

April 20, 2022

Mr. Ryan Howser
Project Manager
El Paso County / Planning and Community Development Department
2880 International Circle, Suite 110
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80910

**WIDEFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT / PARKS & REC FACILITY EXPANSION SITE
DEVELOPMENT PLAN – LETTER OF INTENT**

Dear Mr. Howser:

In January of 2021, the Widefield School District proceeded with the planning of a new recreation facility to be built on their existing Parks and Recreation campus. Although this includes a new building, it is intended to compliment and be an expansion of community amenities that occur inside their existing building at 705 Aspen Drive. The project will satisfy a significant unmet need for the Widefield Community. The new facility shall be two stories with a gymnasium, walking track, exercise rooms, weight lifting area, outdoor exercise deck, locker rooms, child care space, office and support space. The total square footage of the new project will be 63,196 square feet. A potential future addition is shown on the site development plan that would add an aquatics component to the facility. The building has been designed to current codes, including the 2021 IECC.

Widefield School District intends for this project to be constructed in a single phase with completion scheduled for Spring of 2023. In order to meet this completion date, the School District has established a schedule which calls for site grading to begin in April 2022. The construction of the building shall commence immediately thereafter.

The 39.26-acre site is accessed from Aspen Drive from the north and Widdick Street from the east. A loop road encircles the present recreation center and connects to the various play fields. The loop road shall be resealed and striped for two-way traffic, and new traffic signage will be added. In addition to the present building that includes the existing recreation center and public library, the site is populated with small restroom buildings, a maintenance building, playfields, play grounds and transitional area. Parking areas circle the recreation center and are located in various places along the interior road. A large parking lot is located south of the existing pool facility. This lot will be expanded to serve the new recreation center. The project includes alternates for additional parking on the north and south sides of the new building which will be constructed if the budget allows. Additional site improvements will consist of landscaping around the new facility, accessible pathways and connections to the extensive onsite trails network. Storm drainage improvements shall be included with an expanded detention pond.

Sustainable design principles have been integrated into the building and site design. Translucent insulated daylighting devices will be installed over the Gym. Many of the systems and materials have been selected based on resource conservation. Examples include light fixture controls which automatically dim artificial light sources based on available daylight, de stratification fans in larger spaces, high efficiency boilers, low emitting materials, and low water xeric grasses and shrubs.

We are seeking an Alternative Parking Request for the project. Per the Land Development Code, 576 parking spaces are required for all of the site uses. Combining new with existing spaces, the site will have 415 spaces. The potential parking additions on the north and south sides of the building will add 52 spaces. Additionally, adjacent on street parking (Widdick Street) adds 52 spaces. It is anticipated that functions in the existing recreation center will move to the new facility. The future use of the existing facility is undetermined but is expected to have less parking demand. Additionally, it is unlikely that all facilities will be at full capacity at the same time.

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Landscaping along the east and north street frontage is already established. The present tree count on site is as follows:

37 existing mature Evergreen trees, 0 are within 50' of the roadway.

144 existing mature Deciduous trees, 24 are within 50' of the roadway.

The quantity of new trees indicated on the landscape plan (L1.0) is as follows:

0 Evergreen trees, 0 are within 50' of the roadway.

6 Deciduous trees, 0 are within 50' of the roadway.

Non-Compliance with the Land Development Code guidelines along Aspen Lane, Widick Street is as follows:

1. **Section 6.2.2 (B)(1) Roadway Landscape Requirements (Non-Arterial):** The minimum depth of roadway landscaping area required is 10' Total quantity of street trees required at 1:30 ft frontage is 45. The Plan proposes 24 trees within 50' of the boundary line.
2. **Section 6.2.2 (E) (2) Internal Landscaping Requirements for Non-Residential Uses:** The internal landscaping requirement is 1 tree per 500 SF of required internal area (minimum required internal landscaped area is 5% of the total site). The lot size is 39.26 acres. 5% of 39.36 acres = 85,508 SF. 85,508 SF divided by 500 is 171 trees required. We have 163 (6 new +157exg.) total trees proposed, less 24 in R.O.W. [Note: trees that are in street R.O.W. are not allowed to be counted toward the internal tree requirement]. Note the majority of the site is developed with baseball, softball and soccer fields.

Widefield School District is requesting an alternative landscape plan request for the following General Development Standards in the El Paso County Land Development Code:

1. **Section 6.2.2 (C) (2) Parking Lot Islands:** The parking lot requirement is to have 1 tree per 15 spaces. These trees are to be placed in islands located every 15 spaces. Due to School District O/M procedures, islands are not provided as required by design standard so minimum tree requirements for islands are not satisfied. [For 347 spaces provided the requirement is 23 trees].
2. **Section 6.2.2 (C) (5) Required Parking Lot Screening:** There is one existing parking lot paralleling Widick Street that has 88 spaces. There are three deciduous trees along Widick. All other parking spaces are internal to the site.

The alternative landscape request is justified because the site is already landscaped and currently provides a positive image and visual appeal; parking lots are a small portion of the site; buildings are located internally on a large site; and the park creates a pleasant and attractive amenity for the neighborhood.

Attached (uploaded) please find the Submittal Documents scheduled on the Development Application Review page for this project.

Should you have any questions concerning the information contained in our application or require additional information, please feel free to contact me at our office. My telephone number is 719-491-7777.

Sincerely,

Widefield School District 3



Eric Hulen
Director WSD3 Parks and Recreation