



**Council Meeting: January 08, 2008**

**SUBJECT:** Revision of Stocklmeir School Sports Field Master Plan to Accommodate New Classroom Buildings

**REPORT IN BRIEF**

On May 16, 1989, the City of Sunnyvale entered into an Open Space Agreement with the Cupertino Union School District (CUSD) pertaining to the use and maintenance for public recreational purposes of several school properties including the Stocklmeir School sports field. The sports field has been designated on its related Master Plan attached to the agreement.

The District has brought to the City's attention that enrollments have dramatically increased at this school and classroom facilities are in need of replacement and expansion. To better serve Sunnyvale students, they need to construct additional permanent classrooms and related facilities (restrooms, storage, parking and play areas) at Stocklmeir School. Some leased spaces at this site are being eliminated and some leased space is being relocated on-site. The proposed changes would reduce the 3.5 acre sports field by 3,060 square feet (2.0% reduction) and would require modification of the pathway and landscapes at the northwest corner of the sports field. Formal notice for the project was provided by the District on October 30, 2007. Please see Attachment A, letter from CUSD. The work at Stocklmeir School is scheduled to begin as soon as all approvals are received and may require several months to complete. Please see Attachment B, Current Master Plan and Proposed Master Plan of Stocklmeir School Site.

The Open Space Agreement for maintenance and use of the school open space states that it is the City's responsibility to revise the Master Plan (a simple 8.5" x 11" site plan, not a complex document) whenever substantial improvements or changes are requested that will affect the open space property. Additionally, to take effect, the revised Master Plan must be approved by both governing bodies – the Sunnyvale City Council and Cupertino Union School District Board of Education.

The Cupertino Union School District held a public meeting, including notice to neighbors within 300 feet of the school, on October 16, 2007. The Cupertino Union School District Board of Education is tentatively scheduled to review this matter and take action regarding the proposed revised Master Plan during their regularly scheduled public meeting December 11, 2007.

Staff conducted public meetings with near neighbors on November 15 and 17, 2007. Neighbors expressed concerns (listed on page 5 of this report) included aesthetic and noise impacts as well as the small but incremental loss of open space. The Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed a draft of this report at its regularly scheduled meeting on December 12, 2007, and recommended in a three to one vote (with Commissioner Chuck absent) that City Council approve Alternative #1, Approve the Proposed Master Plan for Stocklmeir School sports field to include the new classroom buildings and facilities per Attachment B. The dissenting opinion was expressed for concern with incremental loss of small portions of the open space.

Staff recommends that Council approve the Proposed Master Plan for Stocklmeir Elementary School sports field as shown in Attachment B.

### **BACKGROUND**

The May 16, 1989, Open Space Agreement between the City and the Cupertino Union School District provides a relationship wherein the City maintains the school open space property; and, in exchange, the District allows the City to provide public recreational use of the sports fields during non-school hours including reservations for exclusive use of the fields. This recreational use of public school properties is enabled by Education Code Section 10910 which provides, in part, that the District may grant use of their properties to other public agencies (including the City) for community recreation whenever such use will not interfere with the use of such facilities for the public school system. The Stocklmeir School sports field is included in the agreement. A portion of the field is regularly reserved by local Little Leagues (1 tee-ball field) for games and practices in spring each year. In addition, neighbors and the public use this field for exercise and informal games during non-school hours throughout the year.

The current agreement notes that whenever a substantial improvement or change in land use that is not included in the existing Master Plan is requested, the Master Plan for that site must be revised by the City and approved by both governing boards (School Board and City Council) before it is placed into effect. The installation and maintenance of any improvements agreed to by both parties shall be paid for by the party proposing it or by both parties if jointly proposed.

On October 30, 2007, the District notified the City that enrollments had increased at Stocklmeir and classrooms and facilities were in need of expansion and replacement. To better serve students, they needed to complete facility modernization by replacing classrooms, relocating leased facilities and installing new support facilities including play areas, parking lots and storage.

The proposed changes would also move the Montessori School (leased space) into two temporary buildings near the southwest corner of the field. This move would impact the size of the 3.5 acre sports field at the school decreasing the turf and landscapes at the southwest corner by approximately 3,060 square feet to provide a Montessori tot-lot and rerouting the existing pathway. The proposed work would decrease the public open space by approximately 2.0 % and is scheduled to begin once all approvals are received from the City and School Board. The proposed Master Plan reflects the proposed new boundaries for maintenance by both the City and District. In this case, the improvements are for school facilities that would be maintained by the District and/or their Lease Holder and the rerouted pathway would continue to be maintained by the City as it has been in the past.

### **EXISTING POLICY**

#### **From the Open Space and Recreation Sub-Element:**

#### **2.2A. Open Space**

The City strives to provide and maintain adequate and balanced open space and recreation facilities for the benefit of maintaining a healthy community based on community needs and the ability of the city to finance, construct, maintain, and operate these facilities now and in the future. It is the City's policy, therefore, to:

- 2.2.A.8. Support the acquisition or joint use through agreements with partners of suitable sites to enhance Sunnyvale's open spaces and recreation facilities based on community need and through such strategies as development of easements and right-of-ways for open space use, conversion of sites to open space from developed use of land, and land banking.

#### **2.2.C. Regional Approach**

The City embraces a regional approach to providing and preserving open space and providing open space and recreational services, facilities and amenities for the broader community. It is the City's policy, therefore, to:

- 2.2.C.3. Encourage School Districts to make available school sites in and around Sunnyvale for community open space and recreation programs.

#### **2.2.D. Prioritization**

The City strives to ensure equal opportunities for participation and to provide for a range of structured and unstructured uses, and a variety of general and special interest uses in parks and facilities. The City also provides a wide range of program choices, open space, amenities and facility offerings to meet the recreational needs of a diverse and changing population, including identified

subgroups and special populations. Policies related to acquiring and/or developing open space facilities and amenities are also included here. Competing interests and finite resources, however, require the City to set some priorities. All other things being equal, it is the City's policy, therefore, to:

- 2.2.D.4. Give priority to services, facilities and amenities in which the community demonstrates interest.
- 2.2.D.5. Give priority to services, facilities and amenities that benefit a greater number of residents.
- 2.2.D.7. Give priority to services, facilities and amenities that can be used by multiple users or serve multiple purposes.
- 2.2.D.12. Give priority to acquiring/developing open space and recreational amenities and programs where the needs are greatest and/or which will meet the greatest needs.

Additional Policy:

Maintenance and Use Agreement between the City of Sunnyvale and the Cupertino Union School District dated May 16, 1989.

**DISCUSSION**

The Cupertino Union School District has experienced significant enrollment increases at Stocklmeir School resulting in the need to serve increasing numbers of students in this neighborhood. The District estimates that current enrollment of 700-plus students will increase to over 1,000 within a few years. The District has funding available to provide new permanent classrooms that would be a great improvement for the students in this area of Sunnyvale. Portions of the site have been leased in past years. Some leased space would be eliminated and some leased space for the Montessori Pre-School would be relocated on site and the private tot-lot for this pre-school would be placed on an approximate 3,000 square foot portion of space that is currently dedicated to turf, pathway and landscapes in the southwest corner of the sports field.

The proposed school improvements would decrease the total turf area available for sports but would not decrease the usefulness of these open spaces. That is, all of the games and other typical uses generally conducted on these fields would continue to be played and no user groups or public use would be relocated. Little League would continue to have one back stop for baseball practice and tee-ball games at this site. Organized soccer games or practices are not programmed at this sports field.

Although the public school playgrounds and hard surface courts are not a part of the agreement between the City and the District, the District has allowed neighborhood children to use the playgrounds after school hours at all of its school sites. Leased facilities and play areas, such as those at Montessori School, have not been available previously and would not be available for public use in the future.

Neighbors that attended public meetings regarding this project expressed interest in changes that are planned for the school classrooms, new library, relocated parking lots and the potential for pedestrian and vehicular traffic concerns. They also mentioned concern for potential construction noise and/or dust while the project is in progress.

Regarding proposed changes to the open space, neighbors expressed:

- Concern with small but possible incremental loss of open space.
- Fencing for the tot-lot would change the esthetics and character of the open space.
- Noise from children at play would increase at the proposed tot lot negatively affecting neighbors.
- Changes to the track are not significant – wouldn't impact the use.
- Montessori School is open longer (6:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.) than Stocklmeir School so the impact along the west border would be greater than at present.
- The District should locate the Montessori School in another location.
- Concern that the Montessori School is a private commercial use on a public property.
- The shape of the play area seems to maximize the use of the open space.
- Opportunities for numerous groups to use the sports field at once would be decreased.
- Interest in the actual size of the proposed play area (52' wide and 82' long triangle), its percentage of the whole open space (2.0% of the 3.5 acres) and the change to the length of the pathway (approximately 37 feet shorter than present).

Regarding the potential for increased noise along the west border and near the tot-lot, District staff believes that the current noise level for this activity is reasonable and seasonal as well as periodic. That is, in the cool season, the children play fewer hours in the tot-lot, and throughout the year the children spend the majority of their day indoors. The weekday lunch hour is the hour of greatest use (40 – 48 children) and one-half that use is anticipated during recess times mid-morning and mid-afternoon. The tot-lot is not open to the

public and, therefore, should not have any associated noise during non-school hours, holidays or weekends. District staff has worked with design staff and sees the proposed configuration of services on-site as optimal for all parties. Placing tot programs into the midst of the older children's classrooms and play areas is not beneficial for the tots or the older children. That is, tots are benefited by a border location where they are not surrounded by other uses and age groups. Reconfiguring the Montessori School or its associated play area to another location on site would not provide the benefits for the public school children or private school children that the current configuration provides.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact to the City's Capital or Operations Budget whether Council approves or does not approve the Proposed Master Plan for the Stocklmeir Sports Field. The reduction of turf at this site would decrease mowing time less than 2 to 3 minutes per week while other costs (general grounds, pathway care, debris removal, tree care, irrigation repair, etc.) would remain significantly as they are at present. Therefore, no reduction to operating costs is anticipated with the small reduction in turf at this site if the Proposed Master Plan is approved.

If approved, the classroom and facility construction and on-going maintenance or repair/replacement of these new structures and restoration of impacted turf areas would be provided by the District.

### **PUBLIC CONTACT**

The School District held public meetings with parents, students and those neighbors who reside within 300 feet of the school. On October 16, 2007, District staff presented the project and related proposed changes to the open space at Stocklmeir School to approximately 30 near neighbors. The Cupertino Union School District Board of Education is tentatively scheduled to review this matter and take action regarding the proposed revised Master Plan during its regularly scheduled public meeting December 11, 2007.

Parks and Recreation staff notified neighbors within 500 feet of the school, posted notices at Ortega Park, and contacted the Ortega Park Neighborhood Association of public meetings to review the proposed project and gather input. These meetings were held on Thursday, November 15, 2007, at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. and Saturday, November 17, 2007, at 11 a.m. in the Raynor Park Recreation Building.

Typically, open space project meetings are held at the closest park building. In this case, Ortega Park building would have been chosen for the meetings.

However, Ortega Park Building was not available, and the school meeting rooms could not be used during school hours.

Public contact was also made through posting of the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council agendas on the City's official notice bulletin board, posting of the agenda and report on the City's web page, and availability of the report in the City Clerk's Office, Library, Parks and Recreation Administration, Community Center and Senior Center.

Notice of Commission and Council meetings regarding this report was also distributed to the "Friends of Parks and Recreation" mailing list (a list of organizations and individuals who have expressed an interest in parks and recreation issues).

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Approve the Proposed Master Plan for Stocklmeir School sports field to include the new classroom buildings and facilities per Attachment B.
2. Do not approve the Proposed Master Plan for Stocklmeir School sports field to include the new classroom buildings and facilities per Attachment B.
3. Provide direction to staff as Council deems appropriate.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed a draft of this report at its regularly scheduled meeting on December 12, 2007, and recommended in a three to one vote (with Commissioner Chuck absent) that City Council approve Alternative #1, Approve the Proposed Master Plan for Stocklmeir School sports field to include the new classroom buildings and facilities per Attachment B. The dissenting opinion was expressed for concern with incremental loss of small portions of the open space.

Staff recommends Alternative No. 1: Approve the Proposed Master Plan for Stocklmeir School sports field to include the new classroom buildings and facilities per Attachment B. Although the proposed project will have an impact to the informal recreational use of the sports fields, according to the Cupertino Union School District, this school is in need of increased classrooms and facilities. The proposed new classrooms, support facilities and play areas will go far toward meeting the needs of school children in this area of Sunnyvale for many years to come.

Reviewed by:

David A. Lewis Director, Parks and Recreation  
Prepared by: Curtis Black, Superintendent of Parks

Approved by:

Amy Chan  
City Manager

**Attachments**

- A. Letter from Cupertino Union School District
- B. Current Master Plan and Proposed Master Plan of Stocklmeir School Site



Cupertino Union School District

**Superintendent** Phil Quon  
**Board of Education** Pearl Cheng  
Ben Liao  
Josephine Lucey  
Gary McCue  
George Tyson

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October 30, 2007

City of Sunnyvale  
Parks and Recreation Department  
David A. Lewis, Director of Parks and Recreation  
P.O. Box 3707  
Sunnyvale, CA 94088

Dear David:

The district is experiencing fairly dramatic growth in the Stocklmeir School attendance area. As a result, the district must create additional classroom and expanded support space to meet the projected student increases. At the same time, the district and the community has had a longstanding relationship with the Montessori Pre-School on our campus. The space currently occupied by the Montessori School is being demolished to make room for added facilities and parking for the K-5 program. The only remaining space for the Montessori School is two existing modulars (which are not suitable for K-12 instruction) on the west side of the campus. In order to accommodate this program, we must have enclosed playground space that encroaches on the current play field and track configuration. The design of that space is shown in the attached documents. As part of the reconfiguration, approximately 3,000 sf. of turf will be enclosed with the addition of a play structure and the track will be slightly re-routed.

Sincerely,

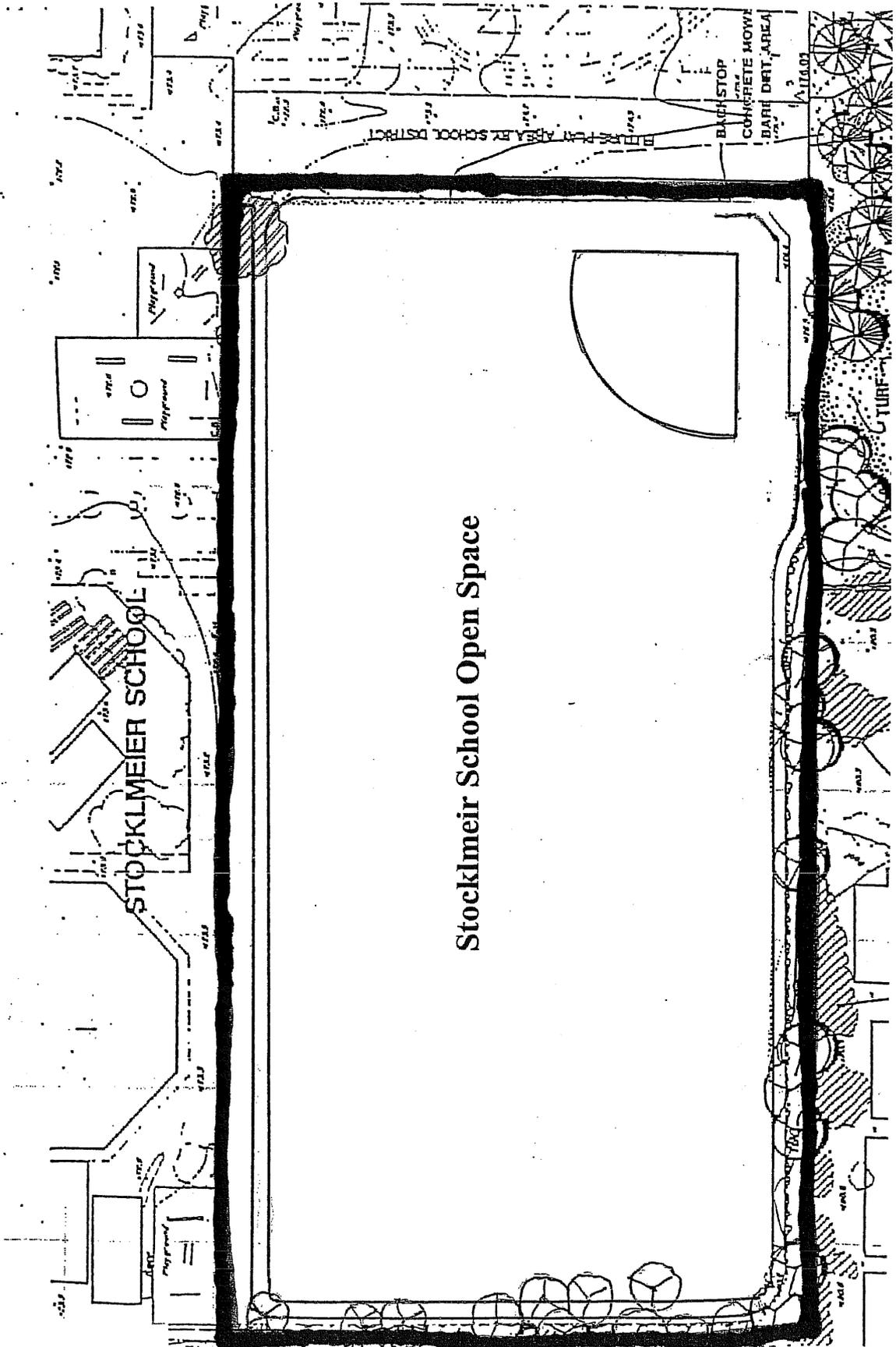
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Hausman".

Rick Hausman  
Chief Business Officer

RH:lc

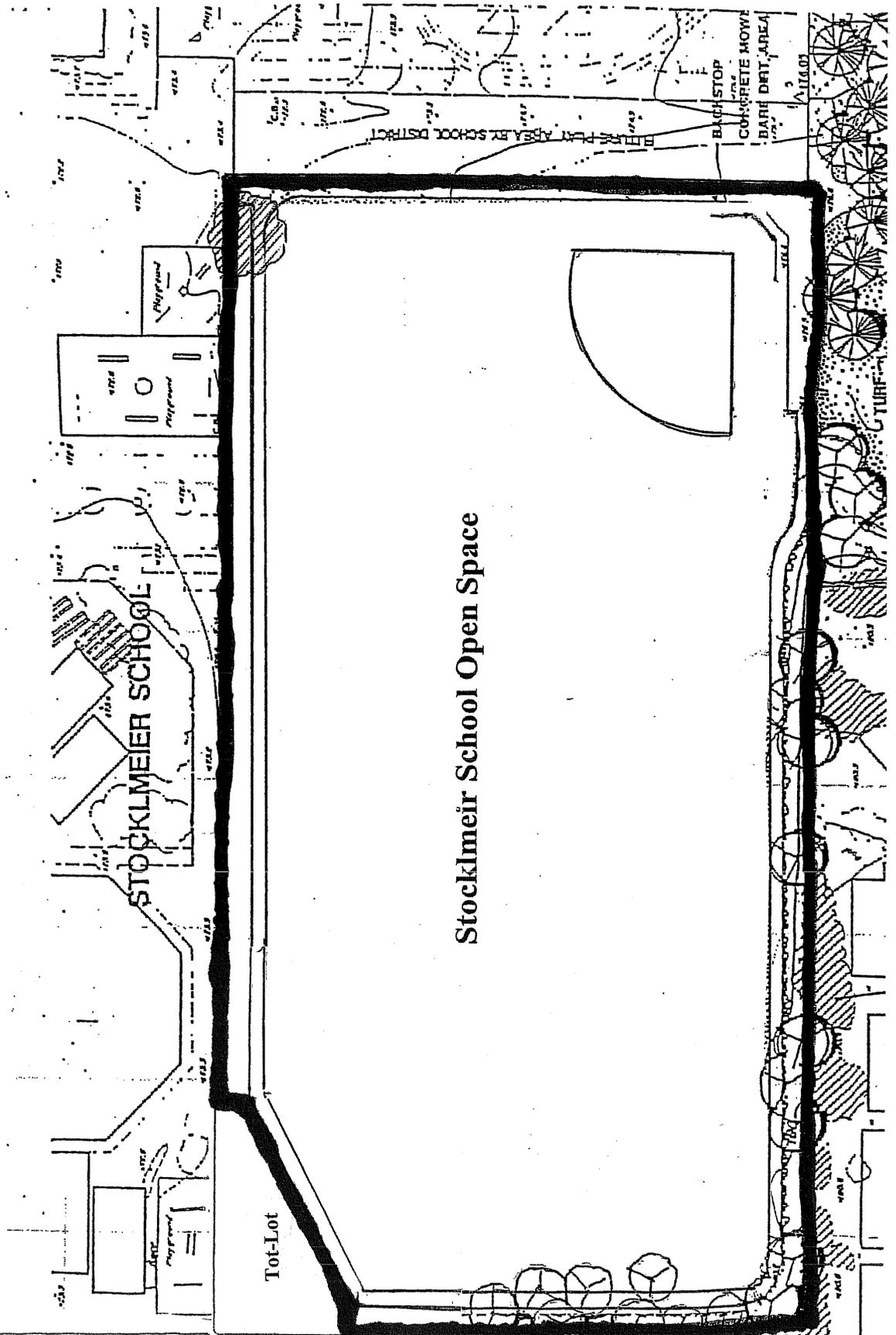
Attachments

CURRENT MASTER PLAN



NOT TO SCALE

# PROPOSED MASTER PLAN



NOT TO SCALE