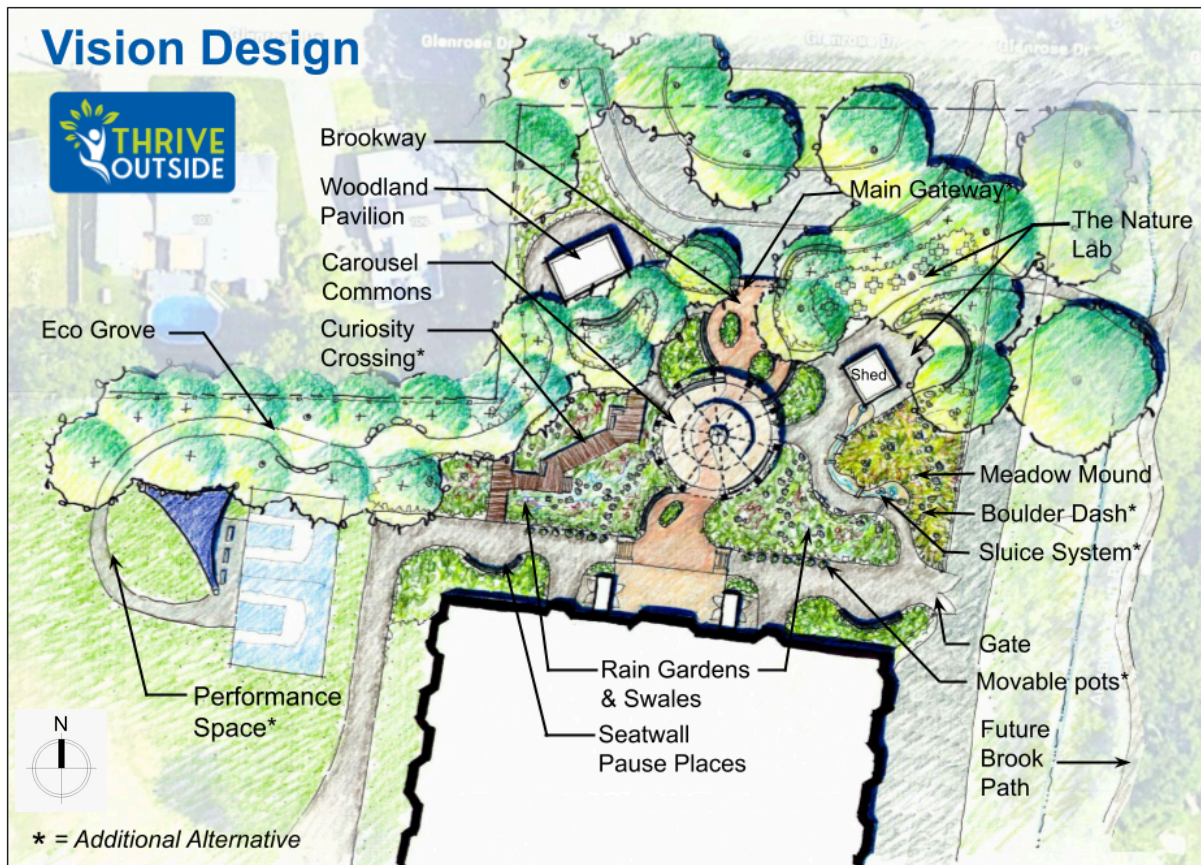




Waddington Elementary School Outdoor Learning Zone Vision Design



Overall Vision:

Rooted in the Waddington School community's shared vision and Riverside's unique identity, this Outdoor Learning Zone features a series of purposeful, flexible spaces that inspire hands-on learning, exploration, creativity, and connection.

Main Gateway

A playful gateway welcomes visitors into the "Brookway," creating a joyful sense of arrival and connection to the Outdoor Learning Zone.

- The entry point to the "Brookway" provides a welcoming gateway
- Colorful and playful
- May be designed by an artist in collaboration with the students

“Brookway”

Inspired by the nearby Annawamscutt Brook, the “Brookway” is the central spine of the design, weaving through the heart of the Outdoor Learning Zone allowing students to flow from one area to the next while also creating a meaningful experience for both learning and gathering.

- The form mimics the nearby Annawamscutt Brook
- Seat walls, interesting paving (e.g. rocks and oyster shells embedded in it) and native plantings
- “Tells the story” of Riverside and the School through signage and images
- Allows the students to “flow” easily from the drop-off to the back door of the building
- Solves for ADA handicap compliance
- Provides areas for gathering, sitting and learning
- Leads to the “Carousel Celebration Space”

“Carousel Commons”

The Carousel Commons is a nod to the historic and iconic Crescent Park Carousel. It will be a colorful and playful central hub, gathering and learning space that celebrates the history and diversity of the community.

- Unique covered structure inspired by the carousel
- Colorful and playful elements
- Double as a gathering space and an outdoor classroom

Spiraling off of the Brookway and Carousel Commons are various learning and gathering spaces:

The “Nature Lab” (east side)

The Nature Lab offers students a place to investigate water, ecology, and the natural world through immersive STEAM experiences, natural play elements, and gathering spaces that inspire curiosity, creativity, and a deeper connection to the Annawamscutt Brook.

- Playful STEAM learning elements that inspire curiosity and interaction
- Whimsical hut (slatted so that teachers can see students)
- Stormwater elements
 - Interactive “Watershed Walk” sluice system - rain is collected on the hut and can then be released into the trough.
 - Rain garden
- “Boulder Dash” - boulders that kids can jump between and climb on
- “Meadow Mound”
- Picnic tables in the shade
- Gathering spaces
- Connection to a future path along the Annawamscutt Brook

The “Woodland Pavilion” (west side)

Nestled in the proposed woodland garden, the “Woodland Pavilion” will be a shaded, quiet space for instruction and small, informal gathering and performances.

- Pavilion with picnic tables for formal outdoor classroom
- Small gathering and performance space
- Winding pathways and native plants

The “Curiosity Crossing” (west side)

The “Curiosity Crossing” invites students to journey through a living wetland landscape that encourages exploration while also honoring the area’s historic connection to the water.

- Rain garden - study wetland plants
- Boardwalk with seating areas and steps leading down into the plants - also a nod to the “resort era” history of the area
- Signage
- “Boulder Dash” is also present here

The “Eco Grove” (west side)

The Eco Grove is a peaceful woodland retreat where students connect with native ecology and Indigenous history.

- Native woodland garden
- Native American history walk
- Pokanoket Wetu structure
- Seating areas

Performance and Celebration Area (west side)

Designed in response to student feedback, this welcoming gathering space offers shaded seating, a flexible performance area, and a place for the school community to come together and celebrate.

- Sailcloth covered area on the highest point
- Accommodates larger gatherings - e.g. 5th grade graduation
- People can sit on the lawn without having to be in the area that floods
- Provides shade for those playing and watching basketball
- Seating at the basketball courts (students mentioned this would be nice)

Storage (by the back doors)

This storage will provide easy access to outdoor learning materials, such as clipboards and magnifying glasses, to support hands-on exploration.

- Proposing two storage containers adjacent to the back door to store outdoor learning materials - could be placed inside or outside

Horticulture (along the main walkway)

Seasonal planters lining the main walkway provide both beauty and hands-on horticulture experiences.

- Pots may be used to grow flowers, herbs and vegetables during the school months and then placed away during the summer
- Line the main walkway

“Pause Places” (various locations)

These places offer an opportunity to rest, journal, chat with a counselor one-on-one, or simply reset.

- Seatwalls or spots along the building and along some of the pathways
- New stairs up the main entry

In Conclusion

This Vision Design proposes to transform the schoolyard into a beautiful, accessible, and engaging learning landscape with purposeful spaces for exploration, gathering, creativity, and connection to the Waddington and Riverside community.

The design solves for:

- Circulation - ADA compliance, clearly delineated pathways and ease of flow
- Gatherings - space for small and large groups
- Clearly defined spaces for learning
- Sited away from recess to minimize distraction
- Clear site lines so that a teacher can see where all of the students are
- Interactive, curiosity-building elements
- Flexibility - seating, doing school work
- Biodiversity
- Stormwater mitigation
- Creates a beautiful and unique learning space that celebrates the Waddington and Riverside community

We'd love to know what you think!

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Want to help with fundraising to bring this design to fruition?

For Fundraising:

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Thrive Outside is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization working to reunite kids and nature.
www.thriveoutside.info