June 12, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Mark A. Hussey
Interim President, Texas A&M University

SUBJECT: CBE Recommendation: Gates Children's Center Playground Renovations

At its June 10, 2014 meeting, the Council for the Built Environment (CBE) discussed a request from the Division of Student Affairs to renovate the Becky Gates Children's Center playground. The Children's Center is currently in the schematic design phase of a renovation and update to the center playground. The expansion will include updates to the current design, as well as the addition of a splash pad, and will commence in phases to allow for outdoor play opportunities for the children throughout the renovation.

The current design was constructed in 1998. Since that time, much of the wooden borders surrounding the play areas have rotted. Also, an infant "baby deck" has since been demolished and is no longer being used. In order to maintain Texas Minimum Standard codes for childcare centers, replacement of many components will include the following:

- Since the removal of the wooden infant "baby deck", the infants have not had adequate play space as defined in Texas Minimum Standards code 746.2417(1) and 746.2507(1) (Basic Requirements for infants and toddlers). Currently, they play within a constructed indoor play space in the multipurpose room or are pushed in a buggy outdoors. The addition of an outdoor infant play area will not only fulfill state requirements but will allow for the gross motor growth and development of the infant and toddler age groups.
- In the hot summer months, the children are given the opportunity to enjoy "splash" activities in which hoses are hooked up to child-proof sprinklers on the playground lawn. Currently, it is not ideal, as the area quickly turns muddy and the children move around in areas that are slippery and dirty. The plan includes the addition of a splash pad area in which showers, bubblers and spray nozzles with motion-sensors allow for water play in an area without a drowning hazard as there would be no standing water. There is one other childcare center in town that also includes this feature.
- Replacement is necessary for the five current shade structures. They currently are shredding and show signs of rust due to their age, the Texas sun, and outdoor elements.
- A plan to replace the current impact surface materials of pea gravel, concrete and colored rubber materials with "pour and play" surface structures that will allow for seamless entry into all play areas, which will provide safe surfaces for young children. Each manufacturer allows each owner to choose the unique designs of their surface areas, and we are interested in continuing our traditional Aggie colors and themes.
- Upgrades and replacements to the current play structures are necessary due to the aging of the current structures. We will be choosing updated models of similar structures and include additional play areas for the children.
We would like to utilize our expansive outdoor space to include a "sport court", paved areas for picnic and outdoor classroom spaces, as well as redesigning the flow of concrete for greater tricycle and bicycle accessibility.

- The design also includes plans for additional storage space for the trikes/bikes and additional outdoor play materials (sand materials, helmets, outdoor kitchen items, musical instruments, hoola hoops, etc.).

According to the current time frame, work will commence first on the splash pad area for utilization during the summer months as soon as approvals are received. The estimated completion date is July, 2014. No additional funding will be necessary for this project as the center currently has set aside funding for this project and matching funds have been requested through the Ed Rachel Foundation.

Recommendations from the Sub-Councils:

**Design Review Sub-Council (DRsc)** – The DRsc recommends approval of the design and plans for renovations to the Becky Gates Children’s Center playground area, with the following comments:

- Access to existing utilities, including irrigation controls and hose bibs, should be maintained and secured.
- Ensure that plans are reviewed by a registered accessibility specialist and that they comply with the playground guidelines published by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- Color of replacement shade structures should be consistent with existing.

**Facilities Utilization Review Sub-Council (FURsc)** – The FURsc recommends the request for the Children’s Center to renovate and update the playground at the Center. The addition and renovation of the exterior spaces to include a new splash pad to allow for outdoor recreation and teaching opportunities is justified.

**Technical Review Sub-Council (TRsc)** - The Technical Review Sub-council supports the proposed renovation and recommends approval, provided the following issues/concerns are addressed and funded.

- **Utility and Energy Services**
  The project and design team will need to follow the TAMU policy on digging on campus prior to any excavation - [https://utilities.tamu.edu/digging-campus/](https://utilities.tamu.edu/digging-campus/)

  The relocation/modification of any TAMU UES systems will need to follow the TAMU UES design standards - [https://utilities.tamu.edu/design-standards/](https://utilities.tamu.edu/design-standards/)

  If the splash pad will be served by a separate DCW feed metering will be required as called out in the TAMU UES design standards. A new backflow preventer will need to be installed regardless of water source placement and type will need to be reviewed by UES.

  Addition of lighting or any other UES systems will also need to follow the TAMU UES design standards and be reviewed by TAMU UES prior to construction.

- **Facilities Services**
  The design team needs to ensure that the project does not increase the rate of storm runoff into local creeks.
The project team should coordinate with Grounds Management for landscaping and irrigation concerns.

The project team should ensure that the facility is designed to minimize, as much as practical, the effort needed for future maintenance. It is preferred that items requiring maintenance be easy to service, be easily accessible from ground or floor level, have generous clearances and be easy to isolate from energy sources with minimal impact to the rest of the facility.

- Environmental Health and Safety
  If the water used in the proposed children's splash zone is to be recycled for any use, EHS must be included in discussions to insure that the water is sanitized appropriately for its possible reuses.

The CBE voted unanimously to recommend the President's approval, with noted caveats, the Division of Student Affairs' request to renovate the Becky Gates Children's Center playground.

Karan L. Watson  
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment

B. J. Crain  
Vice President for Finance and Administration  
Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment

Mark A. Hussey  
Interim President

cc: Tom Reber, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs  
Sub-Council Chairs, Council for the Built Environment
Division of Student Affairs
Becky Gates Children's Center

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Karan Watson
   Provost and Executive Vice President
   B.J. Crain
   Vice President for Finance & Chief Financial Officer

THROUGH: LtGen Joe Weber, USMC (Ret.)
   Vice President for Student Affairs

THROUGH: Tom Reber
   Associate Vice President for Student Affairs

FROM: Kisha Lee
   Director, Becky Gates Children's Center

DATE: February 4, 2014

SUBJECT: CBE Request – Renovations to the Children's Center playground

The Children's Center is currently in the schematic design phase of a renovation and update to the center playground. The expansion will include updates to the current design as well as the addition of a splash pad and will commence in phases, to allow for outdoor play opportunities for the children throughout the renovation.

The current design was constructed in 1998. Since that time, much of the wooden borders surrounding the play areas have rotted. Also, an infant “baby deck” has since been demolished and is no longer being used. In order to maintain Texas Minimum Standard codes for childcare centers, replacement of many components will include the following:

- Since the removal of the wooden infant “baby deck”, the infants have not had adequate play space as defined in Texas Minimum Standards code 746.2417(1) and 746.2507(1) (Basic Requirements for infants and toddlers). Currently, they play within a constructed indoor play space in the multipurpose room or are pushed in a buggy outdoors. The
addition of an outdoor infant play area will not only fulfill state requirements but will allow for the gross motor growth and development of our infant and toddler age groups.

- In the hot summer months, the children are given the opportunity to enjoy “splash” activities in which hoses are hooked up to child-proof sprinklers on the playground lawn. Currently, it is not ideal, as the area quickly turns muddy and the children move around in areas that are slippery and dirty. Our plan includes the addition of a splash pad area in which showers, bubblers and spray nozzles with motion-sensors allow for water play in an area without a drowning hazard as there would be no standing water. There is one other childcare center in town that also includes this feature.

- Replacement is necessary for our five current shade structures. They currently are shredding and show signs of rust due to their age, the Texas sun, and outdoor elements.

- A plan to replace our current impact surface materials of pea gravel, concrete and colored rubber materials with “pour and play” surface structures that will allow for seamless entry into all play areas, which will provide safe surfaces for young children. Each manufacturer allows each owner to choose the unique designs of their surface areas, and we are interested in continuing our traditional Aggie colors and themes.

- Upgrades and replacements to our current play structures are necessary due to the aging of the current structures. We will be choosing updated models of similar structures and include additional play areas for the children.

- We would like to utilize our expansive outdoor space to include a “sport court”, paved areas for picnic and outdoor classroom spaces, as well as redesigning the flow of concrete for greater tricycle and bicycle accessibility.

- Our design also includes plans for additional storage space for the trikes/bikes and additional outdoor play materials (sand materials, helmets, outdoor kitchen items, musical instruments, hoola hoops, etc.).

According to our current time frame, work will commence first on the splash pad area for utilization during the summer months as soon as approvals are received. We have an estimated completion date of July, 2014. No additional funding will be necessary for this project as the center currently has set aside funding for this project and we have requested matching funds through the Ed Rachel Foundation.

Thank you for taking the time to review our request and we look forward to presenting to the sub-councils in the near future.
MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Karan Watson
   Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment

   Ms. B.J. Crain
   Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment

FROM: Ms. Lilia Gonzales, AIA
       University Architect and Chair, Design Review Sub-Council

DATE: May 6, 2014

RE: Design Review Sub-Council (DRsc) Report
    Becky Gates Children’s Center Playground Renovations

On April 23, 2014 the Design Review sub-council reviewed a request from the Becky Gates Children’s Center for renovations to their playground area.

The project scope includes updates to the current design which will allow for outdoor play opportunities. The scope of work will be completed in phases and includes the following: addition of an outdoor infant play area; addition of a splash pad area; replacement of the existing five current shade structures; replacement of current impact surface materials; replacement of current play structures; addition of a “sport court”; and additional outdoor storage areas.

**Recommendation**
The DRsc recommends approval of the design and plans for renovations to the Becky Gates Children’s Center playground area, with the following comments:

- Access to existing utilities, including irrigation controls and hose bibs, should be maintained and secured.
- Ensure that plans are reviewed by a registered accessibility specialist and that they comply with the playground guidelines published by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- Color of replacement shade structures should be consistent with existing.

Please let us know if you need additional information.

cc: Kisha Lee
    DRsc Members
    Bettyann Zito
DESIGN PROGRAM Splash Pad

Small Scale Splash Equipment + Colorful Pavement
Partially Shaded Tricycle Path + Bike Stations
DESIGN PROGRAM Integrated Storage
1. Propose the major splash pad at center entrance.
2. Add several small scale water play areas in playground.
3. Separate activity areas for different age groups.
4. Provide educational activities such as gardening, learning about stormwater management, and art.
5. Add shade to create a more comfortable outdoor environment.
6. Create an open lawn area in the center of playground.
7. Add integrated storage around the playground to keep equipment organized.
8. Expand existing sidewalk system to create more connection and activity opportunities.
9. Explore the possibility of a tree house.
10. Develop a recognizable theme to carry throughout the playground and unify the spaces.
MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Karan Watson
   Chair, Council for the Built Environment

   Ms. B. J. Crain
   Chair, Council for the Built Environment

Subject: Gates Children Center Playground Renovation

RECOMMENDATION

The Council for the Built Environment’s (CBE) Facilities Utilization Review sub-committee (FURsc) recommends that the CBE support the request the Children’s Center to renovate and update the playground at the Center. The addition and renovation of the exterior spaces to include a new splash pad to allow for outdoor recreation and teaching opportunities is justified.

SCOPE

The FURsc met this morning to consider the request by the Becky Gates Children’s Center to upgrade and expand the playground at the Center. Located on Hensel Drive, the facility was originally constructed 16 years ago and has had one addition to the original structure since it opened. Currently there are 165 children enrolled, serving 70 faculty, students and staff families. The diverse mixes of children are from 22 countries and speak 18 different languages.

Based on standards outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) http://www.naeyc.org/, the playground provides programmatic support for the facility, with the primary focus on both a pleasing recreational experience and a teaching environment for the children. Through consultation with a local Landscape Architect, schematic designs have been developed which includes enhancing the current playground and an addition of a water/splash pad area adjacent to the current multipurpose room. No pool or similar facility is being planned. Due to health and cost issues, the water used in the facility will not be recirculated. No additional land will be necessary for this expansion and the additional features will be accommodated within the land area originally designated for the Center.

The improvements are projected to cost approximately $250,000 and will be accomplished in phases, with the splash pad feature constructed first. Security will continue a priority for the operations at the Center and although there is much development in the vicinity, fencing and other design elements will be included to promote the safe and positive experience for their students.

We are pleased to offer this positive recommendation and welcome further inquiries related to this analysis.

Sincerely,

James Massey
Chairman, CBE-FACILITIES UTILIZATION REVIEW sub-council

Attachments
CC: CBE-FURsc members
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Karan Watson
     Co-chair, Council on the Built Environment

     Ms. B. J. Crain
     Co-chair, Council on the Built Environment

FROM: Tom Reber
     Chair, CBE Technical Review Sub-council

DATE: March 3, 2014

SUBJECT: CBE TRsc Recommendation: Renovations to the Children's Center Playground

On February 24, 2014, Mike Teal, owner and lead engineer at Teal Design and Landscape, presented to the CBE's Technical Review Sub-council on the proposed renovation of the Children's Center playground. The renovation, which will include a splash pad will commence in phases to allow outdoor play during the process.

Recommendation
The Technical Review Sub-council supports the proposed renovation] and recommends approval, provided the following issues/concerns are addressed and funded.

Utility and Energy Services
The project and design team will need to follow the TAMU policy on digging on campus – prior to any excavation - [https://utilities.tamu.edu/digging-campus/](https://utilities.tamu.edu/digging-campus/)

The relocation / modification of any TAMU UES systems will need to follow the TAMU UES design standards - [https://utilities.tamu.edu/design-standards/](https://utilities.tamu.edu/design-standards/)

If the splash pad will be served by a separate DCW feed – metering will be required as called out in the TAMU UES design standards. A new backflow preventer will need to be installed regardless of water source – placement and type will need to be reviewed by UES.

Addition of lighting or any other UES systems will also need to follow the TAMU UES design standards and be reviewed by TAMU UES prior to construction.
Facilities Services
The design team needs to ensure that the project does not increase the rate of storm runoff into local creeks.

The project team should coordinate with Grounds Management for landscaping and irrigation concerns.

The project team should ensure that the facility is designed to minimize, as much as practical, the effort needed for future maintenance. It is preferred that items requiring maintenance be easy to service, be easily accessible from ground or floor level, have generous clearances and be easy to isolate from energy sources with minimal impact to the rest of the facility.

Environmental Health and Safety
EHS and Safety & Security have reviewed the plans for the Gates Children's Center Playground Renovations. Only one concern has been identified. If the water used in the proposed children’s splash zone is to be recycled for any use, EHS must be included in discussions to insure that the water is sanitized appropriately for its possible reuses.

Xc: CBE Technical Review Sub-council
     CBE Support Staff