



STATE COLLEGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

PLAYGROUND MASTERPLAN

JUNE 3, 2019



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INTRODUCTION

The design team began working with the State College Area School District in the fall of 2018 to develop a masterplan to address the district’s outdoor play spaces.

Metcalfe is a firm of experience designers – architects, exhibit and graphic designers, and play professionals. We have devoted our practice to playful learning opportunities in schools, gardens, museums, and other cultural institutions. We regard play as a primary way humans learn and we deeply appreciate the District’s desire to invest in this critical part of student life. We have worked in concert with Studio Ludo on this masterplan. They are a 501(c)3 organization devoted to building better play through research, design, and advocacy. The center of their research is in playground assessment, examining play value, safety in the context of risk/benefit and they are extremely sensitive to the entire environment in which the invitation to play takes place. Think Green, LLC is a landscape design and construction firm with a deep connection to children’s play environments. They have provided technical construction advice and cost estimating for the master planning project. Stahl Sheaffer Engineering, LLC is a State College, PA based civil engineering firm with experience working with the State College Area School District. We have recruited them to help us identify critical civil engineering issues that may confront the project at an individual school basis as the District moves from planning to implementation.

Our team has made it our mission to craft remarkable environments that support the innovation, creativity, discovery, and joy that can be found only through play. We are excited about the potential of the State College Area School District Master Plan to not only address the state of its current play venues, but to rethink the future of its outdoor environments through the lens of play-based learning. Metcalfe’s and Studio Ludo’s combined design experience is well versed in current trends in play and learning environment design, from the integration of risk into play, to the importance of nature in school settings. We believe strongly in the correlation between joy in play and success in learning. In the words of Fred Rogers, “Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.”



PROJECT GOALS

Metcalfe was asked to develop holistic playgrounds that emphasized naturalized play spaces and learning opportunities and, where applicable, integrate existing and traditional play equipment towards those aims and to ensure ADA access as outlined in the play area guidelines supplement to the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

In order to understand what existed and what was needed, we developed a base knowledge of each school through:

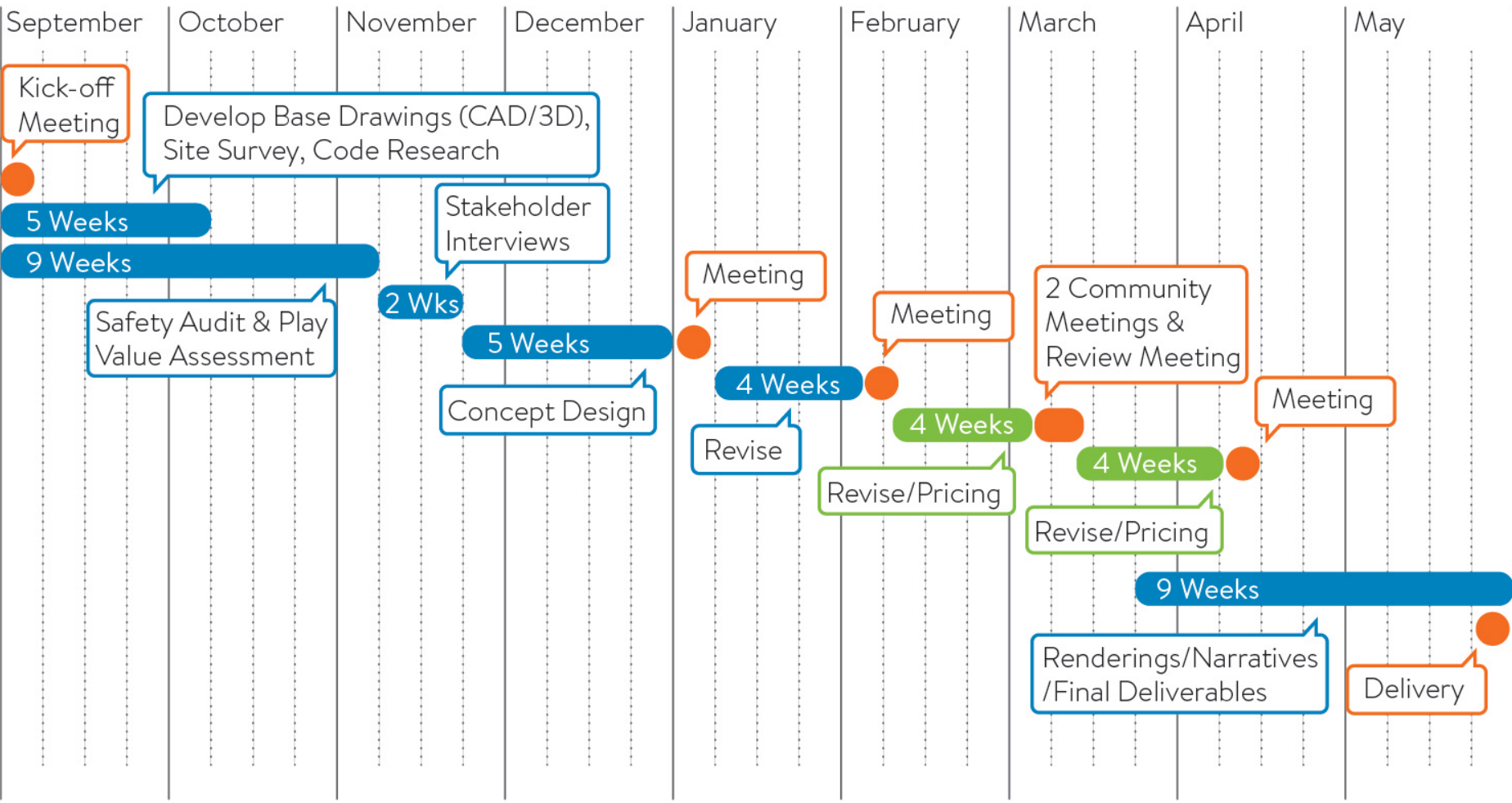
- Documenting existing conditions
- Performing playground safety and play value audits
- Establishing programming needs
- Providing recommendations for the findings

As part of the development and iterative process of design, we lead several community based engagement meetings. We worked with the following stakeholders to gather input and critique during the design process:

- SCASD Board of School Directors
- SCASD Administrative and Professional Staff
- SCASD Designated Playground Task Force
- State College Community At-Large

This document intends to summarize the masterplan process through discovery and analysis, design and suggested phasing for implementation for the following schools:

- Corl Street Elementary School
- Easterly Parkway Elementary School
- Ferguson Township Elemetary School
- Gray’s Woods Elementary School
- Mount Nittany Elementary School
- Park Forest Elementary School
- Radio Park Elementary School
- Spring Creek Elementary School (future)
- Mount Nittany Middle School
- Park Forest Middle School
- Delta Program





PLAY REPORT

OVERVIEW

The goal of the play report is to lay the foundation upon which recommendations for the design of existing and future play areas for the State College Area School District (SCASD) will be developed.

The report begins with an overview of nature play, why it is important, and what nature play elements currently exist within the District. It then provides an overview of each of the ten sites, with photographs, illustrative plans that show existing play features and elements, play potentials, safety and accessibility issues.

Playground Safety Audits were undertaken for each of the ten play areas by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) trained by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

The Playground Safety Audits assess for compliance with ASTM F1487 (Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use), CPSC No. 325 (U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s Public Playground Safety Handbook), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 2010 (ADA).

The Playground Safety Audits include a Priority Ranking System to address any safety issues on a Priority 1-5 scale.

PRIORITY 1:
Non-compliant safety concern that may result in permanent disability, loss of life or body part. Condition should be corrected immediately.

PRIORITY 2:
Non-compliant safety concern that may result in temporary disability. Condition should be corrected as soon as possible.

PRIORITY 3:
Non-compliant safety concern that is likely to cause a minor (non-disabling) injury. Condition should be corrected when time permits.

PRIORITY 4:
Non-compliant safety concern whose potential to cause injury is very minimal. Condition should be corrected if it worsens.

PRIORITY 5:
The item has been determined to be compliant with the owner/operator’s operating policy and standard of care. Continue standard maintenance program.

No site is currently compliant with ADA guidelines due to playground surfacing materials. Recommend upgrading all playground surfacing to a compliant material, such as Engineered Wood Fiber, within the next 1-2 years.

As part of the master plan, an accessible path of travel will be noted at each site, connecting all accessible play elements to primary access points at each school building.

Swing hardware at every site had advanced rust that may have compromised the metal, particularly at swing hangers. Recommend replacing all swing chains and hardware.

Below is a synopsis of key issues at each site that should be addressed as soon as possible.

For more information and photos, see playground sections. For safety audits, see addendum.

CORL STREET ELEMENTARY

- Current building is in the midst of renovations
- Current playground is intact

Due to age, degradation of finishes and metals, as well as compliance issues with ASTM, CPSC, and ADA, it is recommended that all existing equipment and surfacing be removed from this site.

No equipment is currently a hazard, replacement should occur within the next 1-2 years.

EASTERLY PARKWAY ELEMENTARY

- Building renovated in 2001
- Most equipment was installed during renovation

PRIORITY 2: Surfacing should be full depth recommended by manufacturer in front and rear (for 2x height) and 6’ on each end of swings.

Currently surfacing is too short for the two taller swings. Surfacing must be installed immediately.

Slide has visible rust. Some rust has compromised the structural integrity of the metal and could fail. Either remove equipment or inspect monthly for failure.

PRIORITY 3: Fitness equipment does not appear to be made of treated wood, has visible rust, has some wood degradation, and could fail. Either remove equipment or replace elements.

FERGUSON ELEMENTARY

- Building renovated in 2011
- Most equipment was installed during renovation

PRIORITY 2: Slide (red, white, and blue) is in the use area of two adjacent structures (slide and tunnel) and must be removed as soon as possible.

Rocker has flaking paint and visible rust. Some rust has compromised the structural integrity of the metal and could fail. It should be removed as soon as possible.

PRIORITY 3: Surfacing should be full depth recommended by manufacturer in front and rear (for 2x height) and 6’ on each end of swings. Use areas are fine, but kickout areas under both swings need to be topped off.

GRAY’S WOODS ELEMENTARY

- Building was built in 2001
- Most equipment was installed at time of construction
- Some equipment recently added

PRIORITY 2: Truck climber does not have compliant use zone and contains areas of head entrapment. It should be removed as soon as possible.

Climber has flaking paint and visible rust. Some rust has compromised the structural integrity of the metal and could fail. It should be removed as soon as possible.

PRIORITY 3: Surfacing should be full depth recommended by manufacturer in front and rear (for 2x height) and 6’ on each end of swings.

No surfacing deficiencies are currently a hazard, recommended replacement in the next 1-2 years.

HOUSERVILLE ELEMENTARY (FUTURE SPRING CREEK)

- New building under construction
- None of the original playground remains

MT. NITTANY ELEMENTARY

- Building was built in 2011
- Most equipment was installed at time of construction
- Some equipment recently added

PRIORITY 1: On the composite structure, multiple locations (at wheel connection and on underside of platform) have bolts with more than 2 threads showing.

This has a very high likelihood of injury and must be remedied immediately.

PRIORITY 2: On the composite structure, almost all connections are rusted. Any connection showing visible rust must be replaced as soon as possible.

Surfacing should be full depth recommended by manufacturer in front and rear (for 2x height) and 6’ on each end of swings.

Use areas are fine, but kickout areas under all swings need to be topped off.

Additionally, the pink swing has some visible rust on support posts. Inspect on a monthly basis for failure, or replace.

PRIORITY 3: Climber is aged with visible rust, that could have compromised the metal. Recommend replacement in 1-2 years.

Sand box wood is degraded and should be replaced as soon as possible.

MT. NITTANY MIDDLE

- Limited playground (no compliance issues)

PARK FOREST ELEMENTARY

- Building was built in 2005
- Most equipment was installed at time of construction
- Some equipment recently added

PRIORITY 2: Both composite structures have flaking paint and visible rust. Some rust has compromised the structural integrity of the metal. Both should be removed within the next 1-2 years.

Under the overhead bars of structure near building, a stone or concrete is within the use area. This should be removed immediately.

Fitness equipment does not have correct use zone (6’ clear). Recommend installation of surfacing or pruning adjacent shrubs as soon as possible.

PRIORITY 3: Surfacing should be full depth recommended by manufacturer in front and rear (for 2x height) and 6’ on each end of swings. Recommend installation of surfacing as soon as possible at swings near building.

PARK FOREST MIDDLE

- Limited playground (no compliance issues)

RADIO PARK ELEMENTARY

- Current building is in the midst of renovations
- None of the original playground remains

Children and staff behaviors are also included, to understand holistically how each place, its policies, and its people influenced play and learning across sites, and how that could inform future master plan efforts.

In the words of Fred Rogers, “Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.”

We hope this report provides valuable insight into play in the State College Area School District.





Children today are less physically fit, less able to concentrate, and are less able to relate socially to peers and adults than any previous generation of children. These issues, in turn, make them less effective in the classroom.

Research^{1,2,3} demonstrates that outdoor education, greener school grounds, and more time playing outdoors in natural settings support:

- Improved classroom behavior, student motivation, and enthusiasm to learn.
- Better performance in math, science, reading, and social studies.
- Reduced Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
- Higher scores on standardized tests (including college entrance exams).
- Lowered risk of psychiatric disorders, from adolescence into adulthood.
- Improved eating habits, from childhood throughout life.
- Increased self discipline, emotional regulation, and lowered stress.
- Improved eyesight.

Successful nature play fosters a love of the outdoors, while also supporting children’s need for active and passive play.

A diversity of gross and fine motor activities are essential, from sliding, climbing, and jumping, to sand play and manipulating small parts. Children seek out variety and refinement in their play experiences as part of their physical and mental development.

Vestibular stimulation (spinning, swinging, and being upside down) supports core muscle development, which in turn helps children sit. These physical sensations also help with emotional regulation, particularly for children with sensory issues.

Equally important are areas to support social/emotional development with peers and adults. Spaces for make believe, socialization in small and large groups, and places to be alone are essential. Passive spaces can also be used for outdoor education and curriculum development.

¹<https://www.nwf.org/en/Educational-Resources/Reports/2010/09-01-2010-Back-to-School-Back-Outside>

²https://naturalearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Benefits-of-Connecting-Children-with-Nature_InfoSheet.pdf

³<https://www.pnas.org/content/116/11/5188>

CORL STREET ELEMENTARY

Corl Street Elementary has a heavily planted and wooded edge adjacent to the play area. Many use trails and play areas, with gatherings of sticks and rocks, exist within this space, demonstrating the existence of active nature play.

However, children were actively discouraged against using this area by staff, and no children were observed within this space.

EASTERLY PARKWAY ELEMENTARY

Easterly Parkway Elementary School has wide open expanses of grass, a handful of mature trees, a sand area, and some moderate topography. During our visit, no children were observed in the trees or sand area, but they were using the grass and hills for a variety of play activities. Some were playing pick up games and tag, while others were rolling down the hill.

Staff stated that the sand area was very popular in warmer months, when children would spend time digging and building. In the colder months, they preferred other areas for digging, as the sand did not drain well, as was wet and cold.

FERGUSON ELEMENTARY

Ferguson Elementary School has several potential spaces for nature play, including grass areas, mature trees, boulders, topography, and a stormwater swale.

Children were seen participating in a variety of play behaviors within these natural spaces. Many used the trees for games, like hide and seek, and tag. Forts and fairy houses were built, and signs of digging were seen around the roots of the trees.

The stormwater swale held significant appeal. It had numerous boulders and rocks, for perching, hanging out, and building. Many children borrowed rocks from the swale to use in other games and constructions around the trees and in the bushes.

Few children were seen in the grass areas. Instead, most either played on the playground equipment, or retreated to the edges of the play area, near the trees.

GRAY’S WOODS ELEMENTARY

Grays Woods Elementary School has significant adjacent spaces for nature play, including grass areas both on and off the property, as well as mature woods and understory bushes.

Children were seen participating in a variety of play behaviors within these natural spaces. The grass areas were used for pickup sports and tag. The hillside was used for running, rolling, and digging. The dirt pile was used for digging and jumping.

Stumps were used as perches, for jumping, as parts of forts, and for making ‘stews’ with sticks, leaves, and acorns. A number of trees were used for climbing, swinging, and fort building.

Loose parts (sticks, acorns, leaves, and rocks) were a crucial part of the nature play experience and are recommended. Stumps and tree parts were also a great part of the fun and should be retained as much as possible.

HOUSERVILLE ELEMENTARY (FUTURE SPRING CREEK)

- New building under construction
- None of the original playground remains

MT. NITTANY ELEMENTARY

Mt. Nittany Elementary School is surrounded by wide open spaces for nature play, including grass areas, mature trees, and areas of immature trees and understory plantings. Children were seen playing and hiding in the planted areas. While not seen in the act, there was evidence of digging.

There are small hills around the play area perimeter that were popular for rolling and jumping. The open grass areas were also used for pick up games and tag. The mature trees were not seen to be part of the play, but it is highly likely that they are used and play was just not observed.

MT. NITTANY MIDDLE

- Limited playground, no students observed

PARK FOREST ELEMENTARY

Park Forest Elementary School is surrounded by mature woods, understory bushes, and boulders, and has large swathes of grass areas for nature play.

During our visit, no children were observed in these spaces, although there was evidence of play (lean tos and fire rings), either from the schoolchildren or those in the neighborhood.

PARK FOREST MIDDLE

- Limited playground, no students observed

RADIO PARK ELEMENTARY

- Current building is in the midst of renovations
- None of the original playground remains

PLAY POLICIES

A culture of nature play is dependent on both the installations within each site, as well as universal policies regarding nature play throughout the District.

Some schools were relaxed in their policies related to nature play, and some were more strict, explicitly stating that natural areas were off limits.

Standardized policies and training for playground staff is recommended in order for nature play to be successful district wide.

DIGGING: Every school within the District had evidence of digging behaviors. We observed several students using sticks and rocks for digging, and there were piles of dirt seemingly left for this activity.

The general consensus of staff was that digging was acceptable and not harmful to the space, except in areas of topography, where digging caused erosion.

Digging is a great activity for this age range, and an important part of nature play. A district wide policy regarding digging, and other aspects of nature play, such as using sticks, loose parts, and informal

constructions, is recommended District wide, rather than on a case by case basis.

LOOSE PARTS: Ferguson and Corl were the only schools where staff were observed preventing children from using the natural resources of the site.

Children were frequently seen collecting sticks, pebbles, rocks, leaves, and other natural parts for play.

Policies should support playing with loose parts and natural features, such as tree, bushes, sticks, rocks, etc, within safe parameters.

TOPOGRAPHY: Hills, both large and small, were an integral part of the play experience at many sites. Some portions of the hills were fenced off, presumably to stop digging and erosion.

Policies related to hill climbing, rolling, and digging should be established, to maintain the integrity of the sites, while also allowing for play.

PLANTED AREAS: There are many beautifully planted spaces adjacent to play areas that seemed to be used for play, but not necessarily encouraged by staff.

These well established planted areas are ideally suited for nature play, as the plants are often hardy enough to withstand footfall and digging, while also providing places to hide or create small forts.

Some of these spaces are not easily visible. If these types of spaces were included in future nature play areas, clear policies related to staff supervision should be addressed.

PLAYFUL LEARNING: A few schools seemed to have a culture of nature play and exploration already established, based on installations (butterfly gardens, bird blinds, green roofs, etc), as well as educational signage.

These installations are a good model for nature based play and learning. A District wide policy related to outdoor educational experiences, classroom time outdoors, signage, and curriculum development would greatly expand the potential of the nature play areas as learning spaces.

CORL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



- BUILDING
- PLAYGROUND SURFACING
- ACCESSIBLE PATH
- KEY ISSUES
- POTENTIAL PLAY AREAS

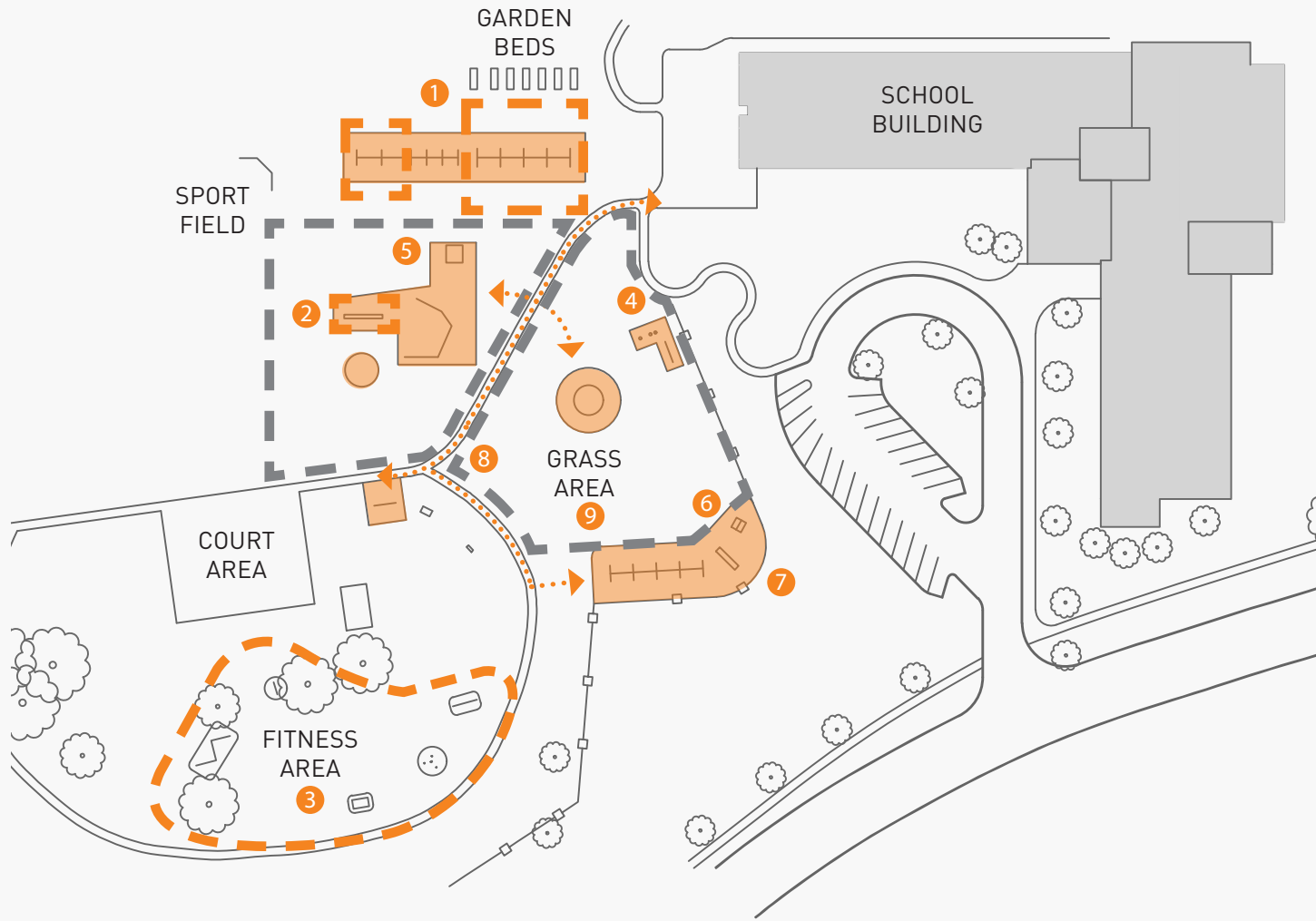


- 1 Remove all existing equipment and surfacing, non-compliant with CPSC, ASTM, and ADA guidelines. No equipment is currently a hazard, replacement should occur within the next 1-2 years.
- 2 Potential accessible path, ensure compliant route to play equipment.
- 3 Grass area potential for nature play: topographic changes, edged with mature trees and shrubs.

EASTERLY PARKWAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



- | PRIORITY ONE | PRIORITY TWO | PRIORITY THREE | PRIORITY FOUR | PRIORITY FIVE |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| None | 1 Swings | 3 Fitness Area | 4 Steppers | Safety Labels |
| | 2 Slide | | 5 Climber | |
| | | | 6 Rocker | |



- 7 Replace all surfacing, not compliant with ADA guidelines.
- 8 Accessible path, ensure compliant route to play equipment.
- 9 Grass area potential for nature play: open area, infill around existing equipment to enable all play features to be on accessible path of travel.

EASTERLY PARKWAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PRIORITY ONE:
None.

PRIORITY TWO:



SWINGS: Surfacing should be full depth recommended by manufacturer in front and rear (for 2x height) and 6’ on each end of swings. Currently surfacing is too short for the two taller swings. Surfacing must be installed immediately.



SLIDE: Structure has visible rust. Some rust has compromised the structural integrity of the metal and could fail. Either remove equipment or inspect monthly for failure.

PRIORITY THREE:



FITNESS EQUIPMENT: Does not appear to be made of treated wood, has visible rust, has some wood degradation, and could fail. Either remove equipment or replace elements.

ACCESSIBILITY: Playground is accessed via surface asphalt from building. Playground surfacing is not compliant however, and is recommended to be replaced by Engineered Wood Fiber, or other accessible surface.

An accessible path of travel must connect the building to each piece of play equipment designated as accessible.

FENCING: Playground is near an adjacent high volume street. It is recommended that fencing or a barrier be installed between the play area and the street.

PRIORITY FOUR



STEPPERS: Steppers plastic shell is cracked. Recommend replacement within the next 1-2 years, or when equipment breaks.



RUST: Inspect all fasteners and moving parts for rust. If rust has compromised the integrity of the metal, the part must be replaced. Otherwise, light sanding and repainting (matching paint to be provided by manufacturer) is recommended.

NOTED AREAS OF RUST: Climber, rocker, swing chains and attachments. These areas did not appear to have advanced rust that compromised the metal. Swing support poles have advanced rust that could have potentially compromised the metal. Inspect these areas on a monthly basis for failure.



CLIMBER: Structure has rust at base. Inspect these areas on a monthly basis for failure.

SHADE: Shade is recommended in the play area.

TRASH RECEPTACLES: Trash receptacles are recommended in the play area.

PRIORITY FIVE:



SAFETY LABELS/SIGNAGE: Labels or signage are recommended in each play area with the following:

- Age ranges (2-5 and 5-12)
- Adult supervision recommended
- Manufacturer’s identification
- Warning regarding installation of equipment over hard surfaces, such as concrete, asphalt, or packed earth
- Warning about removing helmets and drawstrings
- Warning about hot surfaces and burns

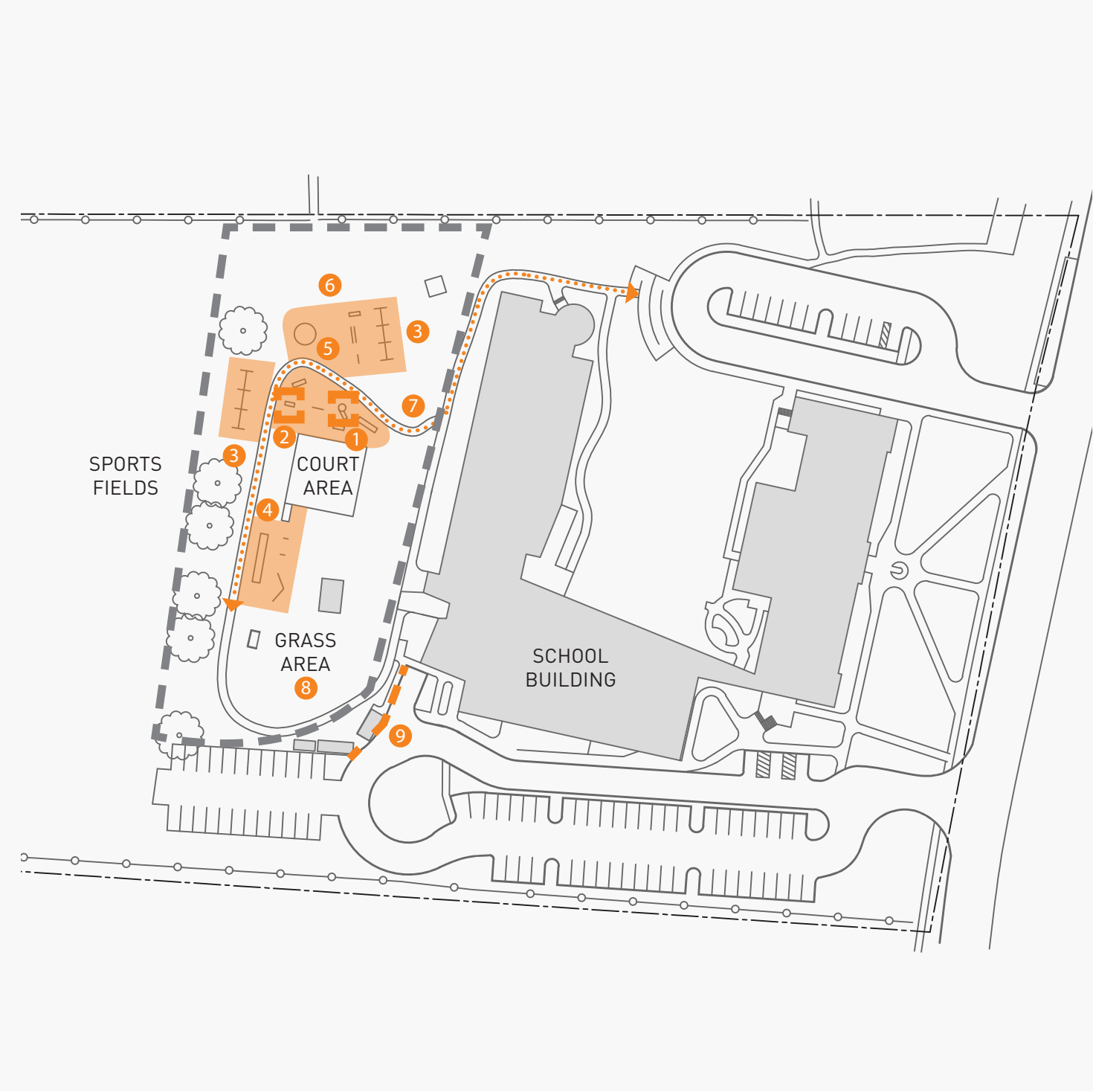
FINISH: Elements with areas of worn paint are recommended for repainting (matching paint to be provided by manufacturer).

RECORDS: Recommend retaining all records regarding play structures, surfacing, maintenance, and injuries. Manufacturer equipment records and contact information included in the Appendix.

FERGUSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



| PRIORITY ONE | PRIORITY TWO | PRIORITY THREE | PRIORITY FOUR | PRIORITY FIVE |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| None | 1 Slide 2 Rocker | 3 Swings 4 Sandbox | 5 Truck | Safety Labels |



- 6 Replace all surfacing, not compliant with ADA guidelines.
- 7 Accessible path, ensure compliant route to play equipment.
- 8 Grass area potential for nature play: open area, mature trees, boulders.
- 9 Fencing recommended between play area and parking lot.

FERGUSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PRIORITY ONE:
None.

PRIORITY TWO:



SLIDE: Slide (red, white, and blue) is in the use area of two adjacent structures (slide and tunnel) and must be removed as soon as possible.



ROCKER: Structure has flaking paint and visible rust. Some rust has compromised the structural integrity of the metal and could fail. It should be removed as soon as possible.

PRIORITY THREE:



SWINGS: Surfacing should be full depth recommended by manufacturer in front and rear (for 2x height) and 6' on each end of swings. Use areas are fine, but kickout areas under both swings need to be topped off.

ACCESSIBILITY: Playground is accessed via surface asphalt from building. Playground surfacing is not compliant however, and is recommended to be replaced by Engineered Wood Fiber, or other accessible surface.

An accessible path of travel must connect the building to each piece of play equipment designated as accessible.

FENCING: Playground is near adjacent parking. It is recommended that fencing or a barrier be installed between play area and parking.

PRIORITY FOUR:



TRUCK: Several instances of rusted metal and connectors. Recommend sand and repaint, as well as replacement of all loose, broken, or rusted connectors.



RUST: Inspect all fasteners and moving parts for rust. If rust has compromised the structural integrity of the metal, the part must be replaced. Otherwise, light sanding and repainting (matching paint to be provided by manufacturer) is recommended.

NOTED AREAS OF RUST: Swing support beam, guardrail at slide, washer at bolt on underside of slide platform. These areas appeared to have advanced rust that could have potentially compromised the metal. While not currently a hazard, inspect these areas on a monthly basis for failure.



SANDBOX: Sand box wood is degraded and should be replaced as soon as possible.

SHADE: Shade is recommended in the play area.

TRASH RECEPTACLES: Trash receptacles are recommended in the play area.

PRIORITY FIVE:



SAFETY LABELS/SIGNAGE: Labels or signage are recommended in each play area with the following:

- Age ranges (2-5 and 5-12)
- Adult supervision recommended
- Manufacturer's identification
- Warning regarding installation of equipment over hard surfaces, such as concrete, asphalt, or packed earth
- Warning about removing helmets and drawstrings
- Warning about hot surfaces and burns

FINISH: Elements with areas of worn paint are recommended for repainting (matching paint to be provided by manufacturer).

RECORDS: Recommend retaining all records regarding play structures, surfacing, maintenance, and injuries. Manufacturer equipment records and contact information included in the Appendix.

GRAY'S WOODS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



| PRIORITY ONE | PRIORITY TWO | PRIORITY THREE | PRIORITY FOUR | PRIORITY FIVE |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| None | 1 Truck 2 Climber | 3 Swings | 4 Hardware | Safety Labels |



- 5 Replace all surfacing, not compliant with ADA guidelines.
- 6 Consider fence between play area and parking.
- 7 Accessible path, ensure compliant route to play equipment.
- 8 Grass/tree area potential for nature play: topography, edged with mature trees and shrubs.

GRAY'S WOODS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PRIORITY ONE:
None.



TRUCK: Truck climber does not have compliant use zone and contains areas of head entrapment. It should be removed as soon as possible.



CLIMBER: Structure has flaking paint and visible rust. Some rust has compromised the structural integrity of the metal and could fail. It should be removed as soon as possible.



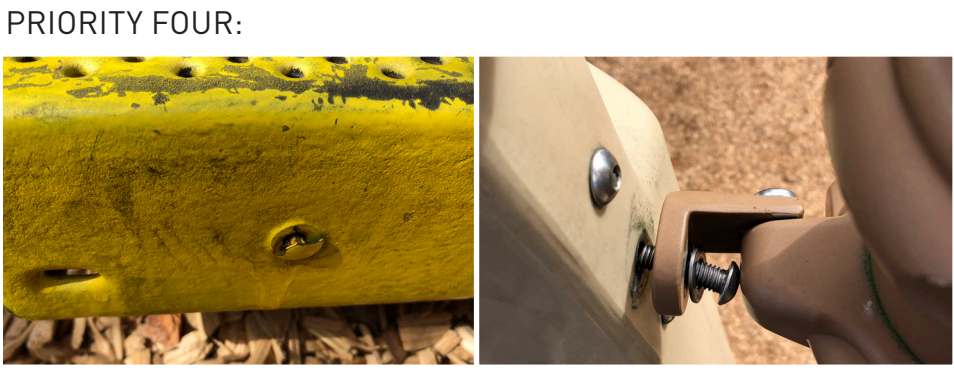
SWINGS: Surfacing should be full depth recommended by manufacturer in front and rear (for 2x height) and 6' on each end of swings. No surfacing deficiencies are currently a hazard, recommended replacement in the next 1-2 years.

ACCESSIBILITY: Playground is accessed via surface asphalt from building. Playground surfacing is not compliant however, and is

recommended to be replaced by Engineered Wood Fiber, or other accessible surface.

An accessible path of travel must connect the building to each piece of play equipment designated as accessible.

FENCING: Playground is near an adjacent parking area. It is recommended than fencing or a barrier be installed between the play area and the parking area.



HARDWARE: Fastener is broken (bottom step of composite climber), another fastener is loose (panel on composite climber), recommend replacement as soon as possible.



RUST: Inspect all fasteners and moving parts for rust. If rust has compromised the structural integrity of the metal, the part must be replaced. Otherwise, light sanding and repainting (matching paint to be provided by manufacturer) is recommended.

NOTED AREAS OF RUST: Bottoms of steppers, all swing attachments and some swing chains, stairs at newer (orange plastic) composite structure, and hardware at backboard of basketball hoops.

These areas did not appear to have advanced rust that compromised the metal.



SLIDE: Slide has significant wear and tear. Recommend replacement in the next 3-5 years, or sooner if broken.

SHADE: Shade is recommended in the play area.

TRASH RECEPTACLES: Trash receptacles are recommended.



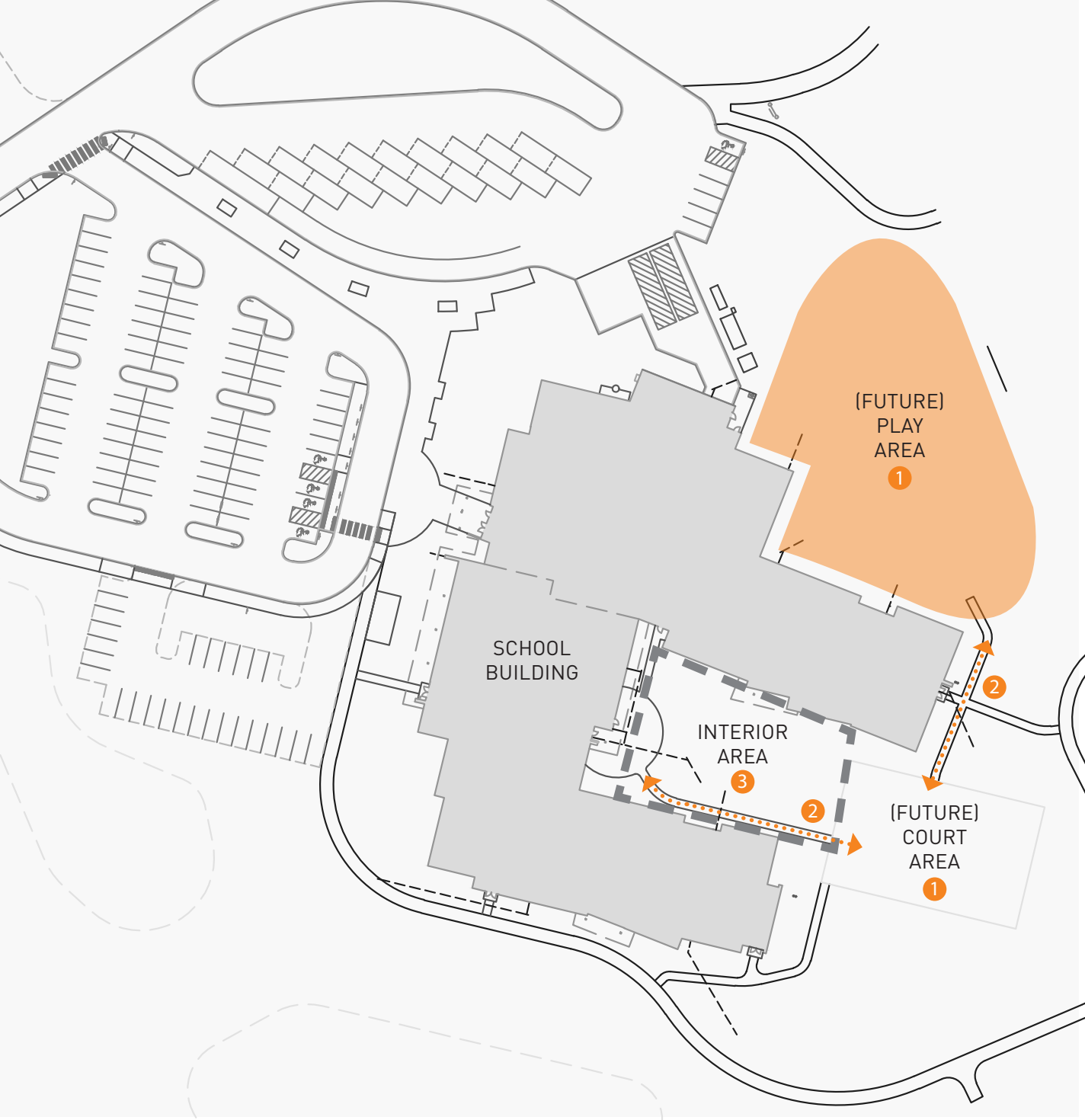
SAFETY LABELS/SIGNAGE: Labels or signage are recommended in each play area with the following:

- Age ranges (2-5 and 5-12)
- Adult supervision recommended
- Manufacturer's identification
- Warning regarding installation of equipment over hard surfaces, such as concrete, asphalt, or packed earth
- Warning about removing helmets, drawstrings, and items around the neck
- Warning about hot surfaces and burns

FINISH: Elements with areas of worn paint are recommended for repainting (matching paint to be provided by manufacturer).

RECORDS: Recommend retaining all records regarding play structures, surfacing, maintenance, and injuries. Manufacturer equipment records and contact information included in the Appendix.

HOUSERVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (FUTURE SPRING CREEK)



- 1 Building under construction, with future court and play area identified on construction plans. existing play equipment onsite damaged and not recommended for re-install.
- 2 Potential accessible path, ensure compliant route to play equipment.
- 3 Interior area potential for nature play: accessible, visible to staff, protected by buildings.

MT NITTANY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



- PRIORITY ONE

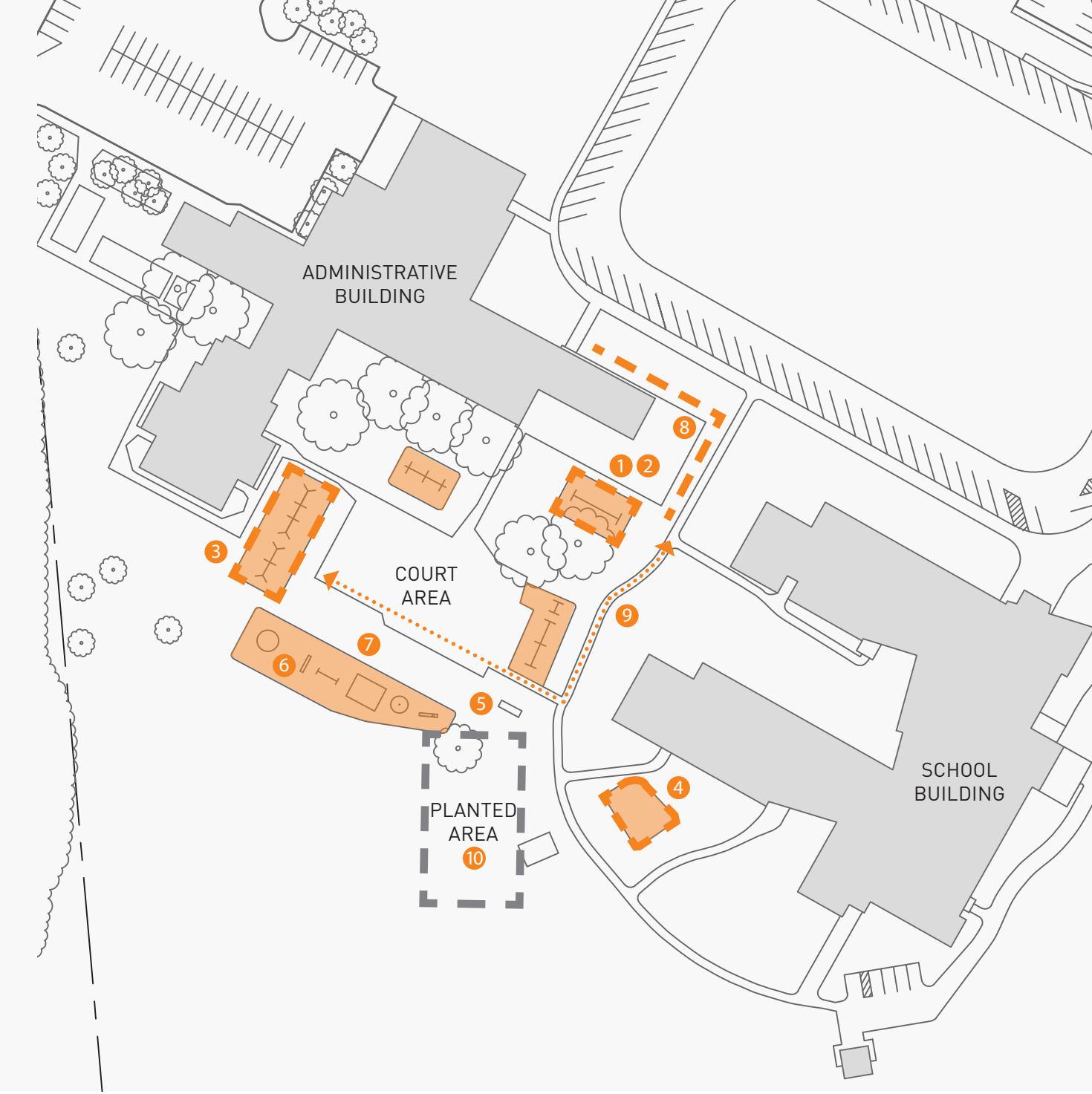
 - 1 Structure
 - 3 Swings
- PRIORITY TWO

 - 2 Structure
- PRIORITY THREE

 - 4 Climber
 - 5 Sandbox
- PRIORITY FOUR

 - 6 Maintenance
- PRIORITY FIVE

 - Safety Labels



- 7 Replace all surfacing, not compliant with ADA guidelines.
- 8 Consider fence between play area and parking.
- 9 Accessible path, ensure compliant route to play equipment.
- 10 Planted area potential for nature play: topography, trees and shrubs.

MT NITTANY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PRIORITY ONE:



COMPOSITE STRUCTURE: Multiple locations (at wheel connection and on underside of platform) where bolts have more than 2 threads showing. This has a very high likelihood of injury and must be remedied immediately.

PRIORITY TWO:



COMPOSITE STRUCTURE: Almost all connections on structure are rusted. Any connection showing visible rust must be replaced as soon as possible.



SWING: Surfacing should be full depth recommended by manufacturer in front and rear (for 2x height) and 6' on each end of swings. Use areas are fine, but kickout areas under all swings need to be topped off. Additionally, the pink swing has some visible rust on support posts. Inspect on a monthly basis for failure, or replace.

PRIORITY THREE:



CLIMBER: Structure is aged with visible rust, that could have compromised the metal. Recommend replacement in 1-2 years.

SANDBOX: Sand box wood is degraded and should be replaced as soon as possible.

ACCESSIBILITY: Playground is accessed via surface asphalt from building. Playground surfacing is not compliant however, and is recommended to be replaced by Engineered Wood Fiber, or other accessible surface. An accessible path of travel must connect the building to each piece of play equipment designated as accessible.

FENCING: Playground is near an adjacent parking area. It is recommended that fencing or a barrier be installed between the play area and the parking area.

PRIORITY FOUR



RUST: Inspect all fasteners and moving parts for rust. If rust has compromised the structural integrity of the metal, the part must be replaced.

Otherwise, light sanding and repainting (matching paint to be provided by manufacturer) is recommended.

NOTED AREAS OF RUST: Most connectors at composite structure, all swing attachments and some swing chains, and panel at composite structure [see below]. These areas did not appear to have advanced rust that compromised the metal.



SHADE: Shade is recommended in the play area.

TRASH RECEPTACLES: Trash receptacles are recommended.

PRIORITY FIVE:



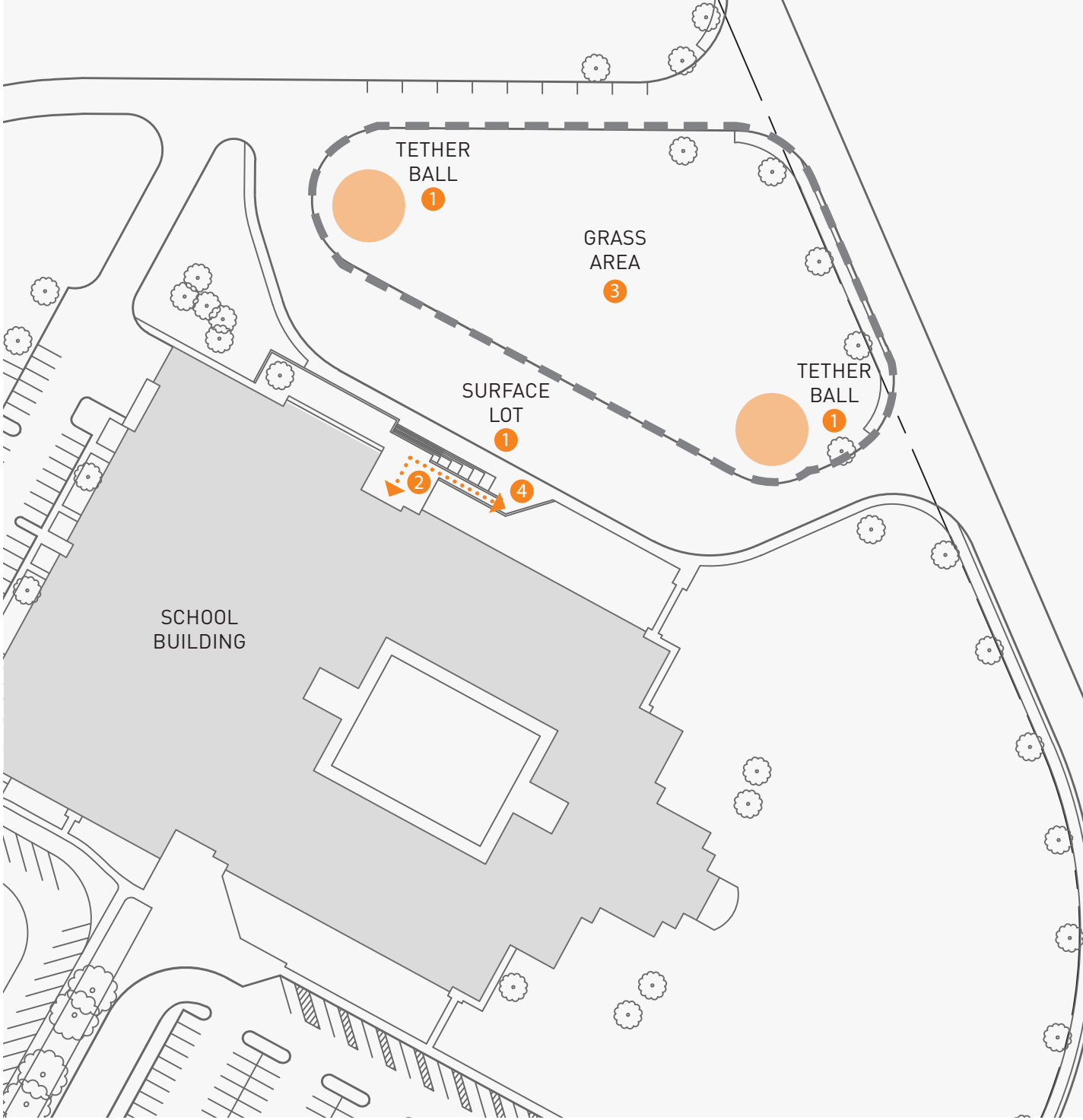
SAFETY LABELS/SIGNAGE: Labels or signage are recommended in each play area with the following:

- Age ranges (2-5 and 5-12)
- Adult supervision recommended
- Manufacturer's identification
- Warning regarding installation of equipment over hard surfaces, such as concrete, asphalt, or packed earth
- Warning about removing helmets and drawstrings
- Warning about hot surfaces and burns

FINISH: Elements with areas of worn paint are recommended for repainting (matching paint to be provided by manufacturer).

RECORDS: Recommend retaining all records regarding play structures, surfacing, maintenance, and injuries. Manufacturer equipment records and contact information included in the Appendix.

MT NITTANY MIDDLE SCHOOL

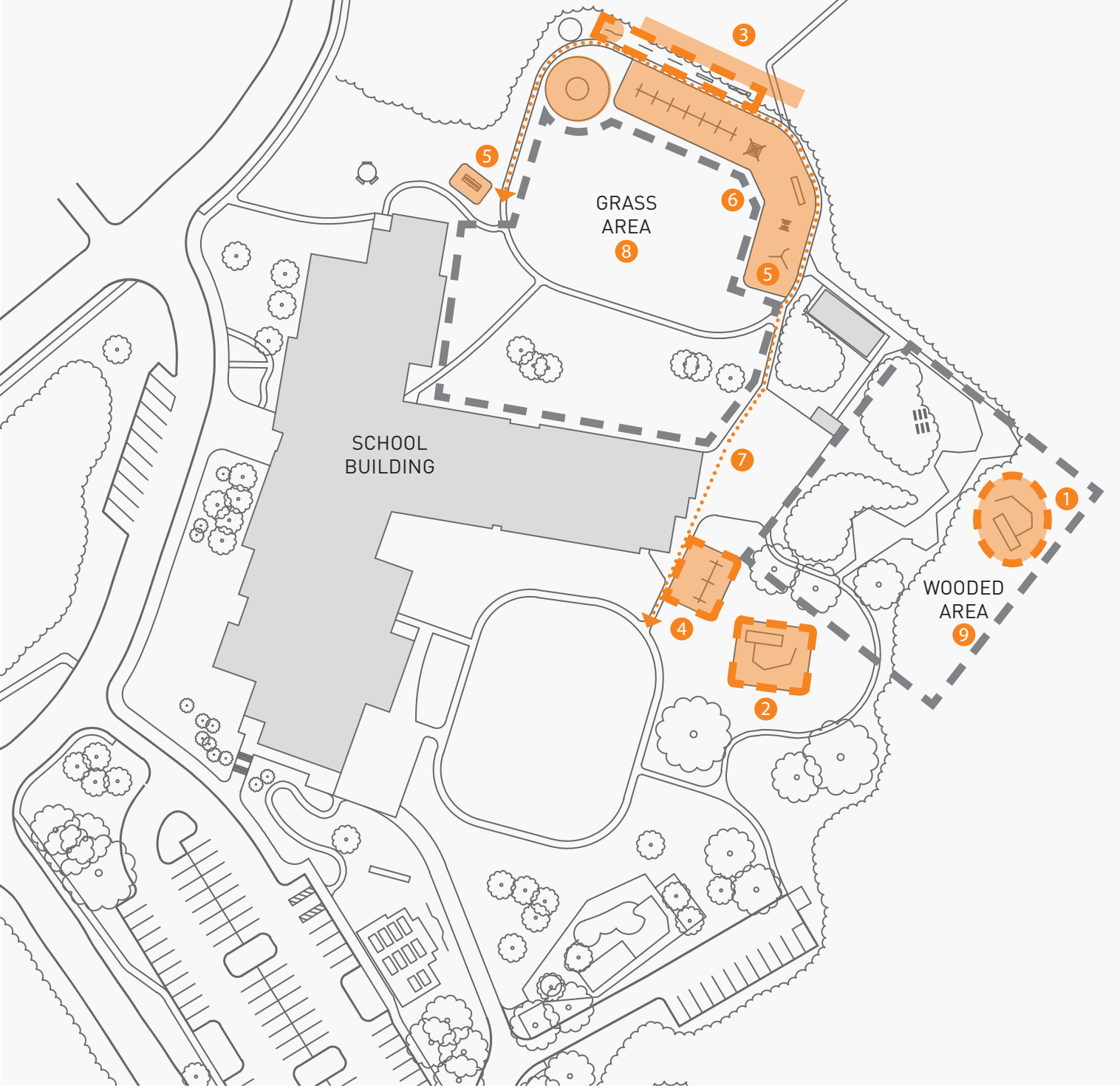


- 1 Play area consists of surface lot and tetherball. No compliance issues.
- 2 Accessible path, ensure compliant route to play equipment.
- 3 Grass area potential for nature play: topographic changes, mature trees.
- 4 Accessible ramp potential for play: parkour/skating.

PARK FOREST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



| PRIORITY ONE | PRIORITY TWO | PRIORITY THREE | PRIORITY FOUR | PRIORITY FIVE |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| None | 1 Structure 1 | 4 Swings | 5 Maintenance | Safety Labels |
| | 2 Structure 2 | | | |
| | 3 Fitness Equip. | | | |



- 6 Replace all surfacing, not compliant with ADA guidelines.
- 7 Accessible path, ensure compliant route to play equipment.
- 8 Grass area potential for nature play: large open area edged with mature trees and shrubs.
- 9 Wooded area potential for nature play: boulders, mature trees, and topography.

PARK FOREST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PRIORITY ONE:
None.



COMPOSITE STRUCTURE 1: Structure does not have compliant use zone, has flaking paint and visible rust. Some rust has compromised the structural integrity of the metal. It should be removed within the next 1-2 years.



COMPOSITE STRUCTURE 2: Structure has flaking paint and visible rust. Some rust has compromised the structural integrity of the metal. It should be removed within the next 1-2 years. Under the overhead bars, a stone or concrete is within the use area. This should be removed immediately.



FITNESS EQUIPMENT: Fitness equipment does not have correct use zone (6' clear). Recommend installation of surfacing or pruning adjacent shrubs as soon as possible.



SWINGS: Surfacing should be full depth recommended by manufacturer in front and rear (for 2x height) and 6' on each end of swings. Recommend installation of surfacing as soon as possible at swings near building.

ACCESSIBILITY: Playground is accessed via surface asphalt from building. Playground surfacing is not compliant however, and is recommended to be replaced by Engineered Wood Fiber, or other accessible surface.

An accessible path of travel must connect the building to each piece of play equipment designated as accessible.



RUST: Inspect all fasteners and moving parts for rust. If rust has compromised the structural integrity of the metal, the part must be replaced.

Otherwise, light sanding and repainting (matching paint to be provided by manufacturer) is recommended.

NOTED AREAS OF RUST: Rocker connections, swing chains and connectors. These areas did not appear to have advanced rust that compromised the metal.

Many structural components and fasteners on the composite structures showed advanced rust and must be replaced.



MAINTENANCE: Climber has wobbly end, recommend footing inspection. Seesaw has gaps, recommend eliminating.

SHADE: Shade is recommended in the play area.

TRASH RECEPTACLES: Trash receptacles are recommended.



SAFETY LABELS/SIGNAGE: Labels or signage are recommended in each play area with the following:

- Age ranges (2-5 and 5-12)
- Adult supervision recommended
- Manufacturer's identification
- Warning regarding installation of equipment over hard surfaces, such as concrete, asphalt, or packed earth
- Warning about removing helmets and drawstrings
- Warning about hot surfaces and burns

FINISH: Elements with areas of worn paint are recommended for repainting (matching paint to be provided by manufacturer).

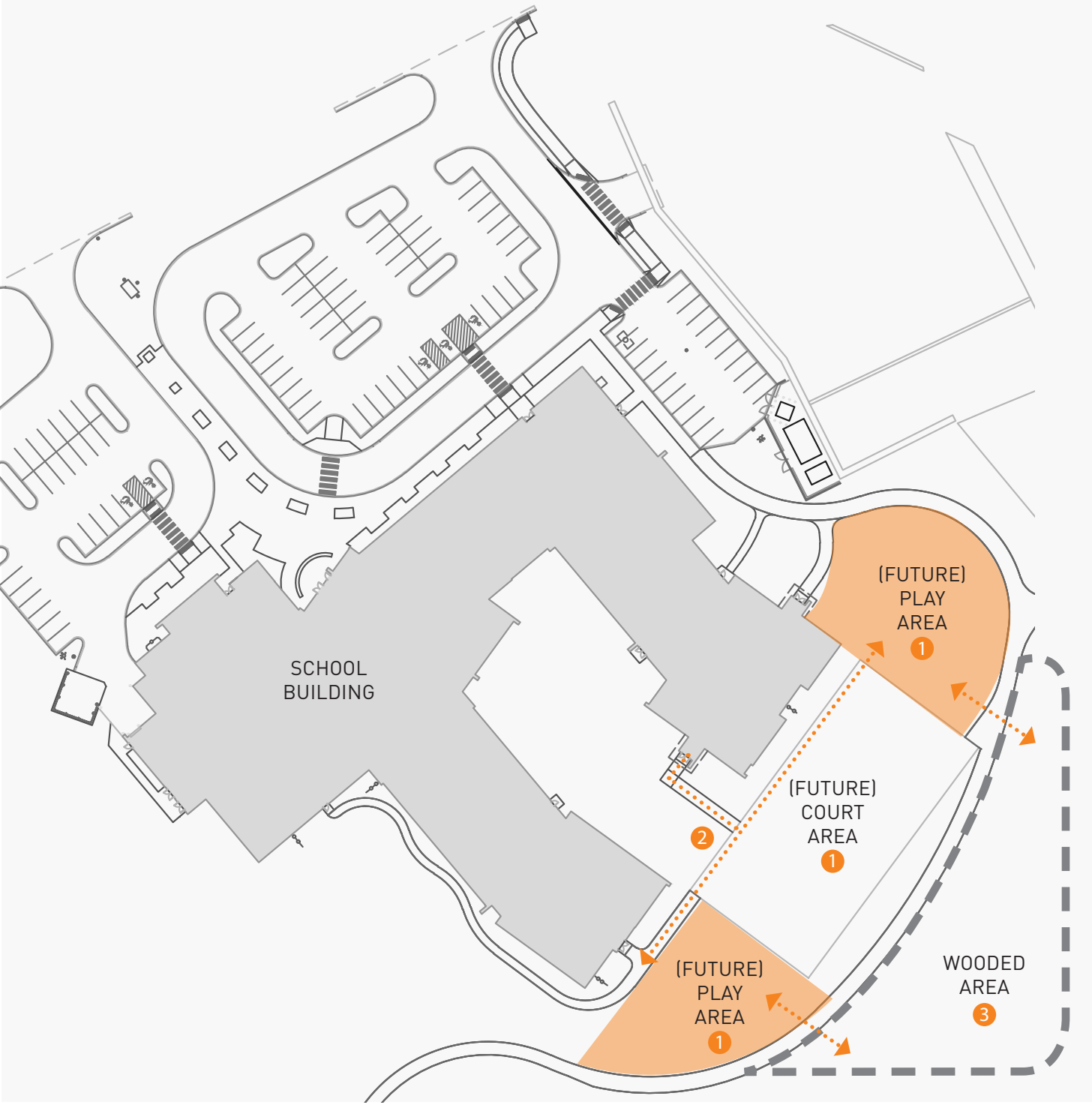
RECORDS: Recommend retaining all records regarding play structures, surfacing, maintenance, and injuries.

PARK FOREST MIDDLE SCHOOL



- 1 Current play area consists of a basketball court and tetherball. no compliance issues of note.
- 2 Accessible path, ensure compliant route to play equipment.
- 3 Grass area potential for nature play: topographic changes, edged with mature trees and shrubs.
- 4 Retaining wall potential for play: climbing/bouldering.

RADIO PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



- 1 Building under construction. future court and play areas identified on construction plans. No play equipment currently on site.
- 2 Potential accessible path, ensure compliant route to play equipment.
- 3 Wooded area potential for nature play: dense canopy of mature trees, grass, and boulders.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PLAY MEMORY?

STAKEHOLDER MEETING: JAN 16, 2019

Metcalfe and Studio Ludo conducted a meeting with the district appointed stake holders – a group that consists of a cross section of representation for each of the schools involved in the study. We should note that the Delta program did not participate in this exercise. The intent of this meeting was to solicit feedback from the stakeholders about their overall ideas of what play could be and shouldn't be within the district. This wasn't about what equipment should be at each school, but HOW the children play or HOW they should not play.

The approximately 50 stakeholders received a number randomly at the door upon entering the meeting room to "mix up" the attendees at each table – there were six tables in all.

For the first exercise, each participant was to write down or use one of the provided images to explain their fondest play memory from their childhood. They then posted their memories on a bulletin board and a select few shared their memory with the larger group. Many, if not most of the memories of play shared were not even on playgrounds! Playing in the backyard, creeks, woods, riding bikes and climbing trees were very popular...kickball, swings and merry-go-rounds were also mentioned often.



I loved the merry-go-round there were some friends that would get us spinning so fast that you could lift up your feet and fly.

Play with 3 siblings on a 5' tall dirt pile covered with sumac trees + raspberry plants... and a dugout 'cave' to play hide + seek
WILD + FREE

Rope Swing

(Indiana Jones Style)

I wrote short stories about a kid who "foraged" around the neighborhood + town. Even to school.

forts

We would go into the "woods" and make forts. There were apartments ~~next~~ near the woods and we would dumpster dive and get things for our fort – bottles, mattresses, etc. We would make different rooms and sweep them



Kickball!
Kickball!!

Kickball on the blacktop every day – every day. Can still remember who could kick it over the swings –

My fondest play memory as a child was the giant tree in my grandparents front yard. I remember climbing the tree with my friends and creating all kinds of forts with blankets on the branches. We would create all kinds of clubs and just spend hours playing in and around that tree.



Behind a friends house, we would build a fort out of scrap wood. ^{that was lying around} For weeks we headed back into the woods. It changed and evolved. We never really finished – it was more the process.

- Playing in the woods and making mud patties during recess at Park Forest Elementary
- Playing in the kindergarten playground at Park Forest and playing chase
- Hanging upside down and climbing on monkey bars (at the same elementary)

PLAY AT STATE COLLEGE IS...

For the second half of the meeting, each table was to write down, list or use provided images to describe what they thought "Play is" and what "Play is Not" for the district. The attendees at each table were to discuss, agree, argue, disagree – but come to some conclusion for each category. Each table then had a volunteer or two present their boards to the larger group as a summary of their table's discussion.

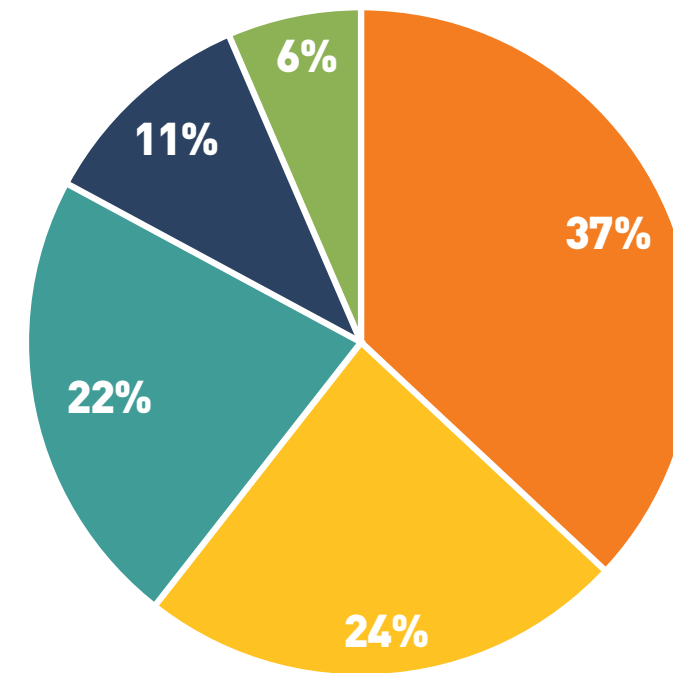
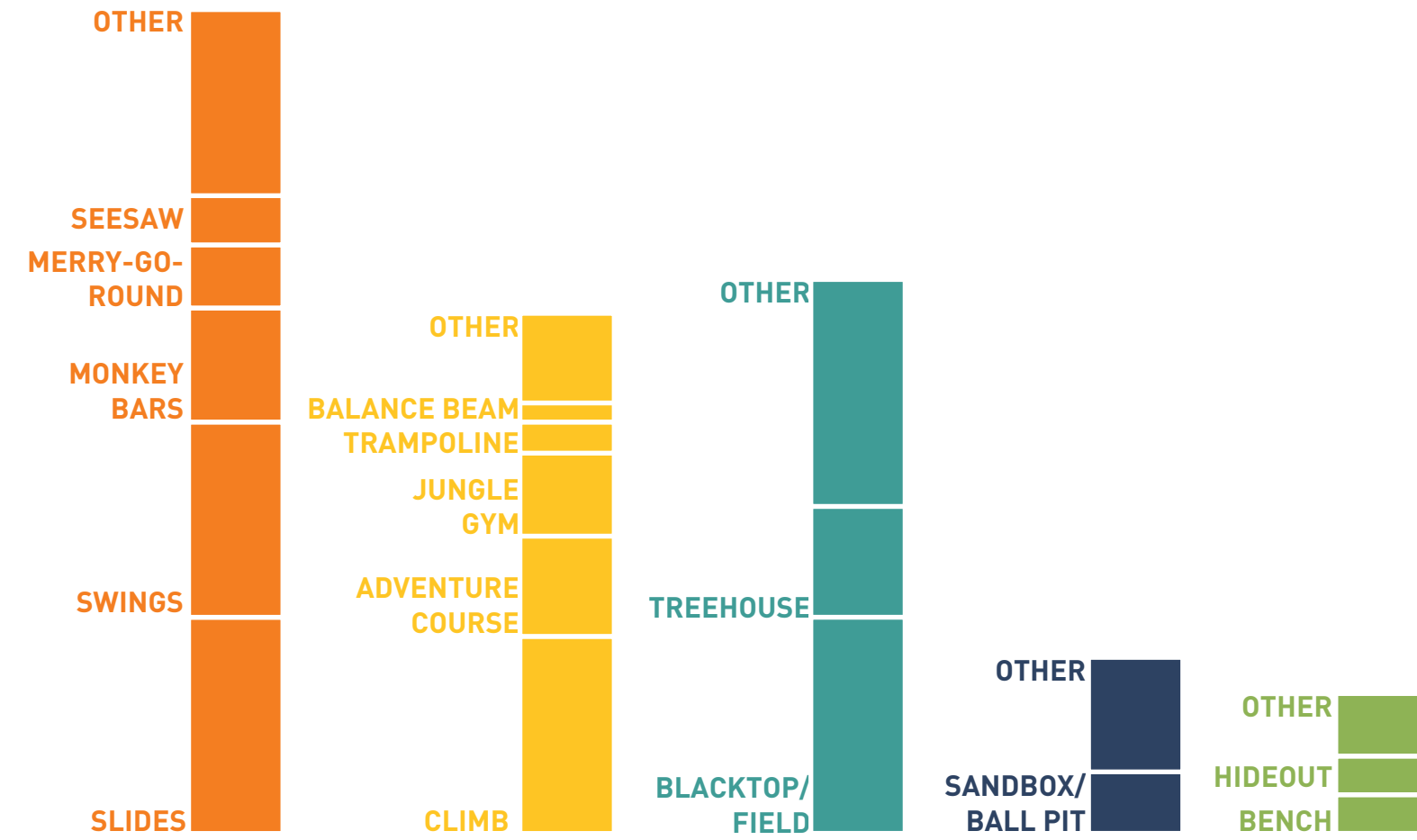


PLAY AT STATE COLLEGE IS NOT...

Some of the major "Play is Not" concepts include water play and hazardous play. While many thought water would be fun and educational, the consensus was that water and mud would be tough for teachers and staff to deal with coming back into the classroom. "Play is" themes included physically challenging the children and risk taking, imaginative play and using natural play elements such as rocks, logs and hills.



WHAT KIND OF ADVENTURES COULD YOU HAVE HERE?



- Woo Spaces**
Vestibular, proprioceptive, ability to sit
- Risky Spaces**
Critical thinking, confidence
- Social Spaces**
Communication, empathy, social cues
- Build Spaces**
Creativity, collaboration
- Solitary Spaces**
mental health, emotional regulation

As part of the student survey process of the Masterplan, students were asked to draw pictures and fill out a “mad lib” of what their new play space could be. Examples of these drawings are on the following page.

The results show that the students, using what they know of playgrounds and adding in their imaginations of what could be, focused on “woo” spaces, risky spaces, and social spaces in particular.

Woo spaces give us awareness of our bodies in an environment. The special movement these spaces produce, such as sliding and swinging, make us feel our surroundings in ways that are atypical to our everyday movement. Risky spaces help us challenge ourselves....at our own pace. We develop physically as we conquer those challenges and develop mentally as well. We are not depending on someone else to assess a situation for us, but understanding our own abilities in the process.

As humans, we are social beings. Whether we are playing a ball game on the blacktop or grass or snuggled close to our friends in a treefort, social cues and communication are developed in these environments.

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOUR SCHOOL IS GETTING A NEW PLACE TO PLAY?

WE NEED YOUR HELP! WHAT KINDS OF ADVENTURES COULD YOU HAVE HERE? IF YOU COULD BUILD ANYTHING, WHAT WOULD IT BE? WHAT TYPE OF SPACES MAKE YOU HAPPY?

MY NAME IS Ryan AND I AM 10 YEARS OLD

DRAW US A PICTURE OF WHAT YOU THINK YOUR PLAY SPACE SHOULD BE

TELL US A STORY ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN YOUR PLAY SPACE

IN MY PLAY SPACE, KIDS WILL have fun AND laugh ON THE mini forest AND IN THE stage IT WILL BE awesome AND enter active AND joyful I CAN'T WAIT TO play on it

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOUR SCHOOL IS GETTING A NEW PLACE TO PLAY?

WE NEED YOUR HELP! WHAT KINDS OF ADVENTURES COULD YOU HAVE HERE? IF YOU COULD BUILD ANYTHING, WHAT WOULD IT BE? WHAT TYPE OF SPACES MAKE YOU HAPPY?

MY NAME IS Nick AND I AM 9 1/2 YEARS OLD

DRAW US A PICTURE OF WHAT YOU THINK YOUR PLAY SPACE SHOULD BE

TELL US A STORY ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN YOUR PLAY SPACE

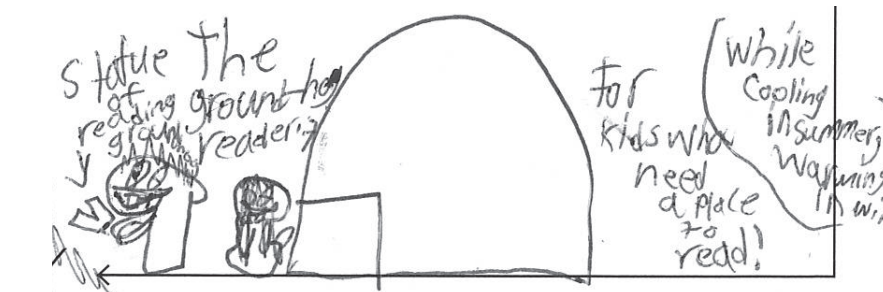
IN MY PLAY SPACE, KIDS WILL climb AND swing ON THE jungle gym AND IN THE swings IT WILL BE fun AND entertaining AND nice I CAN'T WAIT TO play

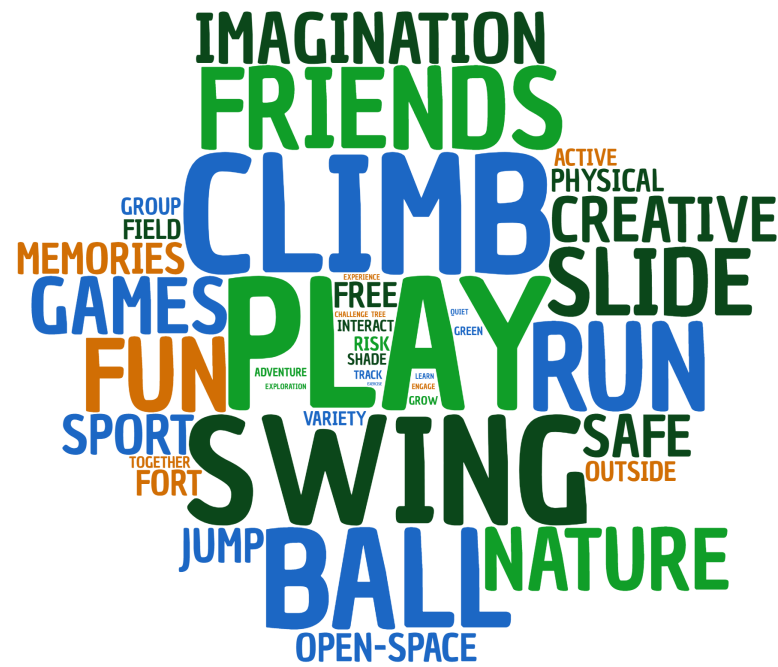
IN MY PLAY SPACE, KIDS WILL play AND fly ON THE equipment AND IN THE patio IT WILL BE fun AND silly AND crazy I CAN'T WAIT TO play

IN MY PLAY SPACE, KIDS WILL learn AND explore ON THE ship AND IN THE fort IT WILL BE exciting AND magical AND fun I CAN'T WAIT TO learn and explore it

IN MY PLAY SPACE, KIDS WILL run AND climb ON THE climber AND IN THE fell IT WILL BE great AND pretty AND bold I CAN'T WAIT TO swing and the grass will be green

TELL US A STORY ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN YOUR PLAY SPACE:





CAREGIVER SURVEY

Creative Play
Caregivers urged the team to allow their children room to explore, create, invent, solve and play in a way that bolsters their imagination. There were many advocates for simple equipment, structures that have the potential for multiple uses and don't restrict a child's outlet for creativity.

Independent Play
Caregivers were understanding of the fact that their children need time and space away from the watchful, sometimes oppressive eye of adults. There were many responses

suggesting designs that allow childrens' independence in their play.

Risk Taking
Many of the survey responses touched upon the importance of adventure, excitement, and pushing boundaries in a child's free time. Taking risks is an important part of growing up, and multiple parents encouraged designing exciting spaces for the children. These types of responses differed from the staff responses, in that the parents seemed more driven to let their kids be free and wild.

Nature Play
Nature is an integral part of our mission for this project and many

What kinds of play memories do you want your kid(s) to have?

"Greenery and nature interwoven with play areas, encourage imagination and wonder."

"I love hearing about the imaginative games that my son plays on the playground with his friends. I hope he remembers that magic of imaginative play."

"I want our kids to remember creating/building/ exhausting their energy and being rewarded for taking risks and adventure in their play."



STAFF SURVEY

Nature Play
The staff had many fond memories of their own childhood, playing in creeks behind their house or a forest with the neighborhood kids. Everyone who commented on nature play seemed to want to be able to bring raw, natural elements from the woods to the school playground and the comments often tied in with imaginative play.

Collaboration
Collaboration was sometimes an offhand word thrown in a list of wants and needs for a playground and sometimes it

was a very focused desire for the student and an urge to make it easier for kids to include each other in games, whether structured or imaginative. The staff not only would like their students to have places to play alone and apart from the classroom atmosphere, they want to make sure students can have fun together, make friends, and be creative and imaginative together.

Creative
There were many responses for creative, imaginative, imaginary play and many staff encouraged equipment/activities that allow for more than one specific use. The teachers want to see their students grow in their own way and be able to learn independently from the

classroom. They stressed that designs should push imagination and let the children decide what their playground is to be even after it's built.

Independent Play
Several staff responses addressed the need for different sizes of groups – allowing spaces to become flexible for group or independent play or designate specific areas for individual games. Some made the point that not all kids are very active and prefer quiet, more stationary games/activities.

What kinds of spaces would make those play memories happen? What are must haves or definitely nots?

What is your favorite play memory?

"Exploring the woods behind my house. I was with neighborhood kids and we would create "clubhouses" and decorate them with items from nature. It was my favorite place to be as a kid."

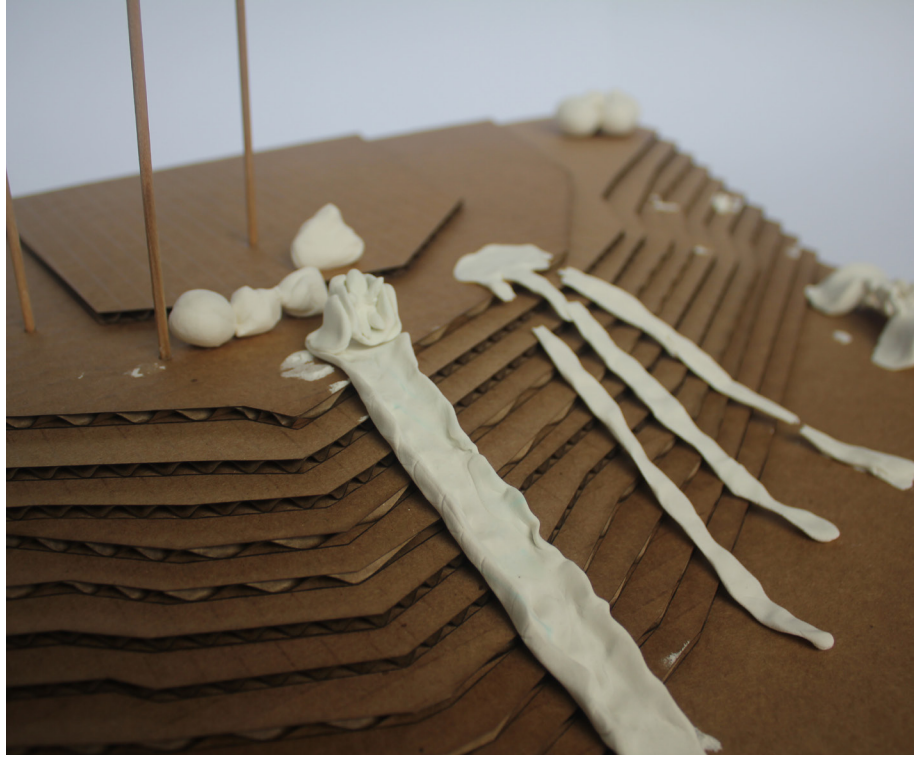
"Climbing trees with my cousins, playing in creeks with my siblings...it was in nature and open ended and allowed us to imagine different worlds."

"My favorite activities at school and at home were group games; especially kickball and softball and dodgeball."

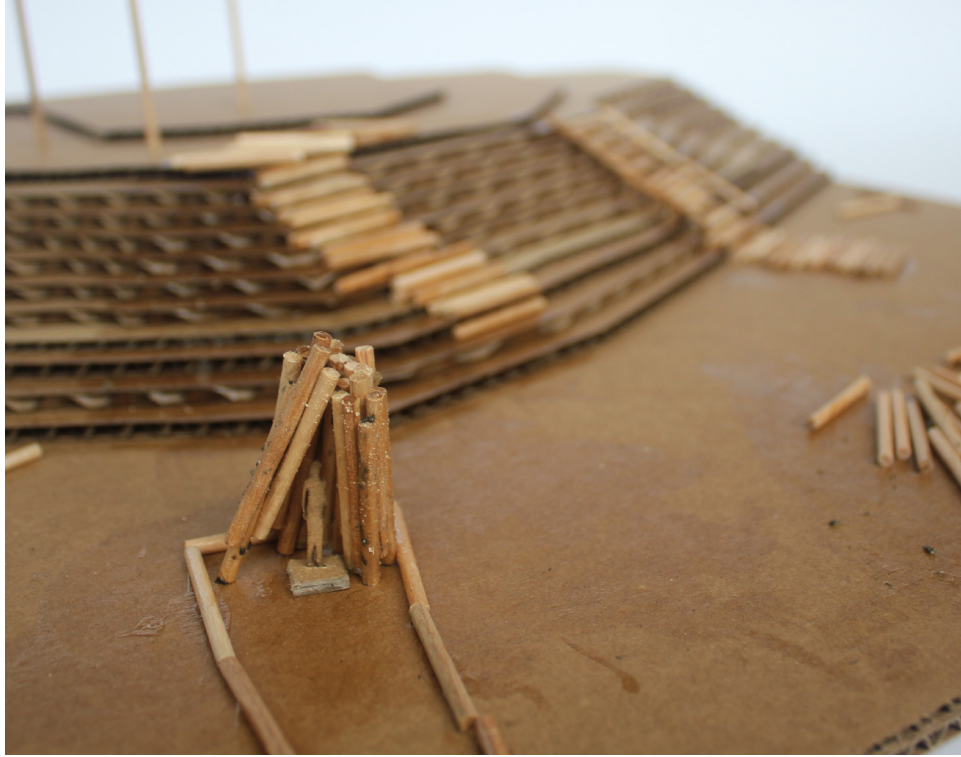
"I work in special ed. Kids with wheelchairs are so left out from the other kids. If there is a way to put a special play place under the equipment that these kids could gather and have the opportunity to inter-play with their peers."

"...I think it would be great to have natural spaces that lend themselves to imaginative play. Stone walk ways, natural elements, big things to move around... make forts, etc."

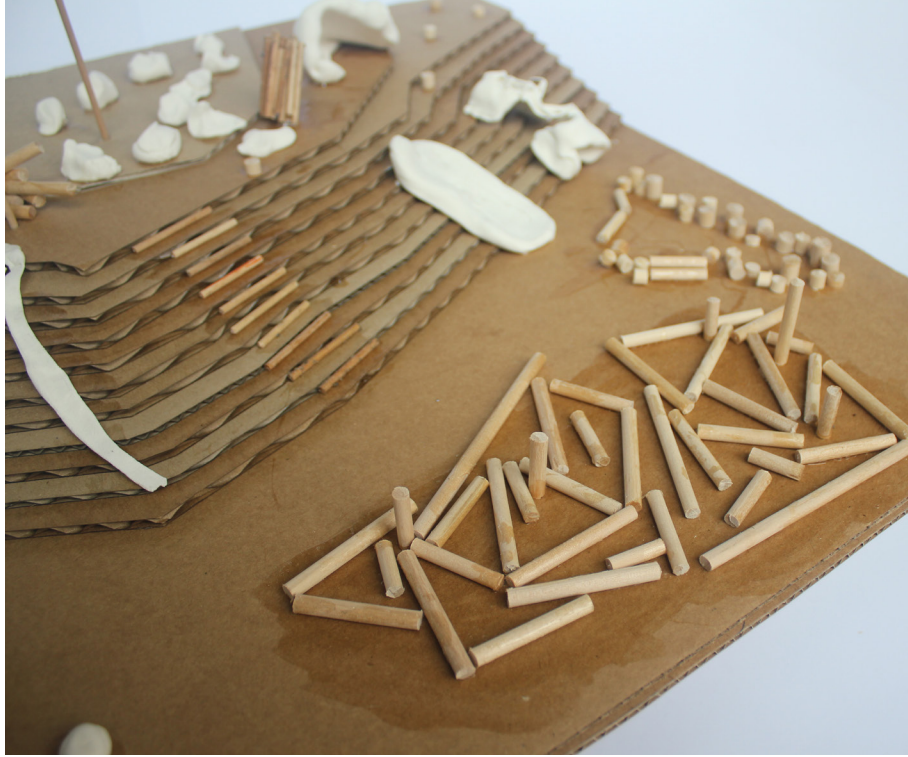
"Space for quieter kids to feel comfortable in...definitely a quiet, peaceful area with seating for more than one or two kids at a time."



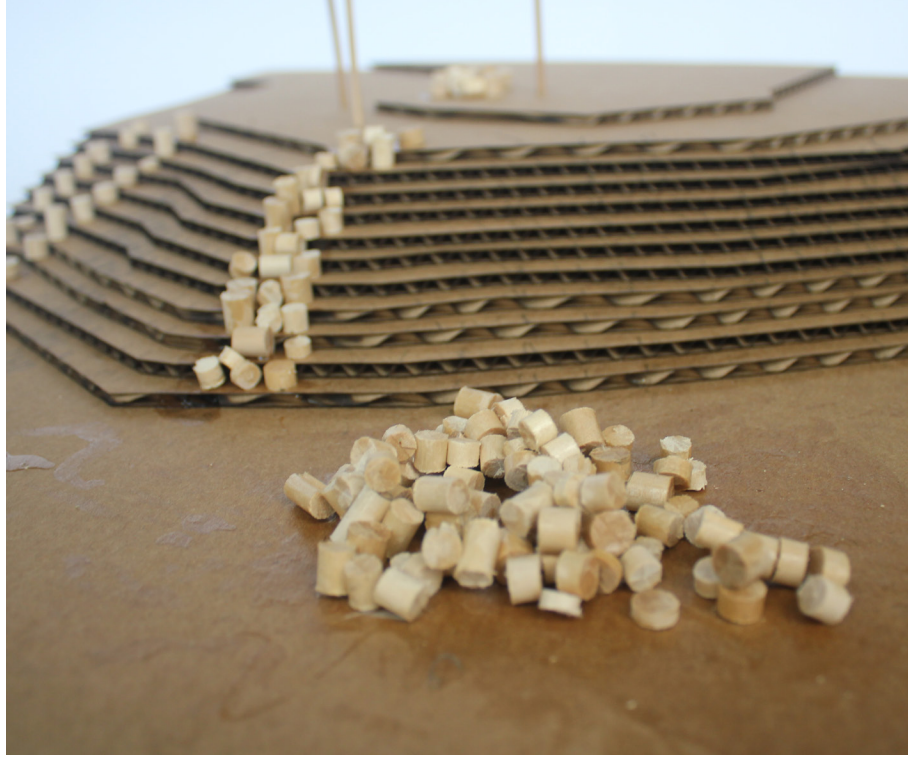
Student model of racing slides and ramps allowing kids of all abilities to enjoy the play ground.



Student model of a tee-pee that could be used as a secret hide out or space for kids to sit quietly when they don't feel like playing.



Student model of a maze, allowing kids to explore freely.



Student model of a hill made of tree stumps, giving kids the opportunity to climb and explore.



The combination model showing the 5 design elements of boulders, logs, vertical sticks, stumps and hills working together.



Racing slides, tree stump paths, a log maze, secret cave hide out, log piles, and balancing logs were used by the students to design their play ground.

DESIGN MEETING

MARCH 21, 2019

Following a small group design meeting several weeks earlier, we conducted a design input meeting with approximately 50 parents and staff and 30 students. The meeting consisted of two groups working concurrently then coming together at the end.

The students were set up in five groups and given a fictitious site with a single nature play design element with which

to work. These elements were the base components the design team was using for each of the schools. The groups consisted of boulders, logs, vertical sticks, stumps and hills. After designing in their assigned groups with their singular element, they were then tasked with combining their thoughts, elements and designs on a singular site. They then presented their designs to the larger parent/staff group. Some of the major points from the students' presentations included designing for inclusivity, desire for secret spaces, problem solving and group play opportunities.

While the students were exploring the relationships of the nature play elements, Metcalfe and Studio Ludo presented the current in-process designs for each of the schools, fielding questions and comments throughout the evening. Some of the major points of conversation with the parents and staff included reinforcing inclusivity as a driver of design, gardens, quieter areas for kids who don't want to play, importance of asphalt for play during snow/rain and enough green space for ball play.



Community Engagement Board for Gray's Woods Elementary.



Community Engagement Board for Park Forest Elementary.



Community Engagement Board for Park Forest Middle School.



Community Engagement Board for Radio Park Elementary.



Community Engagement Board for Corl Street Elementary.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING

APRIL 10, 2019

The design team conducted four community engagement meetings in April 2019, each meeting focusing on about three schools per meeting. This narrowed focus of only a few schools at a time was structured to encourage more direct and specific feedback from community members and staff of those schools. The following pages note some, not all, of the discussion for each of the school communities.

On the first night we discussed Grays Woods Elementary, Park Forest Elementary, and Park Forest Middle School. A small group of community members participated in the conversation providing fitting insight. A few of the comments included not encouraging play in the courtyard area of Grays Woods as a concern for disruption of adjacent classrooms and considering hammocks as social spaces/ woo spaces combined for Park Forest Middle School. The design team is proposing stainless steel group slides on many of the district's playgrounds. There is a concern of "hot" stainless steel. Some of the schools have natural shaded environments that would alleviate this concern. In schools where there is no available shade in

the areas where the group slides are proposed, the team introduced new trees immediately adjacent to the slides to provide shade. The group also discussed having a maintenance plan in place, not only for the equipment and new nature play components, but for the play surface and proposed landscaping to assist the district moving forward.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING

APRIL 11, 2019

The second evening we engaged with about ten community members from Radio Park Elementary and Corl Street Elementary. Radio Park comments ranged from use of the existing garden area and ensuring it was ADA accessible to ensuring there were basketball hoops on the asphalt area. There was also conversation about separation of age groups of children. It was determined this is not a typical policy of the district to separate (one school does have this separation) and that the designs are set for ages 5-12.

Corl Street also commented on having basketball hoops and confirming the number of swings. Many of the proposed designs for the district included group swings. The design team worked with the community comments to include more individual swings, but still include a group swing. With the Corl Street building expansion, the play area inherited some additional outdoor space. The designs included grass mounds on this space. The team was asked to remove those mounds to allow for an open flat space for group play events like kickball.



Community Engagement Board for Easterly Parkway Elementary.



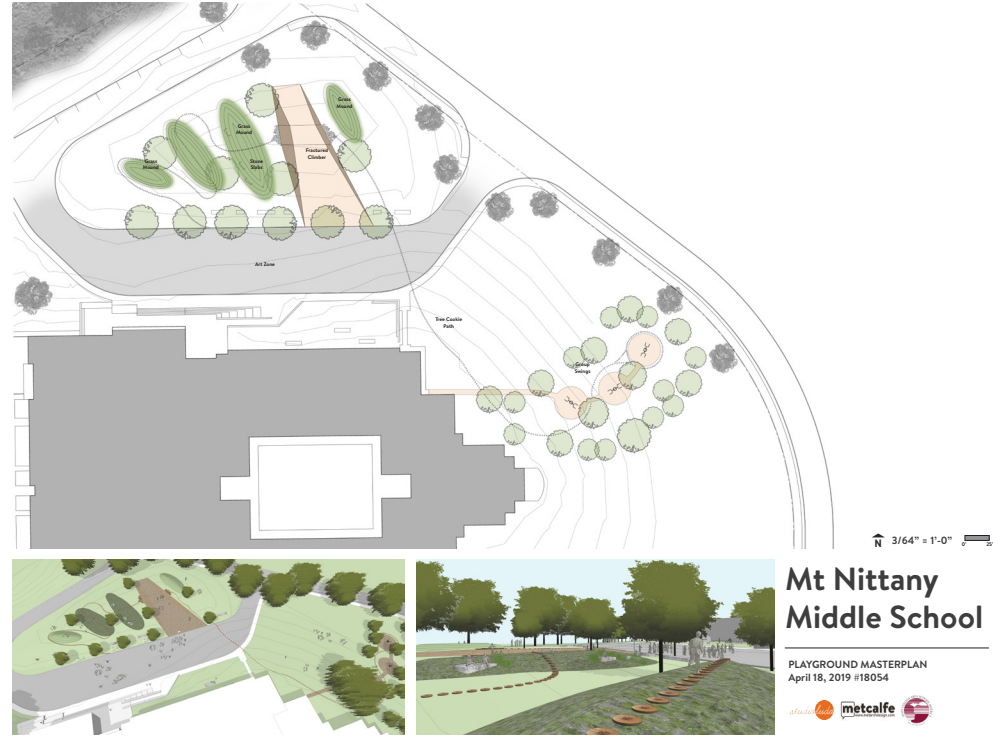
Community Engagement Board for the Delta Program.



Community Engagement Board for Ferguson Township Elementary.



Community Engagement Board for Mt. Nittany Elementary.



Community Engagement Board for Mt. Nittany Middle School.



Community Engagement Board for Spring Creek Elementary.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING

APRIL 17, 2019

The third evening approximately 15-20 community members attended the conversation about Easterly Parkway, Delta and Ferguson Township. Easterly Parkway comments and discussion tended toward ADA accessibility and encouraging more interactive play for children with sensory issues. Music devices, a play house and textures were mentioned as options for enhancing sensory engagement opportunities. Delta had a majority of the representation this evening.

Some of the favorite design proposal of the Delta students in attendance included the group swing and the group slide. The students appreciated the design for the nature climbers as they also encourage just sitting and socializing with friends. It was mentioned that the fields at the top of the hill would accommodate any ball field play. Ferguson Elementary mentioned a concern for stick play in the area designated for small parts play for building animal architecture or stacking sculpture. We discussed that there are several other types of small parts tools that can be used in lieu of sticks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING

APRIL 11, 2019

The last evening included conversation about Mount Nittany Elementary School, Mount Nittany Middle School and Spring Creek Elementary. There were about 10-15 community members in attendance including several from the Radio Park community. There were limited comments on Mount Nittany Elementary and Middle schools. The main comment was to account for basketball hoops. Spring Creek was hoping to see the proposed trees were native species, a slide and more climbing (traditional equipment type). Radio Park

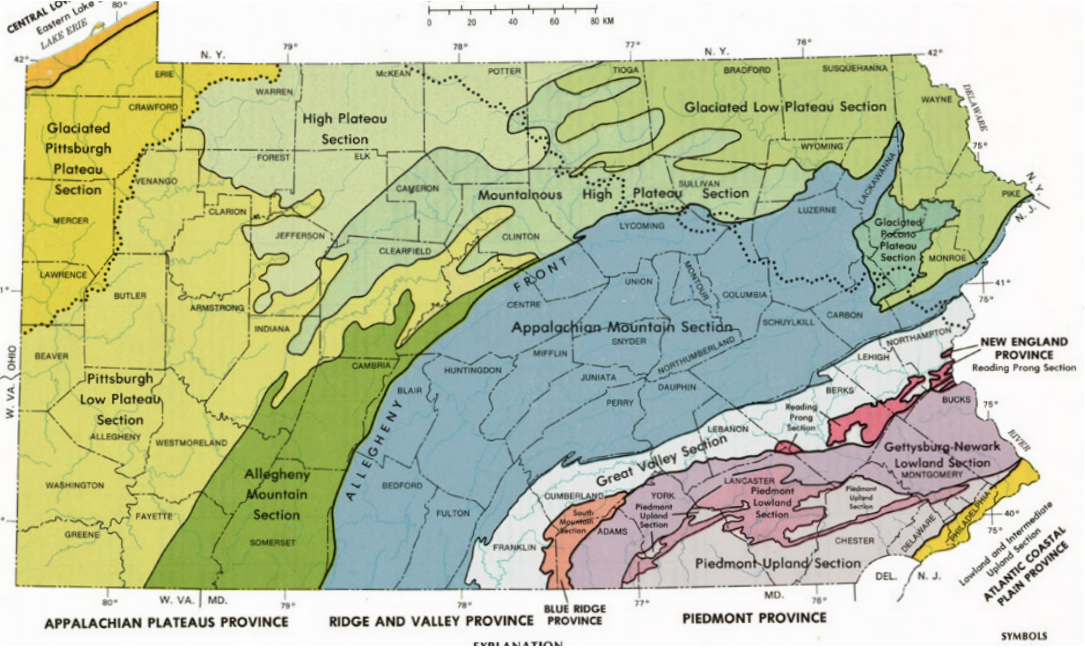
comments included removing the proposed zipline, including a slide and spinning equipment, more vertical play and that it felt too spread out.

ONLINE COMMENTS

The State College Area School District provided a link on the district’s website for those community members who could not attend any of the four community meetings held in early/mid April, 2019. While not all of the comments could be incorporated into the masterplan process, the team took care to review with the district what could be incorporated now and what could be considered during the implementation design process for each phase for each school. Not all comments/suggestion will be able to be implemented due to restraints and considerations not specified in this section and due to the fact that some comments/suggestions conflict with others. However, it is a great feature to promote conversation and input and goes a long way to ensure many points of interest are considered.

https://www.scasd.org/cms/lib/PA01000006/Centricity/Domain/1/CommInput.pdf

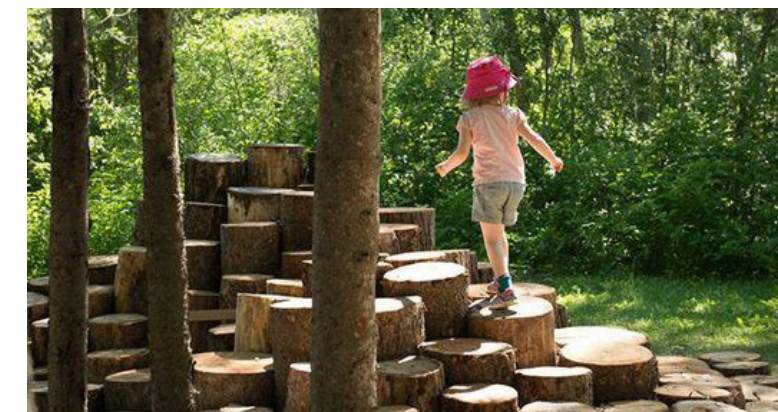
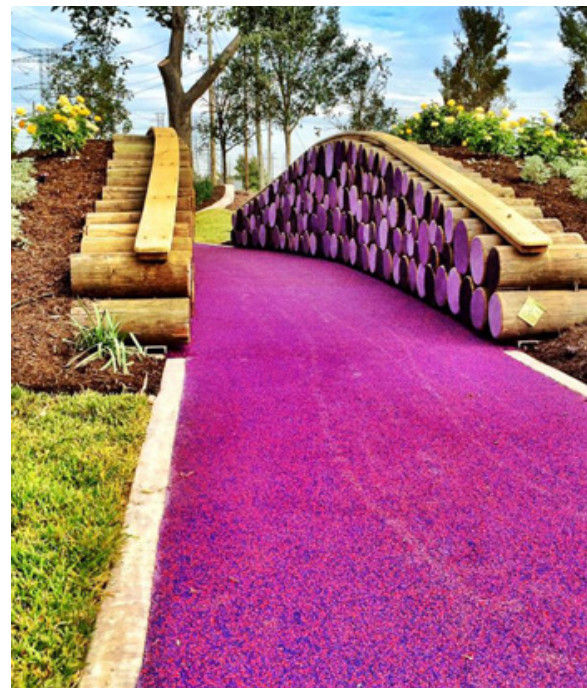
| Timestamp | Please include your child's name | Please share your comments below |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 4/22/2019 11:52:39 | Radio Park | I have some concerns about the playscape that was shared. I don't see enough equipment for the children to play on. Supervision may also be an obstacle with this set up |
| 4/22/2019 14:14:32 | Radio Park | It doesn't look like there is a lot of climbing equipment in the plan. Could more be added in addition to the natural hardscapes? My daughter said that swings were often busy and it looks like there were less than they had before. Can more swings be added, too? Thank you! |
| 4/22/2019 16:56:25 | Spring Creek | The overall design looks interesting. I am wondering if all the logs are actual real logs or fake wood? I am concerned obviously about splinters but also the long term sustainability of something like that. We had many wonderful toys before construction and upon showing my three children the future play ground they all asked where the old equipment was. They liked the colorful slides, the tetherball, the spider web to climb. If anything was changed my oldest son going into 5th really wants longer monkey bars to challenge himself on something that has more than 6 bars. He loves Ninja War courses so if something more along those lines could be incorporated all our boys would be fan of that! It seems like a lot of work and money could be spent on this new plan and I think my children aren't looking for mounds to run up and down on, we have hills everywhere. They really just want some great slides, swings and some of those old classic toys. |
| 4/23/2019 7:05:37 | Spring Creek | I am concerned with ticks. Pennsylvania is the leading state of cases of Lyme disease and these nature playgrounds are the perfect habitat for them to propagate where are children are playing. |
| 4/23/2019 9:27:27 | Ferguson Township | I'm excited to see more natural elements in place with the chance to use creative play! |
| 4/23/2019 10:04:18 | Ferguson Township | You have my full support! I love the nature-based open-play. It's difficult not to compare our playground with the other schools', and I am hoping we could have more space intended for empathy, emotional regulation, social cues, or quiet thinking accessible during recess for the little ones. My kindergartner comes home with all kinds of drama-filled stories of social interactions at recess :) |
| 4/23/2019 11:03:51 | Mount Nittany Elementary | I am a staff member at MNE. One thing we always complain about is MUD. Kids miss recess on days where we could be outside but because of the mud they don't get full use of the playground area. They often walk the track and lose free-play time. Other schools do not have this luxury and might possibly miss recess all together. This also happens in winter because it turns to ice. It would be nice to see the muddy/ grassy areas changed to a more weather friendly surface. Something Comparable to the surface at Bemel Rd. Park. |
| 4/23/2019 13:46:00 | Radio Park | It would be nice to have a basketball court. The design is beautiful but coming from a mom of boys it seems to need more equipment. |
| 4/23/2019 13:58:38 | Ferguson Township | Appreciate the natural materials and look alongside the traditional playground space. |
| | | I just showed it to my 3rd grader and kindergartener; the third grader immediately said, "Where's all the play equipment?" She liked it but said she would "put in some slides and stuff." |
| | | My kids went to Penn Mont in Altoona for awhile, and they have this lovely sort of natural outdoor play area that seems similar to what is shown for Spring Creek. BUT, they also had a LOT more time outside and more time to develop the sort of imaginative and social play those areas would work well for. I don't think this sort of area is well suited for kids who get 20 minutes to play. They need some quick climbing and large muscle movement activities. I hope that the area also includes basketball courts and the existing play equipment (the orange and purple slide etc.) |
| | | I also wonder how well the piles of logs and wood will fare in harsh PA winters. |
| | | I'm also disappointed in how the playground committee was hand-picked. In the future, I hope to see the entire community of parents invited to be a part of these committees. If you have more thoughts than welcome and suggestions, please reach out to me. |



OVERALL NARRATIVE

We propose creating nature based playful interactions that find inspiration in the regional landscape of the ridge-and-valley topography of the Appalachian mountains. The opportunity for play in the landscape is highlighted by operations of modification, addition, deletion and opportunistic interventions on the land. The region’s long, even ridges and continuous valleys and the challenges of moving against them perpendicularly are reimagined at a different scale and playfully reinterpreted. Each site has a slightly different approach based on the individual landscape and spirit of the community. These influences are expressed in the experiential, play and learning opportunities on each site.

We have used landforms, boulders, logs, trees and grasses – among other things -to create full body interactions, social spaces and pensive opportunities. Group play is emphasized with slides and swings for more than one to use at a time. Open-ended play is at the heart of this process.



PRECEDENTS

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