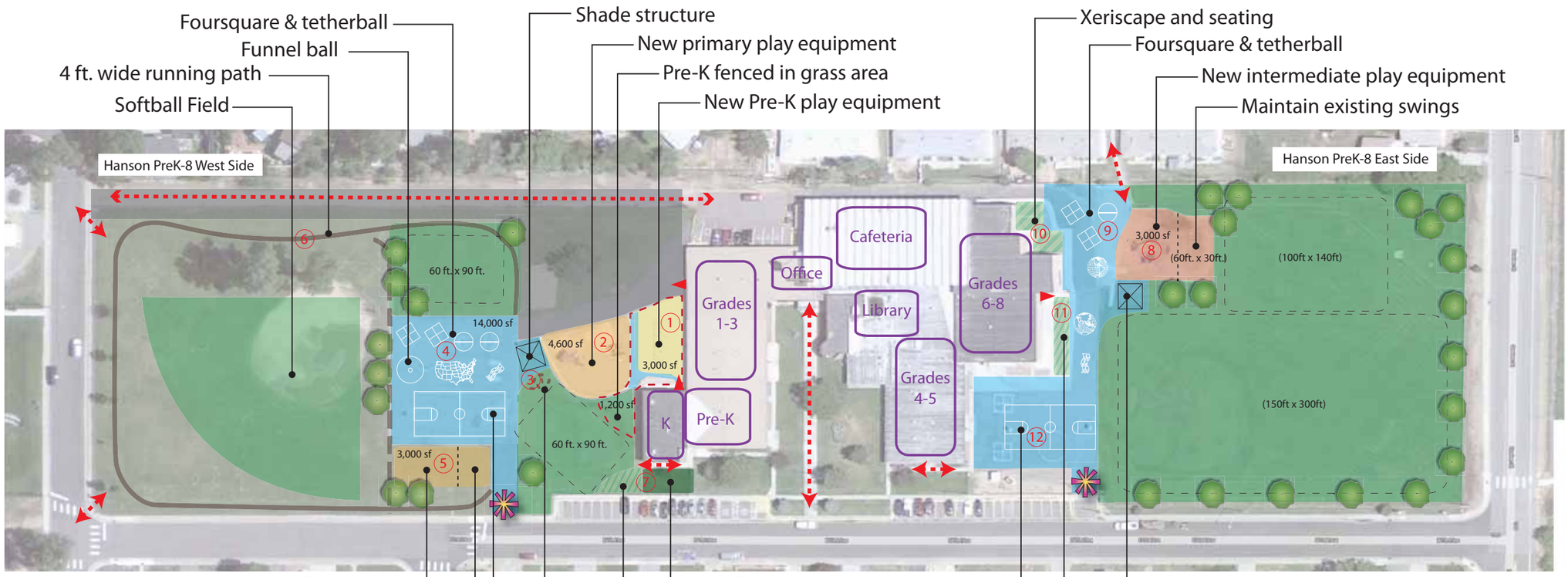
MASTER PLAN MAP



Legend - Key of Uses

- Hardscape
- Softscape
- Garden Area
- Pre-K Play Area
- Primary Play Area
- Intermediate Play Area
- Fence
- Classroom distribution
- Community Gateway
- Pedestrian Circulation
- Doors
- Reference Points

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HANSON MASTER PLAN DESCRIPTION

The Master Plan was created based on the issues, needs and desires voiced by parents, teachers, students and school staff at various meetings during the planning process. Eleven of the most notable and desirable changes to the Hanson PreK-8 Schoolyard are described in detail here and referenced in the master plan graphic.

WEST SIDE DESCRIPTION

① Fenced-in Pre-K Play Area

The school staff identified the area where the swings currently exist as the best location for a fenced-in Pre-K play area. This is because the existing play pit can be used saving the school district money during construction, it is protected from the street by the school building and because it is adjacent to the Pre-K classroom doors. The plan would include a 3,000 square foot play pit with new Pre-K play equipment, 1,200 square feet of grass that already exist but could be fenced, and 600 square feet of new concrete walkway connecting the play pit and the grass. The entire area will be fenced providing enough space for up to 64 preschool students, well more than the current Pre-K classroom capacity allowing room for future expansion.

② New Primary Play Equipment

The existing play pit that is 6,600 square feet provides the best opportunity for new primary play equipment that could incorporate more engaging climbing structures and elements than the existing equipment.

③ Outdoor Classroom

An outdoor classroom space was strongly desired by the design team and the plan includes a space for an outdoor classroom in conjunction with the planned shade structure that is centrally located close to the school doors.

④ Educational and Color Paving

Color and educational paving was very strongly desired by both parents and teachers for the west side. There is a large paved area adjacent to the basketball court that could easily accommodate a new color map, two color four-square spots, two tetherballs sites, hopscotch and funnel ball. The new pavement games would not only encourage physical activity, and provide a learning component, but give the students and the school fun colors on their playground that they can take pride in.

⑤ New Swingset Location and Possible Climbing Structure

Maintaining a swingset was strongly desired by teachers and students. Because the current location of the swings would be moved to make way for a Pre-K play area, the site south of the basketball court was chosen as an ideal new location. There is over 3,000 square feet available which could accommodate up to ten swings, six more than currently exist. Alternatively a new play pit could accommodate six swings and the left over space could be used for a new climbing structure, for which there was also strong support from teachers, parents and students.

⑥ New Running Path

A new running path on this side of the school was strongly expressed at meetings with both school staff and parents. Two options for a new four foot wide packed fine-gravel path are presented here. A larger preferred option that would be nearly a quarter mile circling the baseball field, new swing set location, basketball court and one of the grassy soccer areas, and connect to the planned shade structure providing a natural starting point, or a shorter version (shown dashed in the map) that would be close to a fifth of mile long encircling just the baseball field.

⑦ Garden & Habitat Area

The locations shown on the map are place holders for a 400 square foot habitat area that could include some native prairie grasses and shrubs modeled after the nearby Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, and a 1,000 square foot garden site that could be fenced and used to grow vegetables for the school and community. This would provide a learning opportunity for students related to gardening and healthy food.

EAST SIDE DESCRIPTION

⑧ New Intermediate Play Equipment

The current play pit provides the best location for new equipment that is more age appropriate to the older kids on the east side of the school.

⑨ Expanded Paved Play Area

The gravel area between the existing play pit and paved walkway on the north side of the schoolyard provides the best opportunity for expanding the paved play area with the added benefit of removing the gravel that is current-

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ly a hazard. If the current gravel area were paved this would provide an additional 2,200 square feet of paved play area. This combined with the existing pavement would provide adequate space to add four-square, tetherball, maps and other color pavement enhancing the character and attractiveness to this side of the school, while providing additional opportunities for students to engage in physical activity.

⑩ Opportunity for New Seating Area

The two raised gravel patios in the back of the school are unused, act as an eyesore, and contain gravel that is constantly getting kicked onto the adjacent paved area or clogging the nearby drain. The 825 square foot site provides an opportunity to add drought-tolerant planting areas which will enhance the look of the site.

⑪ New Landscaping at East Building Entrance

Of all the sites where gravel exists at Hanson PreK-8 this site adjacent to the east entrance of the school provides the biggest eyesore and gravel hazard due to the heavy pedestrian traffic between the school and schoolyard. The 830 square foot area also provides a great opportunity for new landscaping that could include rocks and maintenance free plants. This would remove the nuisance of the gravel and make the prominent entrance to this side of the school more visually pleasing.

⑫ Improved Basketball Court

While correcting the slope of the existing basketball court would be difficult, repaving the court in a manner that provides better drainage, adding stripping and repairing the basketball hoops will go a long way in enhancing this area of the schoolyard.

ADDITIONAL MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS

Soccer Space

Preserving space for soccer was one of the most important attributes to both students and teachers. The plan for both sides of the school leaves large grass areas that can be used for soccer and other field games. The west side has two smaller fields conducive to the younger kids, plus overflow space on the baseball field. The east side preserves one large and one smaller field that would be better suited for the needs of older kids.

Gateways

Gateways were included for both the east and west sides of the school. The schoolyard is well used by the community and one providing prominent gateways into the schoolyard, not only enhance the identity of the schoolyard, but invite the community to use the schoolyard as a resource.

Shade Structures

The lack of shade was a strong concern expressed by the design team and the plan incorporates a shade structure on each side of the school that is centrally located at natural gathering spaces on the schoolyard. The shade structure both provides shelter and acts as a centerpiece on the playground.

Trees

New trees are included throughout both sides of the schoolyard, providing greenery and shade that will help to enhance the attractiveness of the schoolyard.

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Section four 4

- Cost Estimate
- Resources
- Acknowledgements
- Master Plan Poster

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Hanson K- 8 - Active Play Areas Master Plan - Cost Estimate

Category	Unit	Unit Cost	Quantities		Total Cost
Play Equipment , Structures & Surfacing					
Play Equipment					
ECE Sandbox w/ sand	LS	$2,000.00	1	$	2,000.00
ECE Sandbox cover	LS	$40.00	1	$	40.00
Climbing Structures	LS	$5,000.00	1	$	5,000.00
Cool Topper	LS	$3,400.00	1	$	3,400.00
ECE Rec Plus - Play Equipment	LS	$25,000.00	1	$	25,000.00
ECE Swings	LS	$5,000.00	1	$	5,000.00
Intermediate Play Equipment installed	LS	$35,000.00	1	$	35,000.00
Primary Play equipment Installed	LS	$35,000.00	1	$	35,000.00
Swings (3 bay 6 seat) (Pending final costs)	LS	$4,000.00	1	$	4,000.00
SUBTOTAL				**$**	**114,440.00**
Play Surfacing (12" EWF Delivered/Installed)					
Pre-K Play Area	SF	$2.50	3,000	$	7,500.00
Primary Play Area	SF	$2.50	4,700	$	11,750.00
Intermediate Play Area	SF	$2.50	3,000	$	7,500.00
Swing Area	SF	$2.50	1,800	$	4,500.00
SUBTOTAL				**$**	**31,250.00**
Concrete & ADA Accessability					
Concrete Seat-Wall	LF	$29.00	0	$	-
Concrete Flatwork- 6" depth	SF	$4.00	605	$	2,420.00
Concrete mow band, 8"x6"	LF	$11.00	0	$	-
Concrete Curbwall @ play pits	LF	$20.00	656	$	13,120.00
Concrete Ramp at Play Pits	EA	$800.00	4	$	3,200.00
Concrete Stairs	LF	$37.00	0	$	-
SUBTOTAL				**$**	**18,740.00**
Site Work					
Asphalt Striping and painting					
Earthwork and Drainage	1	$15,000.00	1		$15,000
New Asphalt, 4" depth	SF	$1.80	2,200	$	3,960.00
Reconditioned seal existing	SF	$0.95	27,000	$	25,650.00
Outdoor Classroom	EA	$10,000.00	1	$	10,000.00
Map Striping	EA	$1,500.00	2	$	3,000.00
Tetherball Striping	EA	$150.00	3	$	450.00
Hopscotch Striping	EA	$400.00	2	$	800.00
Basketball Court Striping	EA	$400.00	1	$	400.00
4-Square Striping	EA	$250.00	4	$	1,000.00
Funnel Ball Striping	EA	$200.00	1	$	200.00
Painted Line-Up Lines	LS	$200.00	0	$	-
Painted Goal Posts	EA	$50.00	7	$	350.00
SUBTOTAL				**$**	**45,810.00**
Running Track					
Crusher Fines, 4' WIDE X 4" depth	SF	$1.00	4,000	$	4,000.00
Crusher Fines Stabilizer	SF	$1.20	4,000	$	4,800.00
SUBTOTAL				**$**	**8,800.00**

Hanson K- 8 - Active Play Areas Master Plan - Cost Estimate

Site Furnishings, Athletic Equipment and Misc.					
Picnic Table	EA	$1,000.00	3	$	3,000.00
Trash Receptacle	EA	$650.00	3	$	1,950.00
6' Bench	EA	$850.00	4	$	3,400.00
Banner Pole and Banners	EA	$900.00	3	$	2,700.00
Basketball Goal	EA	$1,200.00	2	$	2,400.00
Tetherball Poles	EA	$350.00	1	$	350.00
Permanent or Moveable Soccer Goals	EA	$1,000.00	2	$	2,000.00
Backstop with Hood	EA	$2,500.00	1	$	2,500.00
Shade Structures @ Plaza	EA	$25,000.00	2	$	50,000.00
Gateway Feature	LS	$10,000.00	2	$	20,000.00
SUBTOTAL				**$**	**88,300.00**
Gardens, Planting and Irrigation					
Shrub Bed Soil Prep	SF	$0.30	400	$	120.00
Sod and Soil Prep @ field and play areas	SF	$0.55	0	$	-
Irrigation, shrub beds	SF	$0.75	400	$	300.00
Irrigation, sod areas	SF	$0.55	0	$	-
Irrigation, tree bubblers	EA	$60.00	40	$	2,400.00
Shade Tree, 3" caliper	EA	$400.00	20	$	8,000.00
Deciduous Ornamental Tree, 2.5" caliper	EA	$100.00	0	$	-
Boulder-field	EA	$150.00	12	$	1,800.00
Shredded Mulch, 4" depth over fabric	SF	$1.20	400	$	480.00
SUBTOTAL				**$**	**13,100.00**
Vegetable Garden					
Soil Amendment	CY	$35.00	15	$	525.00
Concrete mow band, 8"x6"	LF	$11.00	134	$	1,474.00
4' Chainlink Fence	LF	$20.00	70	$	1,400.00
Chain Link Gate, 4' width	EA	$350.00	2	$	700.00
Irrigation	EA	$1,500.00	1	$	1,500.00
Compost Storage & Accessories	EA	$1,000.00	1	$	1,000.00
SUBTOTAL				**$**	**6,599.00**
Metal					
Steel Edger	LF	$5.00	2,010	$	10,050.00
4' Chainlink Fence (at ECE Play Pit)	LF	$20.00	400	$	8,000.00
6' Chainlink Fence	LF	$25.00	0	$	-
Chain Link Gate, 4' width (at ECE Play Pit and Community Garden)	EA	$350.00	2	$	700.00
Chain Link Gate, 8' wide - 6'ht. double swing	EA	$1,200.00	0	$	-
SUBTOTAL				**$**	**18,750.00**
			Site Improvements Total	$	345,789.00
Project Start Up					
Typical construction mobilization		$10,000.00			$10,000
Infrastructure					
Typical infrastructure construction/repair		$10,000.00			$10,000
Demolition					
Typical Demolition		$25,000.00			$25,000
Architecture Engineering and Coordination					
8% of construction cost		$27,663.12			**$27,663.12**
Owner Representative Fees					
5% of construction cost		$17,289.45			$17,289.45
Contingency Cost					
10% of construction cost		$34,578.90			$34,578.90
			Project Grand Total	**$**	**470,320.47**

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Resources:

Colorado Children's Campaign

Commerce City Press Release February 5, 2011

Education News Colorado "Child obesity threatens Colorado's future" by Diane Carman on Feb 14th, 2011

Health at a Crossroads
2010 Supplement to the Colorado Health Report Card – Colorado Health Foundation

National Center for Health Statistics,

National Survey of Children's Health, 2003–2007, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Acknowledgements:

Colorado Health Foundation

Principals, staff, students and parents at:
- Alsup Elementary
- Central Elementary
- Dupont Elementary
- Hanson PreK-8
- Kemp Elementary
- Monaco Elementary
- Rose Hill Elementary

Adams County School District 14 Administration

Adams County School District 14 Facility Maintenance

Adams County School District 14 Communications

Adams County School District 14 Wellness

Commerce City Parks and Recreation

Recreation Plus

University of Colorado Denver
College of Architecture and Planning

Colorado Center for Community Development

Learning Landscapes

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Garrick Swansen
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Bryon Weber
Michael Griffith
Letora Fortune
Patrick Pickard
Patrick Healy

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HANSON PRE K - 8

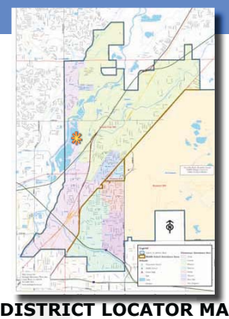
ACTIVE PLAY AREAS - MASTER PLAN

VISION

To create a safe and attractive play space that encourages active and educational environments for the students and community.

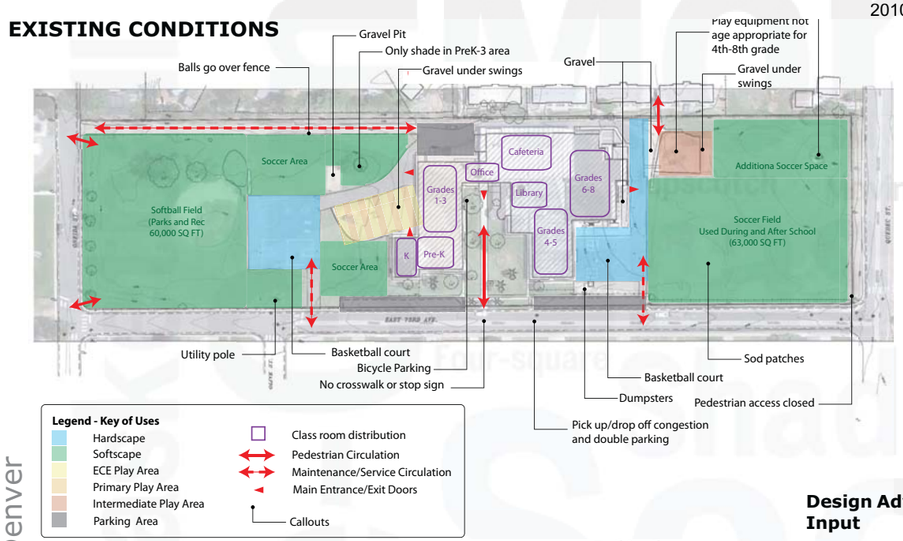
GOALS

1. Enhance the schoolyard to engage students and encourage physical activity.
2. Provide safe and age-appropriate play equipment.
3. Increase shade and gathering spaces to foster positive social activity and opportunities for outdoor learning.
4. Create a unique identity for the schoolyard reflecting age groups.
5. Enhance the schoolyard by incorporating art, appropriate colors and unique elements to foster community pride.
6. Preserve adequate space for soccer while accommodating new equipment.
7. Maintain the schoolyard as a hub and resource for the community.

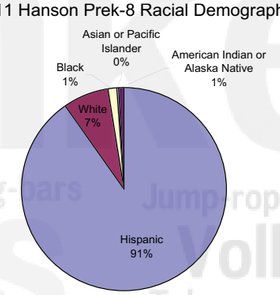


DISTRICT LOCATOR MAP

EXISTING CONDITIONS



2010-11 Hanson Prek-8 Racial Demographics



PREFERRED ACTIVE PLAY AREAS PLAN

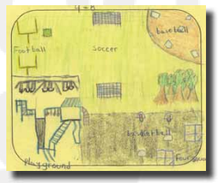
Legend - Key of Uses

- Hardscape
- Softscape
- Garden Area
- Pre-K Play Area
- Primary Play Area
- Intermediate Play Area
- Fence
- Classroom distribution
- Community Gateway
- Pedestrian Circulation
- Doors
- Trees
- Reference Points

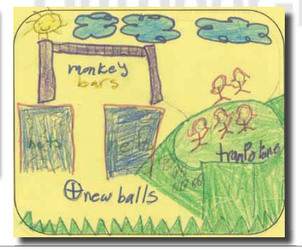
A LOOK INTO HANSON ELEMENTARY'S FUTURE

Drainage Problems

Play equipment on east side



Students draw their dream playground.



Design Advisory Team and Community Input

Nine-member team including the principle, the parent liaison for the school, the district wellness coordinator, and the six members of the wellness team - PE teacher; the health clerk; three teachers; and, a paraprofessional.

Parents discuss design ideas

Children at play on colored pavement

Outdoor classroom

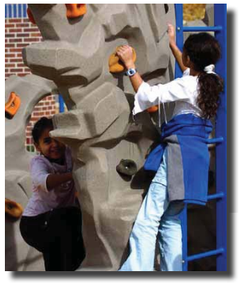
Shade structure

Educational and Color Paving
West side color and educational paving highly desirable by parents and teachers.

New pavement games: encourage physical activity, provide a learning component, and fun colors enliven playground that students can take pride in.

New Play Equipment
Strong need for new Pre-K and primary age-appropriate play equipment. New primary play equipment to emphasize upper body development.

Use of Existing Site Attributes
The existing play pits provide ample room for new equipment.



Age-appropriate play equipment

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Hanson Pre K-8