

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The Telluride Mountain School Master Plan was created to address current facility assessment needs and long-term facility goals for the school. Multiple options were explored and evaluated primarily focusing on development of the school owned property located on three adjacent lots in the Lawson Hill development. The programmatic, safety, health, security, financial, and other impacts for each option were considered. The Master Plan is intended to be a comprehensive, long range plan to guide change and facility improvement for the independent private school.

The process for creating this document included five meetings with members of the Telluride Mountain School, school board members, school staff, student parents, as well as the professional design team. In November of 2019, TMS selected RTA Architects through a competitive selection process to assist the school with a facilities master plan including site planning and preliminary conceptual design services. Beginning in January of 2020 the design team met with the TMS Planning Advisory Team to develop a master plan for the school. Meeting records for each meeting can be found in the appendix of this report. This group provided context, creative input, critical feedback, and helped formulate the options included in this report.

1.2 School Overview

The Telluride Mountain School is an independent private school located between Telluride and Mountain Village in Colorado. Founded in 1998, TMS currently has an enrollment of 120 students in grades pre-k through 12. Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten are taught utilizing the Montessori methodology while the lower school and upper school are taught through age appropriate traditional education with a large emphasis on experiential learning.

The Telluride Mountain School (TMS) currently operates in a single building which was converted from a former fly-fishing rod manufacturing plant. Constructed in 1995 and renovated for school use in 2006 the three story, 15,850 square foot building offers a mix of unique spaces, high volume, and valley views. The building is situated on one of three lots owned by TMS. Consecutive lots F1, F2 and G total 2.111 acres.

1.3 Learning Environment

The Telluride Mountain School makes the most of the renovated spaces in offering unique spaces geared towards small class sizes. Those unique spaces do pose challenges when faced with fluctuations in class sizes and overall enrollment. Situated within a linear stretch of three lots provides unique outdoor learning and play opportunities, but does create challenges for site functionality and access.

Thriving on the opportunities of an existing building has created an identity and culture of TMS. There are many nooks for small gathering and visual disruption. The uniqueness and focus on small class sizes does restrict the ability of the school to flex with enrollment and expand capacity. The spread of program

across three building levels does pose additional challenges, mostly for initial access to the Montessori Pre-k/K program, but fits within the premise of mixed learning and interactions across all grade levels.

Exterior play and outdoor learning is focused within two primary areas; the former parking lot used for hard surface play and the sloping natural landscape known as the woods to the west of the building. Structured play does not fit the culture of the school as is not a specific deficiency. What is lacking is a more defined area which would facilitate multiple activities, shaded areas for outdoor learning and gathering, and age specific exploration areas.

Site parking and access is limited due to the inability of the school to utilize lot G. The linear private roadway is lined by head-in parking which requires vehicles to be parked two or three cars deep. The travel distance to the entry is an additional barrier with travel occurring in the active drive requiring students and parents to navigate vehicle backing out.

1.4 Proposed Solution

Since the inception of the school and the renovation of the current building TMS has strategically acquired the property adjacent to the building to provide additional educational opportunities and accommodate the future vibrancy and growth of the school. The goal of the masterplan was to illustrate a phased approach to short term and projected long-term needs. Through this master planning process, the Planning Advisory Team with the assistance of the Design Team has investigated programming and site planning options that are in alignment with the school's goals and objectives. This process allowed for broad input and participation including staff, administrators, and board members.

The preferred solution includes programming and planning for two specific phases of development. Phase 1 plans for short term needs and growth which may be implemented over the next 1 to 15 years. Phase 2 plans for an ultimate capacity of 200 students which may occur beyond a 15-year outlook.

In addressing phase 1 short term needs, a two story building addition totaling 2,000 square feet is needed along with an entry vestibule. The building addition would infill the former loading dock area. A classroom on each level would be provided. Exterior glazing and direct access to the exterior of the adjacent at grade roof and/or expanded deck are important elements discussed by the master planning team. To further protect the interior environment and create an identifiable entry point a vestibule addition is to be implemented. While a larger gathering space is desired, only minimal renovation to the existing spaces is provided in phase 1 due to the requirements of maintaining educational spaces.

Phase 1 also addresses site parking, outdoor spaces and play areas. Lot G is to be developed for parking and to facilitate safe and efficient drop off. Immediately north of the building the hard surface play area should be leveled to be flexible for any sport while areas for shade and gathering are focused near the east end. A stage area at the west end aids in the transition in grade as well as from formal hard surface area to more natural play and outdoor teaching spaces. The west end of the site, known as the woods, includes three primary zones; terraced outdoor classrooms, elementary play, and nature play. A reconstructed path leading down from the rooftop Montessori playground will connect each element and accommodate an accessible pathway.

To accommodate future goals for up to 200 students additional programming and functions are documented in phase 2 planning. Increases in capacity will require increases in classroom quantity and

individual classroom capacity. Renovations of existing classrooms on the main level, enlargement of the great room gathering space, classroom addition on the building rooftop, and multipurpose room addition would be needed to accommodate 200 students.

With limited site area and access points providing additional parking is challenging. A parking structure over the lot G parking lot is a viable, albeit costly, option. Access to this parking structure would need to be via Society Drive. The gradient difference to Society Drive from lot G will allow for a near at-grade transition from roadway to parking deck.

1.5 Conclusion

The Telluride Mountain School is a thriving independent school that provides a valuable educational option to the Telluride Community. The existing facility is dynamic and contributes to the culture of the school. With additions and improvements to the surrounding site the school will continue to expand the educational opportunities for students and contribute to the surrounding Telluride community.