Picture by Godsman 4th Grader

Master Plan For
Godsman Elementary School

Prepared For: Denver Public Schools
900 Grant St.
Denver, Colorado

Approved__________________________, ________
Principal, Godsman Elementary date

Approved__________________________, ________
CDC Representative date

Approved__________________________, ________
P. M., DPS Facility Management date

Approved__________________________, ________
Grounds Supervisor, DPS Facility Management date
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PROJECT INTRODUCTION

I. The Challenge
Studies show that a well-planned and equipped exterior play area enhances the learning environment resulting in improved learning and achievement. Such play areas provide physical and mental challenges that translate into improved health and learning attention. Furthermore, with proper design, these areas themselves become outdoor classrooms or learning landscapes. One of the principal secondary goals of all schools, including elementary, is to provide a focus for the community – a place to gather and to meet, a place to enjoy, a place that enhances the community’s appearance. A reflection of this community importance is Denver’s Mayor Wellington Webb’s statement, “As Mayor, I have long recognized that we cannot have a great city and great neighborhoods without great schools.”

Denver Public Schools [DPS] is an urban school district with many of the same challenges of other urban districts. The infrastructure is aging – the average facility is almost 50 years old. The ongoing 1998 General Obligation Bond [GOB] will increase the number of schools to 130 but contains no funding for existing elementary schools or any other existing school playground. Approximately 75 DPS elementary schools require moderate to extensive renovations or upgrades to meet adequate standards. These include replacing playground equipment, providing irrigation and sod [to eliminate gravel and dirt fields], providing American with Disability Act [ADA] accessibility, and providing an outdoor classroom learning environment. Approximately half of the 75 elementary schools are located within underserved neighborhoods. It is in these neighborhoods where transforming the schoolyard is most pressing. These schools have chronic disciplinary problems that are disruptive to a school’s academic environment. Playgrounds lacking appropriate choices for children become arenas to bully and tease. Recess should be a positive experience that compliments their academic development, a place where children develop their emotional, physical and social skills.

II. The Solution
The “Learning Landscape” program is an entrepreneurial community-minded alliance of public and private interests that seeks to strengthen Denver Public Schools and their surrounding neighborhoods by designing new multi-dimensional playgrounds and social gathering places. The success of this program is founded on a mutual respect of aesthetic, maintenance, safety, and recreational issues. The University of Colorado at Denver’s Landscape Architecture department offers a seminar course called FINDING COMMON GROUND—EXPLORING THE URBAN EXPERIENCE.

Students of landscape architecture, architecture and other disciplines have come together with Professor Lois Brink to research current educational, sociological, and environmental thought regarding urban space in general and
elementary school grounds in particular. Each student in the course selects a school from a predetermined pool and uses this knowledge to develop a vision and master plan for each school. The master plan approach will suit a multi-faceted contemporary existence—engaging a child’s educational and recreational experience with that of the community at-large.

III. The Intent of the Master Plan

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 goals 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 or systems that will be used on the design phase to organize the programmatic uses. This plan, once approved, will provide a framework for fund raising and future construction.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The design effort undertaken at Godsman Elementary is more than an effort to create a play space. It is more specifically an endeavor to create a sense of place for the students and community alike. A sense of place encourages expression and unfolds a curiosity within children that manifests itself in the form of exploration and creative learning.

Watch little children play in the beach…their hands touch lightly a shell or a piece of driftwood and they finger each material with care, investigating probing, experiencing – with no agenda. They toy with a piece of colored plastic as if it were the rarest of lovely shells, since they are yet unprejudiced about the comparative value of things. It's wide-open world full of delights, with waves, breezes, and beach grasses, as carefree and spontaneous as the small adventures themselves. - Joan Erikson

Leading early childhood development specialists agree that playing is a form of learning that directly supports physical and emotional development in children. During an age where playtime is being eliminated in American schools, it is being discovered that playtime is more essential than ever. It has been found that behavior in children significantly improves when their playgrounds are enhanced. Likewise, there is a direct positive influence on the rate of attendance, participation, and general attitude when kids are allowed an adequate amount of playtime during the school day.

Playgrounds in the traditional sense are important, but they usually do very little to inspire the creative aspirations that children possess. Our purpose is to maximize the playground at Godsman as a place where learning can flourish outside of the traditional classroom. There are many ways to achieve this goal. The first is providing a variety of experiences. The second is to include items on the playground that allow children to exert energy while simultaneously provoking creative thought. This master plan attempts to accomplish both. Of course, aesthetic considerations are important as well. An attractive landscape will instill the community with a sense of pride and ownership. If successful, Godsman will evolve as a revitalized landscape that is enjoyed by the surrounding community as a sanctuary of inspiration, leisure, and learning.
PART 1 - ASSESSING THE PRESENT SITUATION

I. The Neighborhood

Location

The Godsman neighborhood is located in southwest Denver bordered (more or less) by Mississippi and Florida Avenues to the north and South. The Platte River and Zuni Street border the neighborhood to the east and west respectively. Godsman Elementary is situated at the intersection of Tejon Street and Akansas Avenue. The area is mostly single-family residential but evolves into a more commercial and multi-family along the northern boundary of Mississippi Avenue. The residences are typically small, vernacular, detached, single level homes with small front and rear yards. A common house will usually match the materials and architectural style of those surrounding it. This may indicate that the neighborhood was developed incrementally with varying architectural styles developing on a block-by-block basis. For instance, one block may contain all brick residences while the following block may contain houses that display a common type of wood siding.

Description

Godsman Elementary was built in 1958 and it is assumed that most of the houses in the area were built around the same time period. This assumption is reinforced by the presence of the occasional meandering suburban street, breaking the traditional pre WWII grid system. Moderate income, working class families likely occupied these modest homes. Today, many of the houses are in a state of deterioration while others have been maintained and/or altered to reflect a more contemporary style. Overall, it appears that residents take pride
In their neighborhood, as yards are mostly well-maintained and residential facades maintain a common attractiveness. It is evident that within the Godsman neighborhood there reside many skilled laborers. This reveals itself when justifying the amount of ornate stone and ironwork in landscaping throughout the neighborhood. This beautiful and detailed work often times exceeds the economic context of the neighborhood, which demonstrates a certain level of care and commitment to their environment.

Recreation and Amenities

The Godsman neighborhood includes many pockets of parks and open space. Most of these areas are owned and maintained by the City and County of Denver. Formal open space areas include Ruby Hill Park, Rachel Park, and Godsman Park (which is connected to the elementary school grounds). It was difficult to witness a large degree of activity in any of these open space areas due to the cold weather at the time of observation. It was indicated however (by the Godsman teaching staff) that during warmer weather, residents often gathering and play soccer and other organized sports in these parks. In regard to the earlier assumptions about community pride, a group of individuals were observed cleaning litter from a park drainage. At first glance, there did not appear to be a lot of play equipment integrated into the open space, which may indicate that Godsman elementary may be a weekend destination for families seeking a formal playground experiences.

Demographics

A majority of the community is Hispanic. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 63 percent of the Godsman population is Latino while the remaining population is generally white. Of the total population, the median age is 32 years. The average household size in the neighborhood is 2.82 people. In comparison, the average family size is nearly 4 people. As mentioned previously, the houses are small and may not be able to readily accommodate more than 4 residents. A vast majority of the residences including two or more people are
“family” households where the residents are related to one another by marriage, kinship, etc. Of the multi-residents households only 4 percent are “unmarried-partner households”. This may indicate the importance of traditional family values in the Godsman neighborhood. Less than 3 percent of the total housing stock is vacant.

According to the Piton Foundation, the Latino population at Godsman Elementary is over 88 percent, significantly higher than the surrounding neighborhood. This may indicate that Hispanic and Latino families are more likely to have large families than other racial groups in the community. An analysis of the student population can provide good indicators about the overall neighborhood profile. Over 52 percent of the student body is learning English as a second language. This may partially account for the relatively “low” CSAP accountability rating at Godsman. Every grade performed well below the Denver elementary school average. It is interesting to note that 85.7 percent of the students at Godsman are receiving Free or Reduced Lunch from Denver Public Schools. If this statistic is reflective of the larger community population, then the Godsman neighborhood may rate among the poorest in Denver. The following shows 2004 Godsman test scores in comparison to other schools in the Denver Public School District.

Given the fact that Godsman is a majority Latino, it is not unusual to hear Spanish being spoken as the primary language among the students and parents. In fact, during parental meetings, Godsman staff will usually rely on an interpreter to communicate.

II. The School

Location

Godsman Elementary is located at 2120 W. Arkansas Avenue at the center of the Godsman or Ruby Hill neighborhood. The campus is bordered by Arkansas Avenue to the north, Florida Avenue to the south, Tejon Street to the east and Zuni Street to the west.
Constituents

As previously mentioned, a large majority of the students at Godsman are Hispanic or Latino (88.3%) and nearly 50 percent of the 550-student population is learning English as a second language. Over 85 percent of the students receive free/reduced lunch from the school system, which indicates that a vast majority of the students are from families below poverty level. Godsman Elementary services Early Childhood Education (ECE) through Grade 5. Although the daily attendance rate is 93.6 percent, the CSAP performance of Godsman is rated “low” with an improvement rating at “stable”. The average test scores are substantially lower in every category when compared to the average for Denver Public Schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Godsman</th>
<th>All Elementary Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade Reading</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade Writing</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade Reading</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade Writing</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade Math</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade Reading</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade Writing</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Site Inventory

The grounds encompass a little more than 6 acres with the building footprint consuming over 1 acre of the total land area. The remaining area is mostly composed of parking, play equipment space and open sports fields. The general breakdown of the space is as follows:
Considering, Godsman was built in 1958, the campus is in good shape (more or less). This is the obvious result of a continual maintenance. All of the concrete sidewalks surrounding the building were replaced within the last 3 years and are relatively void of cracking or deterioration. The blacktop appears to have recently been replaced and as it reveals little evidence settling or drainage problems. Adequate sewer drains are placed at the edge of the blacktop to collect a majority of the storm run-off (which has evidently preserved the asphalt). The
entire campus is slightly sloped to the south at about a 3 percent incline, which has allowed proper site drainage and prevented pooling. There are a few small areas on the campus that have been able to maintain bluegrass including the parking lot islands and a picnic area on the north edge of the school grounds (constituting less than 0.34 of an acre).

All designated sport fields (over 1.25 acres) are dirt and gravel. This situation may contribute to the generation of heat on the site during the warm months. It is clear that planted trees and other vegetation have difficulty surviving when planted at Godsman. The perimeter of the site was recently planted with numerous shade trees of which only one remains. Other than a few scattered oak trees in the main playground area and a large Cottonwood in the ECE playground, the site is lacking adequate shade (either natural or constructed). Small areas around the periphery of the playground (in the picnic area and ECE playground) contain small evergreen shrubbery for ornamental purposes.

Florida Avenue and Tejon Street border the main playground. Tejon is a smaller neighborhood road while Florida is a commuter road and transports a substantial amount of traffic throughout the day. The school administrators, from a traffic and inward observation standpoint, have expressed concern about this corridor from a traffic and visibility standpoint. Beyond these roads are residential neighborhoods with the exception of south beyond Florida Avenue where a large open space corridor stretches from east to west.
Parking

According to DPS standards, Godsman requires over 53 parking spaces to adequately accommodate the need of the public, visitors, and teaching staff. The school has 56 parking spaces including 3 handicap-designated spaces. The drop-off area is associated with the main parking area on the west side of the school near the ECE playground and the main entrance. Since older children are not allowed in the ECE playground, they are expected to wait at main entrance when being picked up. The main playground area is located directly on the other side of the building from this pick-up area. Buses typically park along Arkansas Avenue to drop off students near the main entrance. Pedestrians are expected to access the campus from Arkansas Avenue, which is where the main entrance is situated. There is an emergency vehicle access point on the south side of the school via Florida Avenue.
Play Equipment

Most of the equipment in the playground appears to be relatively new and therefore likely complies with current DPS standards. It is built with a modern plastic composite material that eliminates the possibility of splinters and burning. There are however a few items that appear to be older than 10 years. These include the jungle gym, a metal “truck” climbing apparatus, metal swing rings, and the tetherball poles. There is a higher ratio of items in the ECE playground that are unquestionably older and potentially non-compliant. These include small concrete climbing structures that are likely from the 1960’s, a 3-per-bay swing set, and a chain-link climbing apparatus. Most of the play equipment in both playgrounds are vandalized with graffiti. Recently, a slide in the primary playground was set on fire.

The sports field area of the main playground does not include any sort of established goals (football, soccer etc.) The fields do however include baseball/kickball fence link backstops. The most popular activities at Godsman are basketball, tetherball, and soccer. Play equipment that appears to receive a high degree of activity include the jungle gym and swing rings.

Site Condition

All things considered, the following is list of the main problems observed with the conditions and configuration of the current site:

- Lake of shade
- Potential safety hazards associated with non-compliant play equipment
- Not enough natural turf for organized sports and play
- Vandalism to play equipment
- Playground is highly exposed to Florida Avenue
- Soft surface around play equipment is not sufficient to prevent injury
- Campus is underutilized
• No formal wait area for kids to be picked-up
• No school bus pull-off area
• Traffic congestion on Arkansas Avenue during drop-off and pick-up times
• Lack of vegetation
• Lack of shade
• Lack of drinking water
• Outdated or broken landscape elements or playground equipment.
• Minimal artwork or color
• Minimal learning components
• Drainage problems on the north side of the building
• No goal structures in play field
• Lack of quiet study areas
• Lack of interesting topography
• Noise pollution from surrounding roads
• Lack of connection to the heritage or culture of the neighborhood

Survey

When surveyed about the elements that should be included in a new playground environment, teachers, parents, and students expressed many of the same views. The most popular item was the climbing rock, which received votes from over 70 percent of those who responded. Other popular items were the shade structure (60%), play equipment (53%), and the outdoor classroom (46%). A few items did not receive any votes including the playground maps, the garden, and swings. Variations of the playground maps and swings are already included within the existing playground area. Other items wished by Godsman staff included circuit style exercise equipment and perhaps an outdoor amphitheatre.

Most of the school site appears adequate for day-to-day school activities, but improvements can be undertaken. Namely, a grass sports field is something that would benefit the children since soccer one of the most popular activities during recess at Godsman. Specific play equipment items need replacement, as they are no longer compliant with DPS standards. The school could benefit from instillation of cultural and experiential learning items (i.e. art,
gardens, theatre, etc.) to add variety to the landscape. There is a lot of underutilized space around the campus, especially directly south of the building along Florida Avenue. There are many options for these areas that need to be explored. Finally, the most immediate need is for shade on the Godsman playground as the campus is very vulnerable to harmful solar exposure. The children, parents, and teachers at the school have reinforced the need for a shade structure as verified in the playground survey. Needless to say, an aggressive tree-planting program would certainly help the situation while providing an aesthetic component to the schoolyard.

### III. Safety Assessment

**Playground Safety Site Assessment**

Elementary School: Godsman Elementary  
Address: 2120 W. Arkansas Avenue  
Inspector: Brian McNellis  
Inspection Date: 3/5/05  
Note: If any “NO” is checked for any of the individual site assessment issues, please provide detail comments on additional sheets of paper and attach to this report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> General Concerns</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Can the playground be seen from the street? x</td>
<td>Florida Avenue and Tejon Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Is the playground fenced off from the street, open water sources, ditches, etc? x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Does the playground provide for wheelchair access? x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Are drinking fountains present, operational, and clean? x</td>
<td>None outside</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Is the size of the playground equipment correct for the age group utilizing it? x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Does the playground have adequate site drainage? x</td>
<td>New</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Is the equipment free of vandalism? x</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Does the playground provide approved shade structures and/or trees? x</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B.</strong> Ground Cover</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Is fall protection, EWF (Engineered Wood Fiber), provided under all play equipment? x</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Is the loose fall material 12 inches deep? x</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Does the fall material extend at least 6 feet beyond the play equipment footprint? x</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Is the fall material non-compacted? x</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Is there a rubber mat present that is 1 inch thick for every 4 feet of equipment height? x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Does the fall material extend beyond the beam swing height? (1:2 Height to Distance Ratio?) x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Is there a provision for keeping the swing area x</td>
<td></td>
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### C. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Compliance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are there openings present in the play equipment that are between 4 and 7 inches?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are there any “V” shaped entrapments present in the play equipment?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Are there 38 inch high non-climbable tails on all raised platforms/decks?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Are there any protrusions that extend beyond the play equipment surface? If so, is the protrusion’s end diameter larger than that of its base?</td>
<td>x</td>
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### D. Risk Management

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<tr>
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<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Have the spin-arounds and see-saws been removed?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are the decks lower than 66 inches high? Is the equipment height less than 104 inches?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are the grass areas free of holes and/or protruding sprinkler heads?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No grass in play area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are the walkways and ball courts free of trip hazards?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are the trash cans/dumpsters “child-proofed”?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. If present, are the soccer goals firmly anchored and in good condition?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. If present, are the chain-link fencing mesh and any chain link backstop meshing serviceable and free of barbed edges?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Are the metal slides shaded? What is the slide compass orientation?</td>
<td>west</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Have merry-go-rounds, pivot-type see-saws, concrete pipe, and glider-type swings been removed?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. If present, are the basketball goals of the non-climbable gooseneck type?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### E. Maintenance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are the swings and bearing chains in good order?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are “S” style hooks closed and swing seats intact?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is the play equipment anchored according to specifications?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If present, are the wood structures sound, smooth, and free from splinters and excessive checks?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are the trees properly pruned and healthy?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. If present, are the benches sound, smooth, and free of any sharp corners?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### F. Supervision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is the play equipment centralized for easy supervision?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is there a separate play area provided for the ECE / pre-primary children?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Have the chain nets been removed from the basketball rims?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART 2 – CREATING THE FUTURE

I. Vision

In partnership with the Godsman neighborhood, we will provide a safe, aesthetic, and interactive landscape that promotes physical activity, fosters bilingual learning, and is mutually inclusive of all students and community members.

II. Goals

1) To create distinct cultural icons for community identity.
2) To integrate natural and built elements that provide sufficient shade while enhancing the appearance of the school.
3) To implement natural and/or synthetic turf areas for organized sports and play.
4) To add dynamic and colorful artwork and/or structural elements that stimulate creative thought and learning.
5) To provide quiet and areas for learning and solitude.

III. Spatial Concept

The spatial concept is rather simple and utilizes much of the existing defined space as much of it has recently been installed and remains in good shape. The major components are mainly the designation of underutilized space as learning landscape elements. This includes the northeastern section of the campus and directly south of the building. These areas can used as many things. Administration at Godsman expressed their interest of having an outdoor classroom/amphitheatre, which is suggested near the northeast corner of the site. Associated with this may be planted areas and the official Godsman gateway. On the south end of the school, a wildlife ecology area is suggested where exists is a vast vacant area. This will provide some aesthetic quality to the school when observed from Florida Avenue. This area also be a space that would accommodate some shade opportunities.
IV. Ordering System

The spatial concept is inspired by two contrasting ideas. The first is simply derived from the popularity of basketball at Godsman. Dozens of children (boys and girls) were observed playing basketball during each site visit to the school. Many staff had mentioned this as a particular characteristic of Godsman as well. It is clear that basketball is a unifying activity in the community since it inspires
sportmanship and spectatorship among the students and neighborhood residents. Godsman Elementary should be a place that allows these types of events to flourish.

The other concept is inspired by the slow changes that the Godsman neighborhood has undergone from the time it was initially developed. Needless to say, the neighborhood will continue to evolve into future as well. The second concept pays homage to the first occupiers of the neighborhood; the dinosaur. One of the great roamers of the Colorado landscape was the stegosaurus, which is suggested (along with the figure of a basketball) as an organizing form for the Godsman learning landscape.

V. How will the Goals be Fulfilled

Now that goals for Godsman Elementary have been established, it is important to determine how each of these goals will be achieved. For the purpose of this section, each of the goals will be studied individually.

1) The first of the goals is, to create distinct cultural icons for community identity. This particular goal may be the most important since to a certain degree, encompasses each of the remaining goals. It is apparent that the Godsman
neighborhood is a place of pride and cohesiveness. Unfortunately, it is lacking areas that celebrate this wonderful characteristic. Since Godsman Elementary and the surrounding neighborhood is mostly of Hispanic heritage, it is certainly important for the area to have adequate social gathering areas for the immediate community. It is apparent that a number of sports are popular in to the local community, mainly basketball, and soccer. Godsman Elementary should seize the opportunity to develop the landscape as a place where these activities can flourish. Not only should the playground be utilized as a place where members of the community will come to participate in sports, but it should also be an attractive place where people will be encouraged to gather as spectators to these activities. This may entail including seating areas and/or shaded areas. Of course, players are needed if there are to be spectators, which may require the improvements of existing play areas to incorporate grass turf and proper equipment (i.e. goals). Other improvements to the play areas may include the painting resembling the logos of local sports teams (i.e. the Nuggets, Broncos, Rockies, etc.). Other community incentive improvements may be the inclusion of picnic tables for weekend family gatherings. Finally, this goal may be accomplished by providing an outdoor theatre area where community performances, meetings, and celebrations can occur.

2) The second goal is, to integrate natural and built elements that provide sufficient shade while enhancing the appearance of the school. It makes sense to provide shade in a variety of ways. The first is through natural improvements such as trees and other vegetation. Tree canopies are a wonderful amenity since they provide shade during the summer months and solar exposure during the winter months. Another positive incentive for tree coverage is the obvious aesthetic enhancement they provide. Specifically place man-made structures should also be incorporated into the landscape. These types of amenities may be the most necessary near sport areas (perhaps as part of the designated spectator areas). Properly designated shade areas
will instantaneously enhance the Godsman campus, as a place the community will want to gather while providing an essential amenity on a daily basis for the students and community alike.

3) The third goal is, to **implement natural and/or synthetic turf areas for organized sports and play**. Currently, the open play areas of Godsman are un-maintained dirt and gravel “field”. In order for these areas to be perceived as a recreational amenity it will likely require the planning of a resilient bluegrass turf. Not only will this enhance the appearance of the school grounds, but also it is much safer in terms of preventing bodily injury. Grass areas (native or not) provide incentive for gathering and relaxation that may be perceived as essential from a community standpoint.

4) The fourth goal is, to **add dynamic and colorful artwork and/or structural elements that stimulate creative thought and learning**. These can be in the form of murals, mosaics, sculptures, etc. Again, this will enhance the visual appearance of the landscape as an attractive place for students and the community to gather, socialize, play, and learn. It may be appropriate to designate areas where students can use colored chalk to draw pictures, establish games, spell, write, or do arithmetic. On a more formal level, the school provides opportunities for mural to be placed on blank exterior walls. A well-crafted mural of local history or cultural expression may support the first goal of establishing Godsman as a community icon (not to mention add interest to an otherwise blank wall). Artwork is also an effective method of reducing vandalism, which is a concern at the school. As mentioned previously, the Godsman may want to consider incorporating some logos of local sports teams on the designated blacktop in effort to enhance community pride while providing an aesthetic vitality. The blacktop is also an appropriate area for the establishment of games and/or paintings. This can be everything from the traditional including four square and hopscotch to the more elaborate such as a representation of the solar system or an abstract timeline associated with facts, figures. Any possibility may be accompanied by student paintings. Student involvement in the production of these art pieces on the school grounds is encouraged. The production of art should be perceived as a learning experience while instilling students with a sense of investment and belonging.
5) The fifth and final goal is, to provide quiet and intimate areas for learning. Currently the playground at Godsman is wide open and does not provide many opportunities for students to experience solitude. Although this may be great from a monitoring perspective, it makes for a rather uninteresting landscape. This goal can be achieved by providing more significant amounts of vegetation (i.e. trees and/or gardens). This may also be accomplished by providing infrastructure such as additional play equipment and or rocks, topography, etc. The Godsman landscape is large and there is plenty of area to incorporate a variety of these types of spaces. The main area proposed for these types of uses are on the east side of the east wing of Godsman Elementary.
Photo Gallery

(Note: all photos taken by Brian McNellis)

Existing pavement art

View of the primary playground

Graffiti on new play equipment

Empty wall space (a good opportunity for artwork)

Vacant space south of the school building

1960’s play equipment in the ECE playground
New play equipment in the ECE playground

Dilapidated bench in need of repair

Picnic area

Popular climbing apparatus

Adjacent City of Denver Park