Munroe Elementary

VISION STATEMENT

To transform a limited use playground to a safehaven for the entire neighborhood based upon the cultural, academic and physical needs of the school and the Westwood residents.

A Master Plan for Elementary School

Campus Improvements

Completed By: Elizabeth Vigil

Faculty Advisor: Lois Brink

Finding Common Ground

Exploring the Urban Experience

Fall Semester 2001

LA6686:001

University of Colorado at Denver
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Munroe Elementary School is located at 3440 West Virginia Avenue. The school is bordered by Irving Street, West Custer Place, South Knox Court, and West Virginia Avenue and situated in the Westwood neighborhood within District 3. Munroe is one of three elementary schools in the Focus Neighborhood Initiative in the Westwood area that will benefit from the city of Denver’s commitment to revitalization of the community while enhancing human services, encouraging community capacity building and facilitating a reduction in crime.

Six hundred and eighteen children attend Munroe within the Early Childhood Education (ECE) to fifth grade programs. Munroe offers GED and English as a second Language classes to parents during and after school as a community outreach program. Munroe’s staff is composed of sixty-five teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and support personnel.

Councilwoman Ramona Martinez’s office quoted the most recent census data stating there were 70,000 people residing in the District 3 area a 40% increase from other Denver districts. Westwood’s population is 14,999, children under the age 18 years of age equal 5,210 or 35% of the total population. The percentage of births to African-American is 1.2, Latino births 78.7%, and non-Latino White is 13.4. The teen birth rate between the ages of 15 and 19 is 158.9, unwed mothers gave birth to 42.3 of infants born in Westwood. Seventy-six percent of the residents are Latino, 16.9% non-Latino White, 3.4% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1.4% American Indian and 1.2% African American. Children living in single parent households equate to 34.8 of the Westwood population.

There are 4,062 housing units in the Westwood area with 29.3 of the population living at the current address a year or less. Approximately 10.5% of the houses were built before 1940. Homeowners occupy 51.8% of housing units, and the average sale price for a home is $88,878.9 as of 1998. Thirty percent of the average household total income is allocated for rent among 49.3% and 10.2 of Westwood’s residents living in housing publicly subsidized.

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1 Soto, John. Personal interview. 2 October 2001.
Nearly 10% of Westwood’s residents are on some form of public assistance, 6.7% of the children are on TANF, while 92% of the student body qualifies for the free and reduced lunch program.\(^2\) Children under the age of 12 years account for 13.5% of subsidized childcare. Thirty-three percent of the adults in the area are at poverty level. An average of 27.4% of Denver’s children 18 years or younger are considered indigent while Westwood’s children register at 45.6%. The average annual wage in 1996 was $25,838 and the average household income was $27,350 for 1995.

The native language of Spanish speakers is 53.7% and the remaining 46% of the student body are native English speakers. Transitional Native Language Instruction (TNLI) is offered to the children who speak little or no English (47%). Three years is the expected time period for all students enrolled in the TNLI program to transition from the Spanish literacy concept to English. English Language Development classes are incorporated for 45 minutes each day while using English materials.

The Collaborative Literacy Instruction incorporates a wide range of reading and writing activities in a daily 2 ½-hour block (this includes but is not limited to shared reading, read aloud, guided reading, phonics and writers’ workshop and literacy centers, etc…). Everyday Mathematics Curriculum is administered where proficiency is demonstrated and mathematical power is mastered.

Administration monitors and seeks to improve the student body’s overall performance through intervention and quarterly assessment programs in reading and writing for the children that score below proficiency. Two literacy programs, Early Success and Soar to Success serve as reading intervention implements to enhance the skills of the first through fifth grade children. An additional Reading Recovery one-on-one intervention program.

consisting of 16-20 of the school’s lowest achieving first graders in Spanish and English receive tutorial assistance.
The Six Trait Writing Assessment is used along with informal reading and writing inventories. Individual and classroom profiles are maintained to monitor and analyze the results. Munroe’s CSAP Spring 2000 test scores for math were 34% unsatisfactory, 42% partially proficient, 12% proficient, 1% advanced and 12% no scores (not enough problems were answered to merit a rating). Reading scores for the third, fourth and fifth graders were 30% unsatisfactory, 24% partially proficient, 41% proficient, .02 advanced and .03 no scores.

Drop out rates for high school students from the ninth to twelfth in 1999 were 12.9%. Twelve point four percent of Westwood’s teenagers actually finish high school. Reported offenses in the Westwood area as of September 2000 to August 2001 are as follows: Part 1 Persons includes homicide, sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault 7.5%. Part 1 Property entails burglary, larceny, theft of motor vehicles, and arson 52.3%. Part 2 Crimes are assaults, forgery/fraud, criminal mischief, weapon offenses, other sex offenses, drug related offenses, against family/child, and disorderly conduct 40.2%. Reported offenses in the Westwood area are slowly beginning to rise since the period between September of 1999 to August of 2000.

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2 Denver Police Department, SOPA. 14 September 2001.
Students
The student body is comprised of 615 children. There are five Native Americans or .008%, four African-Americans or .006%, 18 Asian/Pacific Islanders or .029%, 575 Latinos or 93% and 13 non Latino Whites or .021% children enrolled at Munroe. Approximately 45.6% of the children live at the poverty level, and 92% of the children qualify for free and reduced price lunches. The school suffers from a high mobility rate of 86% and 53.7% are Spanish native language speakers. One hundred and nineteen children are enrolled in the Pre-primary and Kindergarten program, 316 in the Primary (First through Third Grades) and 180 Intermediate (Fourth and Fifth Grades).

Students from nearly every class participated in the data collection for the Master Plan. An average of five children were requested from each classroom for a thirty-five minute span of time. Activities, problems with the present playground desires for new activities and equipment, architecture and related building materials were discussed before the children picked through 19 color images of play equipment depicting defined outdoor spaces, trees, gardens ponds etc., that appealed to them. Each child chose five photographs, drew a picture of what they wanted on their playground and taped their choices on the back of the page. The enthusiasm grew as they shared with each other why they picked their favorite images.
The power of peer suggestion outweighed the logical reasoning of many adults. A group of fifth graders wanted a village of real tree houses with bridges, the children involved with the initial selection process went back to class and discussed their choices. Nearly a week later the village of tree houses evolved into a village of pyramids placed in a forest with connecting chutes, ladders, rope bridges, rock climbing surfaces on one side of the pyramid and interactive murals on the opposite side. Some teachers and adults wanted baseball fields, outdoor classrooms, seating area and traditional swing sets. Children desired turf soccer fields, large shaded areas, gazebos, drinking fountains that resembled animal heads with large open mouths, pyramids built at different levels, a bell to ring when they were able to climb to the top of the highest pyramid, pulleys to ride from pyramid to pyramid and the list continued. The younger children wanted jungle gym equipment with lots of slides, traditional swings and tire swings, and archeological/treasure digs in the sandbox. Almost every child requested real grass areas for playing ball, some type of shaded area, tree houses or pyramids (at least two or three separate structures) climbing equipment, swings or pulleys (the older children preferred pulleys to swings almost 3 to 1), enormous climbing boulders, a corn, tomato and chili garden or butterfly garden, and outdoor water fountains. Swimming pools, climbing metal structures and community gardens were activities they were willing to eliminate.
Parents

Single parent families account for 34.8% of the school’s households. Teen (15-19) birth rate is 158.9% per thousand (versus 88.4% of greater Denver) in 1998 in the Westwood area. The education level of women with a twelfth grade education or less as of 1998 was 58.7%. Munroe actively pursues the involvement of the family and offers Adult English classes, a GED program in Spanish and employs a full-time family advocate. The mothers of the GED class participated in the Master Plan through a selection process based upon a presentation of the choices that were presented to their own children. A reoccurring theme was the need for a turf soccer field, shaded sitting areas, a safer means of dropping off and picking up their children from the school area due to the danger of the traffic flow, and the tree house/or pyramid village that their children wanted.
Administration
Individual meetings with Jody Cohen, Principal; Nancy Campbell, Assistant Principal; Chris Wilkinson, Challenge Teacher; Laura Thompson, Special Education Teacher; Alicia Quarters, Paraprofessional; Rosavalia Guzman, Family Advocate, and Eldon Hunter facility manager, were conducted from the initial phases to the final proposal phase. Basic structural improvements were initially offered for shaded play space, awning window coverings for the southern facing classrooms, safer traffic flow for drop off and pick up of children, a larger parking lot, relocation of the dumpsters, grass fields, updated equipment, trash receptacles, community or themed gardens, designated seating areas, outdoor class labs, sensory stimulant equipment for special education students, and proper drainage. In addition to Munroe Elementary School Administration, Professor Lois Brink and the UCD students met with DPS Facility Management staff where Professor Brink explained the nature of the project from the perspectives of UCD, DPS, and the individual schools.

Teachers and Paraprofessionals
Nearly all teachers, and paraprofessional are bilingual and are able to teach both English and Spanish language classes. Chris Wilkinson the Challenge Teacher, Eric Berghorn the Physical Education Teacher, Laura Thompson the Special Education Teacher: Alicia Quarters Paraprofessional and randomly surveyed teachers discussed and provided viable input. Some of the suggestions included a cultural theme, a professional track, outdoor classroom facilities, themed gardens, alcoves for individual retreats, shaded areas, tree houses, another form of playground equipment insulation and better planned asphalt play areas away from the classroom windows. Dirt fields and lack of proper drainage are major concerns when it rains or snows. The teaching staff was just as enthusiastic as their children about the prospect of new equipment, shade, shelter from the elements, and any form of grass, foliage or vegetation.

Larger Community
Councilwoman Ramona Martinez and her staff personnel were contacted and voiced their support for the project. Ms. Martinez, John Soto and Bernadette Salazar assisted with resources and networking avenues. Denver Police Department District 4, Captain Rudy Sandoval, and Community Police Officers Manny Hays and Mark Regerman have provided resources, safety data and constant assistance since the on set of the project.

Drawing by Amador Acevedo. 4th grade
Cultural Identity

I Ball Court
The development of an I Shaped Ball Court originated in the lowlands of the Gulf of Mexico and can be traced as far back as 1250 B.C. Ball courts have been located as far south as Honduras and extending as far north as central Arizona and ball courts have been discovered in the Caribbean Islands. They serve as a universal ritual spanning over a multitude of eras and cultures.

Origins of the game began as a means of sports and entertainment. But the game evolved over time and social pressure as a vehicle to provide wagers for high stake gambling, astronomy, religious, agricultural, and social ceremonies and later a means of mediation among warring entities. Indigenous people adapted the ball game to reflect their own cultures, redefined the rules and significance of the game as their own culture evolved. Depending upon the demands of the culture the ball game was played differently in each region.

Formation of the I ball court was simple in design but complex in meaning. Each opposing side of the ball court had a stone wall, with their own temple and elevated platforms for spectators. In the center of the stone wall was a vertical stone ring. A solid heavy rubber ball was thrown back and forth with the intent of scoring points. But if the ball passed through the hole that was no wider in space than a finger’s width between the ball and the ring. It was not unusual for a ball game to last for several days until a member of the team could pass the six-inch diameter ball through the hoop.

Initially the ball was thrown by hand, but as the game evolved over time the players used bats and later touching the ball was forbidden. This was a game reserved for nobility but the

stakes could be very high. Death to the losers was not uncommon. Players were expected to strike the ball with their hips, knees, and elbows. The exposed body parts were heavily padded with leather and cotton. Upon completion of a game the players would drain the blood from their bruises to prevent further injuries.

Normally the games were played as a form of entertainment but occasionally they were played on a more serious note. The I ball court was considered a sacred site just like their temples. Astronomers would toss a ball against the four corners of the wall and predict an omen according to movement of the ball. A game of I ball was thought to signify the motions of the sun and the moon.

The Aztecs believed the courts possessed an astronomical and mythological significance. A ball court that extended from the north to the south was plotted and built to honor the sun’s seasonal changes from north to south during the span of a year. An I ball court represented the world, while the rubber ball symbolized the sun on its daily journey across the celestial heavens. Losing teams were occasionally sacrificed to the sun god. The court that was aligned east to west, this was symbolic of the sun’s daily journey across the sky, passing through the underworld and experiencing a rebirthing the following morning.  

The Olmec, Toltec, Mayan and Aztec civilizations readily incorporated massive open public spaces or plaza into the culture. Plazas were predominating features of the pre-Hispanic indigenous settlements surrounded by temples; an I ball court, stone pyramids, and warrior pillars, with the purpose of serving as the primary nexus for important public and religious events. An I ball court is symbolic of the energy that every child will bring from their inherent cultures and families while uniting the playground with laughter, unique play, and shared experiences.

Patolli

Mesoamericans relished the public and sometimes ominous games of noble I Ball Court. Games and contentious sporting events also reflected religious meanings and served as a means of settling disputes. Patolli, a more subdued means of competition with religious and mythological relevance was the board game of chance symbolizing the 52 years of the Aztec’s calendar cycle. Participants would use a board game surface that was divided into a cross with 52 designated spaces. Markers could be dried beans; clay counters or small colored stone, each movement of a marker reflected the passing of a year.

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Juxtaposition
The Westwood neighborhood is comprised primarily of Latinos 76% or 31.7 of Denver’s total Latino population reside between the Sheridan Boulevard, Alameda Avenue, Federal Boulevard and Mississippi Avenue. Munroe’s current student body is 615 children; 575 or 93% who are Latino and 53.7% of the students are Native Spanish speakers. Children living in the Westwood neighborhood are sited at a 12.9% drop out rate between the grades of 9 through 12, Denver’s overall average is 9.6%. Westwood students are reading at the lowest quartile 49.2% of the ITBS scores according the 1999 Census statistics

Munroe Elementary School was the recipient of 30,000 new Spanish-language supplemental textbooks donated by the Mexican Consulate, September 2001. Leticia Calzada Lopez, the Mexican consul in Denver, acknowledged the integral contribution duo Mexican citizens have in America and Mexico. She believes “Our challenge is to come to grips with this multicultural reality.” Duo citizens experience the assimilation of American life while attempting to maintain their cultural identity. This is one of the primary reasons the I Ball Court was chosen as the focal point or theme for the playground.

The I Ball Court represents one of the most readily recognized symbols of the Mesoamerican civilization that has migrated to a modern culture while attempting to recognize the strengths of the two cultures in a beneficial manner for the residents of the Westwood community. The contributions of an ancient culture in a modern society that is redefining a public space for the safety, education and promotion of its youth and neighborhood can be depicted in the I Ball Court. Juxtaposition has survived and continues to thrive in this predominant Latino enclave as the community seeks to actively promote and enrich their children’s lives from an educational and cultural stance. The I Ball Court represents the child’s world of physical prowess, educational and cultural knowledge, and aesthetic appreciation for the past while looking to the future for growth and strength.

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Toltec Warriors
In the capital city of Tula, Mexico stands the Toltec Warriors near the pyramids and temples, honoring fallen warriors. The ominous statues of fortitude served as a reminder to the inhabitants of their desires to succeed, seek honor, tenacity and strength, both mentally and physically. Each warrior is carved with a butterfly breastplate to emulate the short but brilliant lives brave warriors live. The depiction of Toltec Warrior bodies with famous Nugget representatives heads i.e.: Alex English, Larry Brown, David Thompson, Dan Issel, etc… could easily serves as a juxtaposition of the Toltec Warriors attributes that are applicable to contemporary warriors, athletes.

Four Universes
The Aztecs believed four distinct universes, commonly referred to as the Four Suns that preceded their realm. The first layer of the sun was occupied by the “Four Jaguars” but had met their demise after a horrid massacre and humans were devoured by the jaguars. Individuals who were fortunate to survive the first disaster were transformed into monkeys with the second cycle of the sun known as the “Four Winds.” “Four Rains” was the third cycle of the “Four Suns” and was destroyed by a rain of fire. By the fourth cycle of the sun the “Four Waters” a prolonged flood desecrated the earth for 52 years. The universe was referred to as the “Four Earthquakes” which could be destroyed by seismic shocks at any given time. At the end of the 52 year cycle the “Four Earthquake” would more than likely occur. The 52 year cycle was equivalent to the Aztec’s calculation of a century.

The elements of fire is portrayed by the sun or Aztec Calendar, water is nourishment from the crop and plant life, air is creative breathing space represented by the I Ball Court and earth is the soil the culture cultivates and maintains for future generations.

On Site Analysis
Munroe’s playground is comprised primarily of pea gravel, dirt, and blacktop. Due to the extensive amount of impervious ground cover drainage and stagnant water has served as impromptu splash ponds for the students. The soccer and baseball fields are not level, and are loose dirt lots and evolve into swamps with the slightest amount of water collection. Deep pockets or depressions on the pea gravel fields exist because this section is not level nor is there any form of valid drainage. Blacktop surfaces were recently refinished due to the erosion of the vicinity since no drainage was provided for excess runoff.

Drainage from the school structure spills directly onto the blacktop and creates muddy areas surrounding the foundation of the school. During the winter months the building runoff drains onto the blacktop and forms icy patches. The few grassy spots that do exist are yellowed, and dying due to a lack of moisture. The sprinkler heads are removed almost as quick as they are replaced. A strip of grass alongside the northeast side of the building is now dying and resembles a marsh due to the over watering of the area. Sod was laid in this area but a year ago and the grassy span is now revealing erosion.

Munroe’s only lawn span that exists on the school grounds is on the north side of the school. This area is fenced off and students are not allowed on this site. A small hill next to the ball field had grass at one time is now a thorny weed mound because. Nancy Campbell, the assistant principal stated the children sometimes roll down this burr filled hill. Perhaps this area could serve as a bleacher site for parents to observe their kids' games. Eldon Hunter, the facility manager was not too thrilled with the prospect of using the site for a steppe community garden or butterfly garden.

*Shade and grass*
Shade and grass soccer fields were the two components the student body, faculty, and community requested consistently. Classrooms on the south side of the building suffer direct heat exposure all year long. Awnings or window trellis with vine coverage could relieve this problem and offer a visual dimension to the present boxy style of the building. A row of trees shrubs and a strip of foliage could serve as a sound and heat buffer to the students and teachers in those south classrooms. Windows must remain shut during recess time if class is being conducted. Classrooms exposed to the playground contend with noise, dust and intense heat temperatures.

Parents and sport spectators of the ball fields have no place to sit and observe their children. A substantial number of parents walk their children to and from the school on a daily basis. A gazebo, some sheltered picnic tables, an interactive water fountain, a couple of chess or checker tables and a piazza would invite the community to the school grounds. Presently the tree lawns surrounding the eastern and southern perimeters of the schoolyard support dirt, weeds and trash. Rapid growing shade trades with brick, octagon, planters surrounding the saplings could serve as additional benches and deter to potential theft of the new trees. The metal grates that are placed around trees on cityscapes may also keep the trees in place.

Westwood is a neighborhood where construction and crafts people reside as proud homeowners Driving through the area elaborate stucco houses exist alongside modest framed homes. It is not uncommon to drive past a vastly improved newly bricked or freshly stucco home that once was a time worn house. Impressive brick pillars and wrought iron fencing enclose the homes. Lawns usually do not exist around these homes because dirt is considered a form of natural beauty. Urban dwellers are extremely proud of their lawns while some immigrants from Mexico consider owning a piece of earth the ultimate form of beauty and proudly rake the bare patches clean.

The school fence is an antiquated chain link enclosure. After meeting with some of the parents it was suggested that brick pillars and simplistic wrought iron replace the present fence to accurately depict the residents. The wrought iron fence on Santa Fe Drive has decorative pieces of sheet metal welded onto the fencing supports in the form of dancing lizards. The parents and children found this to be a very appealing model for the two gateways leading onto the playground.
One of the primary areas of concern for the administrators is safety. Drop off and pick up of children around the school is a problem. The entrance of the school is located on the north side of the building. Usually only the school buses use this entrance. It is not unusual for parents and guardians to double park alongside the school buses and expect the children to cross between two parked buses to come to the parent’s car. Parents honk their horns, swerve around each other and literally stop traffic on both sides of the street. The relationship between the neighbors and the school is tolerant at best. While on the south and west sides of the building students must contend with parents double parking on both side of the street and they expect the children to come to them.

The design of the present teachers’ parking lot does not help with this problem. There are not enough parking spaces for the teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators in the school. There are a limited number of parking spots visitors; parents and some faculty members must park on the street. Nancy Campbell, the assistant principal requested a larger parking lot to accommodate the ten percent staff increase with the new addition. The request was denied due to budget constrains. The solution was to repave the area and narrow the parking spots. Teaching staff is not guaranteed a parking spot; visitors must park on the street.

Entrance and exiting of the faculty parking lot is completed by driving in and back out due to the inability of turning a car around. Last year the family advocate accompanied one child to the hospital after a car in the parking lot struck him. The parent that hit the child did not see the student as they were backing out of the lot after dropping off their own child.

Jody Cohen, the principal has stressed to the parents how dangerous it is to drop the children off in the parking lot but the parents continue to abide by this dangerous practice. She has contacted the police department and the problem subsides substantially while the officers patrol the area but reappears when the officers are not present. Jody would like the parking lot expanded and designed to resemble a circle drive or an additional exit leading out to the street could alleviate some of the congestion. A designated drop off and pick up spot would also be greatly appreciated.

Unfortunately the school’s two trash dumpsters are located near the entrance of the parking lot and consume five precious parking spaces. The odors from leftover lunches and soured milk lingers even after the dumpsters have been emptied. Liquids from the dumpsters have permanently stained the blacktop and this site is a breeding ground for flies and bees.

Environmental challenges are numerous on the Munroe school grounds. The students, staff and community can constantly find new problems that have been overlooked and elaborate on the existing problems. Community Resource Officers Manny Hays and Mark Rogerman were insightful when planning out the layout of the play area from a safety and prevention perspective.

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History/Future Improvements

Munroe Elementary, dedicated in 1962, was named in honor of Herbert M. Munroe, an appointed Attorney for the Denver Board of Education from 1897 until 1932, serving a thirty-five year span. He was a graduate of East High School class of 1891. As an advocate for public education he was instrumental in the securing of land for new elementary schools, and continuously advised the School Board to place high schools adjacent to city parks. Munroe served as a participant in the Big Brother movement, Old Timers Baseball Association, the Y.M.C.A., and Sons of the American Revolution, he died February 22, 1950 while refereeing for the Colorado State Industrial Commission.

The Architect of record for Munroe Elementary is Alfred Watts Grant and Associate. The first school principal was Mr. Robert W. Thibodeau. The construction budget totaled $ including $ to general contractor Cyrus Delano, $ to mechanical contractor Natkin & Company and $ to electrical contractor Howard Electric Company. H. F.-C.G.A. was the Architect for the new addition.

Inventory of On-Site Uses

General Surface Areas
The existing surface areas, excluding the play equipment installed in summer, 2000 are expressed in square footages (sf) as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface Area</th>
<th>SF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irrigated Turf</td>
<td>25,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Surface</td>
<td>79,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asphalt</td>
<td>52,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Fines</td>
<td>14,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping</td>
<td>1,371</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weeded and non-irrigated areas

Including the building, the sites totals are 39,558 sf legal 31,890 sf actual

Playground Equipment
Munroe’s playground is on one level leading from the back entrance door or gymnasium door onto the asphalt. The Early Childhood Equipment and play area is adjacent from the hard surface area. This area is separated from the hard surface activities by a designated enclosure for the ECE play area. There are four slides on the traditional play equipment, one wide slide, one long metal slide, one winding slide, one slither slide, one bay of three swings (9 swings), five climbers, three horizontal ladders, one set of horizontal bars, one fire pole, and eight travel rings. This equipment was intended for kindergartners and primary users. All of this equipment will be either relocated or removed from the present site.

The intermediate playground area leads out from the back entrance door and gymnasium door onto the hard surface or asphalt area located adjacent from the parking lot. This hard surface site consists of six tether ball poles, six hop scotches, 4 four square activities, four designated wall ball spots against the gymnasium wall, four basketball hoops, and two large painted circles for undesignated play. In addition to the hard surface areas there are two fire poles, one set of horizontal bars, one bay of three swings, nine climbing apparatuses, and eight travel rings.

Playing Field
There is no turf area for the children to play ball or run on. Pea gravel is the ground cover for the entire area with four backstops in place, one set on the northwest and on the northeast corners of the field and the other set are situated on the southeast and southwest corners. The slightest provocation from the weather transforms the dirt and pea gravel fields into mud pits.

Track
A running track does not exists, the students run on the pea gravel or the asphalt area.

Asphalt
The playground area nearest the back entrance door and gymnasium doors lead out to a wide span of asphalt is separated from the parking lot by a chain link fence. Total square footage are 5,346 and 42,716.95, respectively. Activities on the asphalt consist of six tether ball poles, six, hop scotches, four 4 square sites, four wall ball areas, four basketball hoops, and two large painted circles for undesignated play activities. Inadequate drainage and spill over of pea gravel onto the asphalt causes additional safety problems.
**Soft Surface**

Sand is spread unevenly beneath the ECE play area and the intermediate play area, beneath the swings, slides and climbing apparatuses, this is the closest form of soft surface that exists on the playground.

**Plant Materials**

Munroe’s playground supports no turf area for the children to play upon. The only area with grass is the surface surrounding the west area of the school on South Knox Court and the north end bordered by West Virginia Avenue. Students play on asphalt, dirt or pea gravel fields. Tree inventory includes one Russian olive, five ash, eleven unidentified deciduous trees. All the trees are sorely in need of pruning and overall care. A few shrubs grow on the north side of the school near the entrance on West Virginia Avenue and need to be trimmed and maintained. Perennial and annual beds do not exist on the school grounds.

**Vehicular Access and Parking**

The parking lot provides 44 spaces for the staff and visitors of Munroe, five of these spaces are occupied by the school’s two large dumpsters. South Knox Court entrance on the southwest corner of the parking lot is the only way to enter or exit the parking lot. One handicapped spot is available. Additional on street parking is available on West Custer Place and South Knox Court. Denver Public Schools’ parking policy allows for one space per classroom plus five for every ECE through third grade classroom, an additional 15 support and five more spaces for visitors. Fire access is adjacent to the staff parking lot on West Custer Place with an entrance from South Knox Court this area is normally used by the facility manager and his supporting staff. The fire lane leads to the back entrance door.

**Handicapped Accessibility**

The back door entrance and the gymnasium doors on the south side of the building are accessible. Existing playground equipment is not accessible to physically impaired students.

**Master Plan**

**Munroe’s Goals**

To develop for the community and serve the people by creating a safehaven that will nurture and enhance their ability to play, imagine, and think critically in a cohesive environment and strive to reinforce the families’ commitment to pro-social values such as helpfulness, personal attributes that are essential to attaining humane and productive lives in a democratic and urban setting.

**Programmatic List of Elements**

Expansion of present parking
*Safe one way entrance and exit of the site
*Designated drop off and pick up site
*44 spaces presently, minimum of 78 spaces proposed
Outdoor stage/ amphitheatre
Outdoor classroom
*Accommodate 25-30 children
Sensory garden
*Herbs
*
Ecosystems of Colorado
*Tundra
*Alpine
*Wetlands
*Grasslands
*Deserts
*2 Gateways
Traditional ECE Play equipment
Traditional Primary Play equipment
Traditional Intermediate Play
Hard surface play area
1 Ball Basket Ball Court
4 tetherball poles
four 4 square areas
Wall ball
Hopscotch
Aztec game Patolli
Shade Pavilion with a tree house village in the form of pyramids
Soccer and baseball fields with turf
Running track
Long jump pit
Archeological digs in the sanded area, perhaps the images of a time line, Aztec warriors or gods and goddesses.
Aztec inspired Toltec warrior pillars and mosaic tiled pillars
Olmec heads to climb on
Misting arbor
Tree houses that resemble pyramids
Wrought iron and brick fencing
Trash receptacles formed a mythical Aztec animals.
Manos and metate (this is a grinding slab and a flat stone) in the sensory garden.
Sculptured garden pieces of the Corn God, Quetzalcoatl, Earth Mother, mosaic masks, Olmec statues, images of El Dia De Los Muertos, Aztec Calendar etc…