



Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, P.C.

Memorandum

To: File - Simpson Park
From: Cara Smith/Elisabeth Lardner
Date: June 1, 2016
Subject: Simpson Playground + Passive Lawn Renovation Public mtg. 5/25/16

Simpson Park Playground + Passive Lawn Renovation Concept Alternatives Discussion

May 25th 2016

Mount Vernon Recreation Center

Attendees Sign in Sheet attached

7:00 – Welcome and Introductions (Dana)

7:30 – Slide presentation on Concept Alternatives (L/KLA)

7:45 – Public Art (Diane/May + Watkins Design)

8:00 – Small Group Discussion

8:55 – Report on Small Group Discussion and Next Steps

Return in August 2016 with recommended Concept Plan

9:00 – Adjourn

Key Points from Group Discussions

- Prefer Concept 2
- Prefer art that is climbable and kinetic
- Retain concrete walk at current width; add wider diagonal path
- Use seat walls where possible
- Use trees for shade rather than structures
- Add picnic tables
- Relocate maintenance access outside of this portion of park (more to east of tennis courts)

Small Group Discussion Notes Transcription

Group 1 – Lori and Carol's notes:

- Master Gardeners worried about wall being torn down as part of master plan
- Preference for #2 concept – like circulation within site - at first, group preference would be for sidewalk to disappear along west side. After further discussion, **preference for keeping existing sidewalk along west side or ever smaller footpath**. There are concerns that if sidewalk is removed, people will still walk/trample where sidewalk once existed rather than choose to follow path through the playground.
- Some **shelter** from rain would be nice – maybe pavilion or gazebo or shelter as part of the art element. **Picnic areas** are very important.
- Prefer trees better than gazebos for shade
- Area(s) for pleasant social gathering. Seating elements that face each other.
- The climbing web was very popular with one of the boys.
- They liked the idea of picnic area, without grills

- Park should be more **integrated and cohesive** rather than separate zones. Would like to be able to take kids and dogs at same time (currently unable to do that as dogs not allowed in kid area). Too much fencing - should be more open.
- Multigenerational spaces. Need places for both the young and old to enjoy. Should have **both public and private spaces** where one can people watch/be involved or also have the option for quiet reflection and intimacy.
- Need socialization opportunities for adults too
- Like **seat walls**
- **Safety** is a concern. If nice shelter is built, would it be overtaken by the homeless? There may be safety issues with the gazebo idea.
- **Lighting** would be a great way to mediate safety concerns and illuminate those dark, creepy spaces.
- More **trash and recycling receptacles** is a must! Right now, must walk too far to throw away trash.
- Don't like stone dust paths!
- Art – would like something for **(1) something climbable, (2) kinetic, and (3) seating**
- Prefer **natural, muted colors**. Bright colors are nice for kids but send a message that eliminates other user groups. Kids won't care what color equipment is. Also, keep in mind this is an earth mother type neighborhood, so natural play is a great idea.
- **This should be the park that you go to for natural play. Potomac Yards park has standard playground equipment and they do that very well.** No reason to compete with that park- should be something different and special. Perhaps a combination of natural and standard play – they like the climbing stones to a slide (The kids didn't like the fact that a natural park in the area didn't have the reward of sliding.)
- **Could children's garden be incorporated into playground?** Maybe along western edge instead of sidewalk and would lead into Master garden.
- Like the terraced seat walls. Would be a great place for local meetings
- Dana says **lighting** might be possible but would require a special use permit
- It seems that the consensus was to pursue a **combination of sculptural and functional** areas that bring together natural play, climbing, some kinetics and some seating.
- Play area should have **speed reducing elements** (sculpture?) to slow down bikes- probably some sort of decorative fence elements that zig-zag at each end of the area
- A quiet area where seniors can gather for coffee

Home Runs: Concept 2; Art Concepts for seating; climbable and kinetic art pieces

Foul Balls: Linear paths/circulation patterns; Entrance sculpture art

Group 2 – Elisabeth and Tim's notes:

- No art for art sake – space too small
- No gateway art
- Desire art that is touchable/playable/climbable
- Mad Hatter in Central Park is a favorite icon and climbable structure
- Climbing structures – like the kinetic in the bottom left-hand corner on example sheet

- Climbing poles desired
- Spider web play equipment – like
- Swings
- Metal slides – worry about heat, they benefit from shade - tunnel slide
- Public art with water feature, like Echo on Columbia Pike
- National Zoo water feature – sea and sea lion exhibition water spray
- Equipment on roof example from May + Watkins work for a school – group liked it, young person suggested we design equipment for monkeys, not for kids (movement, climbing, etc.)
- Musical fence – play the fence, each board is ‘tuned’, example given
- Musical tubes found in another park
- Concept 2 – like the access point at the corner
- Branching – steps
- Beverley Hills preschool playground is not a good model, it is more of a one visit type playground and for smaller children, not versatile enough
- Use mosaic in art pieces – it is multi-sensory: art/climbable/touchable
- Don’t install shade structures = too many \$ for little value
- Drainage is an issue – Big Simpson has used this area of the park as a ‘rain garden’ informally; often wet and ponding in lawn area
- Desired activities in lawn area - frisbee/front yards/disc golf
- No grills with picnic tables
- Fencing – need some fencing along East Duncan, but the playground does not need to be entirely fenced
- Use existing concrete path as bike path; need to structure new stone dust diagonal path so bike riders don’t zoom through playground area (jogged gate is one potential way to reduce that issue - see sketch on Concept 2 attached)
- Labyrinth/maze would be cool
- Choice of equipment (Hume St.) – spinning is really attractive
- Slides not getting much attention
- Favorable thing at Simpson now – zip line
- Imagine space
- Path surfacing – support for stone dust

Home Run: Concept 2; Climbable and interactive art

Foul Ball: Concept 3 - rectangle design

Group 3 – Cara and Diane’s notes:

- Mirror – nice addition; flat mirror, not funhouse mirror
- Concept 2 – draws into both sides of park
- Like natural play
- Prefer play that is not too safe looking/feeling
- Like that young toddlers are fenced in
- Need a place for older children
- Don’t see 10-12 years there now
- Perhaps create a transition from guided to independent play
- No team use but still kick a ball (don’t make it hard to play; i.e. too sloped)
- Unlock fields
- Sunlight great in the winter (trees are a better investment- good for summer shade/winter sun)

- Like seating around trees
- Like taking out sidewalk and using other path (move crosswalk to other side in this case)
- Prefer connection with the existing path
- Art preference is for climbing and seating
- Playground – colorful, exciting, art does more than one thing
- Like kinetic art and bright colors
- Like all shapes – most
- Passive Space/Lawn “is the rain garden”—so much moisture there

Home Runs: Concept 2; natural play; new path; taking out trees in the center of the passive area

Foul Ball: maintenance/utility road

Question Responses

1. What is your favorite childhood memory in a park?

- Jumping off high levels
- Climbing on “The Mad Hatter” sculpture in Central Park, NYC (and climbing on rocks)
- Swings
- Climbing – risk taking!
- Akron, OH – I was playing under a big ol’ oak tree and just happened to look over at the baseball game my brother Rick was playing and watched him make a single player triple play – 3 outs – wow!
- Just played outside – few parks, some playgrounds on army bases
- Likes swings
- Running around
- slides
- I loved the first time I went to the new St. Stephens St. Agnes playground. It’s so much fun!
- Running, climbing
- My children enjoying Simpson from baby to teen and now my dog loves it
- Tot play → Little League → Baseball → Big Simpson
-

2. What is your favorite memory of Simpson Park?

- Swinging on the zip line! (The piece of equipment on the slide structure)
- n/a
- Hearing children play
- N/A
- Enjoying the Simpson Park Gardens
- Working and enjoying Simpson Gardens
- Bringing kids to the playground
- Playing catch & Frisbee in small patch of grass next to Big Simpson left field

- I love spinning on the merry-go-round with my brother and sisters. It's the best reason to go to that playground! We also love to explore the beautiful garden.
- Little League participation
- Been home since 1995 & enjoy it 2 -3 x/day
-

'Park Lib'

Five years from now, when I visit Simpson Park, I am most excited about **the water play**. It is a fun park with lots of **goats in trees**.

The best reason to visit the park in the winter is **the slide is covered in snow!** and in the summer is **there is lots of shade**.

I wish that **there will be more ropes** ~~could change~~.

I miss **natural play furniture** and am glad that the park has **play areas for all ages!**

(Thomas mcthengle@gmail.com)

'Park Lib'

Five years from now, when I visit Simpson Park, I am most excited about **interactive art**. It is a fun park with lots of **creative fun**.

The best reason to visit the park in the winter is **it's welcoming** and in the summer is **shady play + meeting areas**.

I wish that **X** could change.

I miss **X** and am glad that the park has **so many fun places to climb**

(A Gordon)

'Park Lib'

Five years from now, when I visit Simpson Park, I am most excited about **X**. It is a fun park with lots of **X**.

The best reason to visit the park in the winter is **the quiet** and in the summer is **plants in the garden**.

I wish that **amount of seating** could change.

I miss **X** and am glad that the park has **swings**.

(Bruce Roberts paretspeppers@gmail.com)

'Park Lib'

Five years from now, when I visit Simpson Park, I am most excited about **watching my kid take (safe) risks**. It is a fun park with lots of **playful options**.

The best reason to visit the park in the winter is **getting out of the house** and in the summer is **meeting new friends**.

I wish that **X** could change.

I miss **classic wood playgrounds (like Polk used to have)** and am glad that the park has **a**

working water fountain & artistic elements.

(X)

'Park Lib'

Five years from now, when I visit Simpson Park, I am most excited about **multiple generations enjoying the entire park**. It is a fun park with lots of **interesting areas**.

The best reason to visit the park in the winter is **winter interest at Simpson Park Gardens. Sculptures giving the eye a pop of color and on a gray day** and in the summer is **color, color, color! Interesting art, seating**.

I wish that **the barren look (beside the garden)** could change.

I miss **a place to be able to sit & enjoy the park with friends (again mulit generation friendly)** and am glad that the park has **a lot of green space, trees, and a neighborhood vibe**.

(D. Dieter)

'Park Lib'

Five years from now, when I visit Simpson Park, I am most excited about **a better functioning park with seating, shade, play areas**. It is a fun park with lots of **X**.

The best reason to visit the park in the winter is **winter interest in gardens** and in the summer is **beautiful flowers & trees**.

I wish **the poor flow & lack of shade** could change.

I miss **X** and am glad that the park has **gardens**.

(X)

'Park Lib'

Five years from now, when I visit Simpson Park, I am most excited about **more open space**. It is a fun park with lots of **open space**.

The best reason to visit the park in the winter is **no one there** and in the summer is **no one there**.

I wish **there was more open space** ~~could change~~.

I miss **open space** and am glad that the park has **places for unstructured play and games**.

(Ian Clements ianclem@yahoo.com)

'Park Lib'

Five years from now, when I visit Simpson Park, I am most excited about **climbing, sliding, and swinging**. It is a fun park with lots of **trees, benches, and great play structures**.

The best reason to visit the park in the winter is **to play outside** and in the summer is **to play in the shade**.

I wish **the play structures and benches** could change.
I miss the **merry-go-round (when it's closed)** and am glad that the park has **swings!**
(Ian & Lena Doerrer, (703) 739-2105)

'Park Lib'

Five years from now, when I visit Simpson Park, I am most excited about **structures that flow**.
It is a fun park with lots of **room with existing landscape**.
The best reason to visit the park in the winter is **X** and in the summer is **baseball**.
I wish **I could add a regulation pitcher's mound outside of locked fencing to be used by all kids** could change.
I miss the **X** and am glad that the park has **become family friendly**.
(Killian Cousins, 703.606.8815)

'Park Lib'

Five years from now, when I visit Simpson Park, I am most excited about **all people enjoying all aspects**. It is a fun park with lots of **excitement/quiet**.
The best reason to visit the park in the winter is **to see birds & snow & dogs** and in the summer is **families & sports & fun**.
I wish **people's idea about park limitations** could change.
I miss **being able to enjoy passive space—now an alley of fences/closed off**, and am glad that the park has **character & we need to open it up. Start Park Stewards Certification Program to deputize responsible citizens to assist!**
(Paul Linehan, pmljkc@gmail.com)

'Park Lib'

Five years from now, when I visit Simpson Park, I am most excited about **my kids being able to run between playground and grass while my dog and I sit and picnic**. It is a fun park with lots of **art**.
The best reason to visit the park in the winter is **the dog park** and in the summer is **shared play area**.
I wish **the fences and stone dust path** could change.
I miss **X** and am glad that the park has **X**.
(X)

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1- Concept Alternatives Table - preferences highlighted
- 2- Visual Preferences – art, play equipment, inspiration board
- 3- Hand sketches, kid drawings, and circled play/art preferences
- 4- Sign-in Sheet

'Park Lib'

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Question 1

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- My children enjoying Simpson from baby to teen and now my dog loves it
- Tot play → Little League → Baseball → Big Simpson

Question 2

What is your favorite memory of Simpson Park?

- Been home since 1995 & enjoy it 2 -3 x/day

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Question 1

What is your favorite childhood memory in a park?

X

Question 2

What is your favorite memory of Simpson Park?

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**Simpson Park Concept Alternatives – May 25, 2015 –
 Preferences highlighted 5/31/16**

FEATURES	Concept 1	Concept 2	Concept 3
Circulation			
<i>Existing 5' Concrete Walk on western edge of park</i>			
Retain		X	
Widen to 8' or 10'			X
Demolish and Remove	X		
<i>Existing Stone Dust Walk – some do not like stone dust</i>			
10' Primary North/South axis	X	X	
8' Parallel North/South axis			X
10' Primary East/West axis	X	X	X
Crosswalk Connections			
Retain current on E. Duncan		X	X
Relocate on E. Duncan	X		
Retain on Monroe	X	X	X
Relocate on Monroe			
<i>Maintenance/Vehicle Access off E. Duncan – preference is for no access through the park</i>			
West of Tennis Courts	X	X	X
Entry Plaza			
<i>Location</i>			
Leslie and E. Duncan		X	X
East of Leslie	X – off of path		
<i>Use</i>			
Pass through		X	X
Gathering Area	X		
Benches	X		
Seat walls		X	
Storage - bikes	X	X	X
Storage – strollers	X	X	X
Playground			
<i>Surfacing (assumption)</i>			
Rubber	X	X	X
Fibre Mulch	X	X	X
<i>Perimeter</i>			
Fully fenced			X
Partially fenced	X – N/E/W sides	X – N/W sides	
Separated from Master Gardener space by path		X	X
Integrated with Master Gardener space	X		
<i>Equipment – preferred concept 2, but exact number of pieces is to be determined</i>			
Standard Equipment	X	X	X
'Nature/Art' Play Equipment	X	X	X

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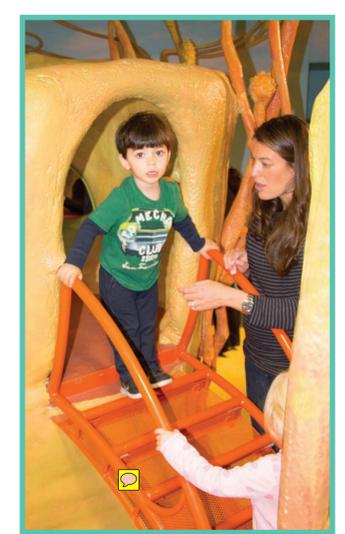
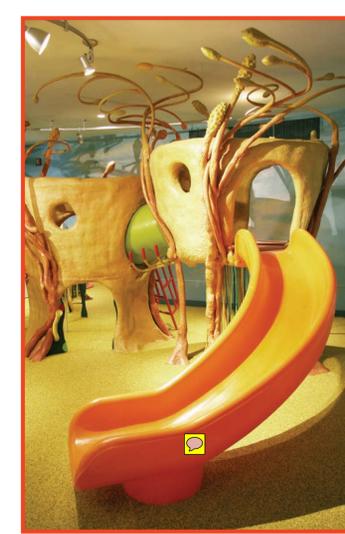
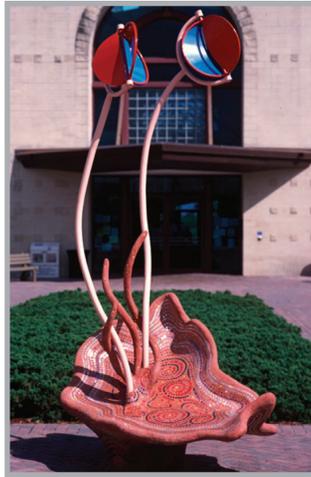
3 large pieces	X		
4 large pieces		X	
5 large pieces			X
Stepping stones	X		
Sitting Areas			
Curved custom benches	X		
Standard benches		X	X
Seat walls		X	
Shade Structure			
Canvas Sail	X		
Additional Tree Plantings		X	X
Large Central Green			
Perimeter Edge E. Duncan			
Fencing/portion	X	X	X
Berms		X	
Bench/berm	X		
Seat walls		X	X
Planting	X	X	X
Perimeter Edge south			
Rain garden/infiltration	X	X	X
Mirror Wall on Big Simpson		X	
Perimeter Edge east			
Planting	X	X	X
Informal play	X		X
Children's Garden	X		
Picnic area		X	X
Perimeter Edge west			
Seat wall		X	X
Playground fencing			
Planting	X	X	
Stone dust walkway	X	X	X
Open Lawn Area – concern with too much slope or interruption that cannot play/kick a ball			
Hillocks/hummocks in green			X
Sloped towards the south		X	
Level	X		
Structures – some interest in the small kid stage and possibly a shelter/ pavilion in case of rain			
Stage/platform			X
Shade structure (built)	X		X
Site Furniture			
Benches			
Curved custom benches	X		
Standard benches	X	X	X
Tree benches	X		
Bikes/Stroller Parking			
City standard U-shape bike	X	X	X
Stroller parking	X	X	X
Picnic Tables			
Metal ADA 6'		X	X

<i>Drinking Fountain</i>			
City standard	X		
Pump/play/drink		X	X
Plant Materials			
<i>Shade trees</i>	X	X	X
<i>Ornamental trees</i>	X	X	X
<i>Shrubs</i>	X	X	X
<i>Ornamental grasses</i>	X	X	X

ENTRANCE



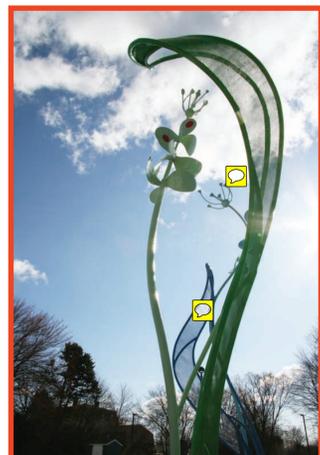
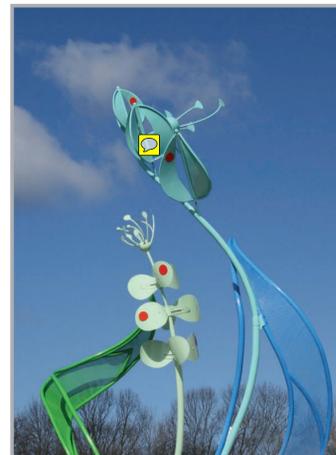
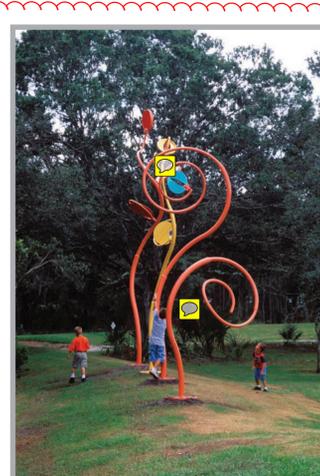
CLIMBABLE



SEATING



KINETIC



MOST GREEN DOTS (3-8)



MOST GREEN DOTS

SWING



swings for all ages



sculptural swings



basket swings



baby swings



standard swings



accessible swings

CLIMB



natural materials



large, colorful powder coated steel and mixed materials



natural materials + powder coated steel/age groups separate



web climbing



spiral climbing sculpture



variation in level of difficulty/climbing wall

SLIDE



combined with play structure or tower



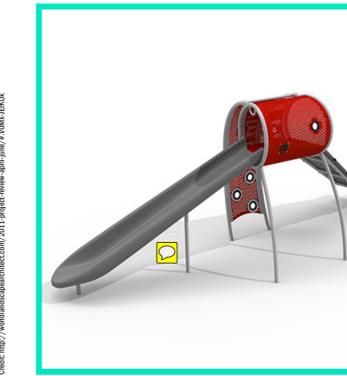
tunnel slide



landscaped hill slide



wide slide with climbing pegs



free-standing slide with climbing features

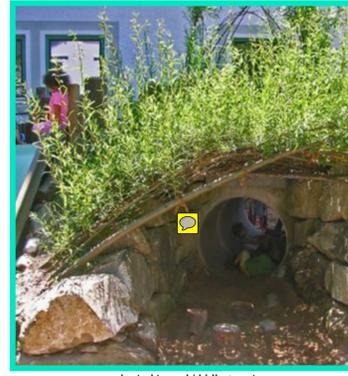


non-metal hill slide

EXPLORE



insect magnifying station



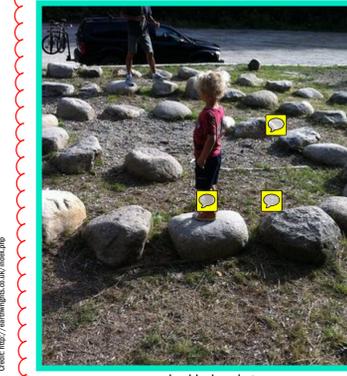
planted tunnel/ hiding spot



chalk drawing surface



wide tunnel and climbing mound



boulder-hopping



musical fence

PRETEND/IMAGINE



mini-stage and amphitheater



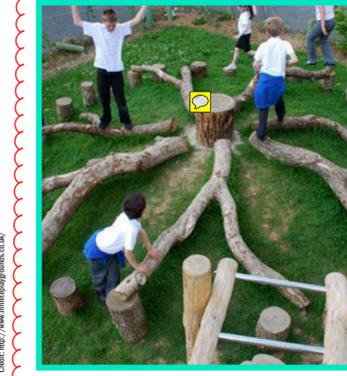
playful, colorful platform



house play/stage



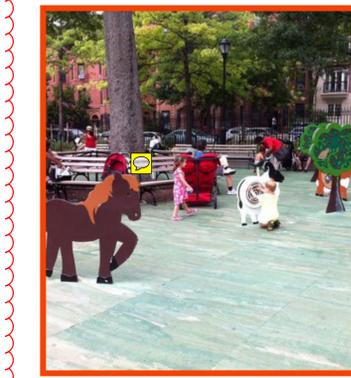
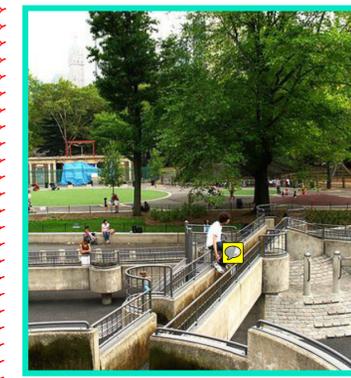
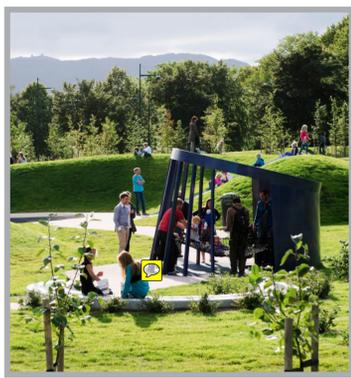
mirror play



natural play log circle



boat play



MOST GREEN DOTS

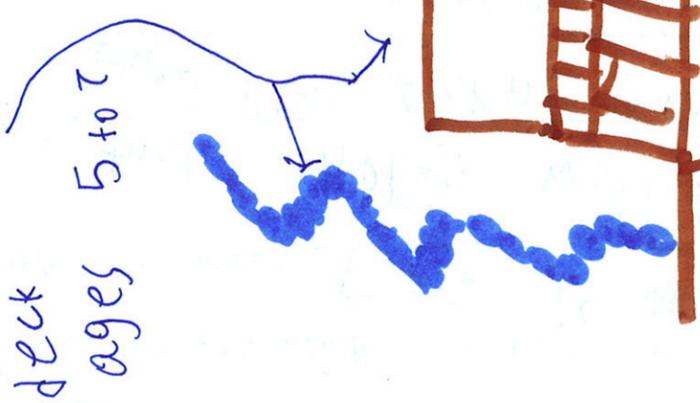
SIMPSON PARK PLAYGROUND + PASSIVE LAWN RENOVATION
INSPIRATION BOARD DRAFT 5/18/16

SOURCE OF IMAGES: PINTEREST

key:

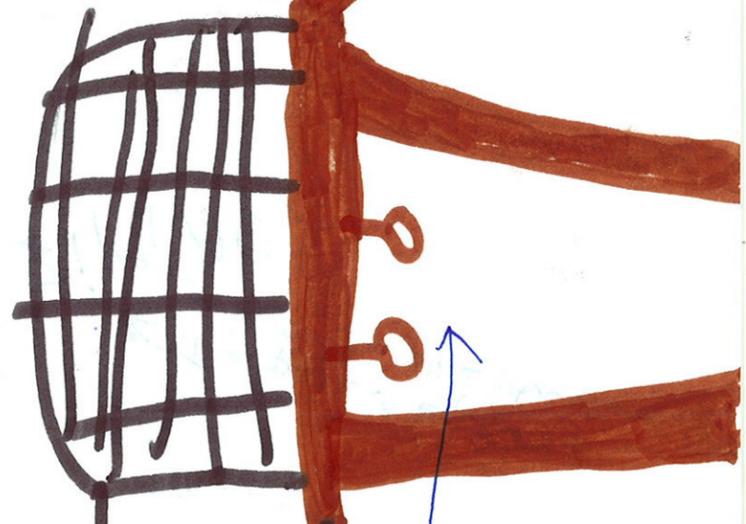


sculptures and



bridge
ages 5 to 7

rope

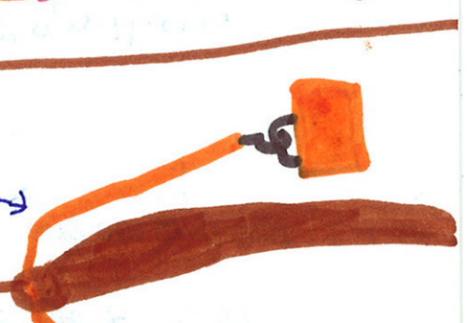


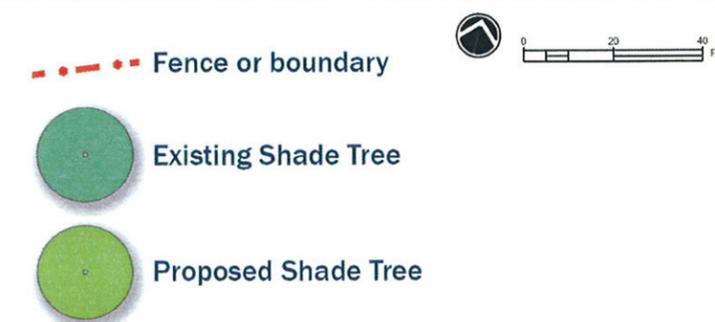
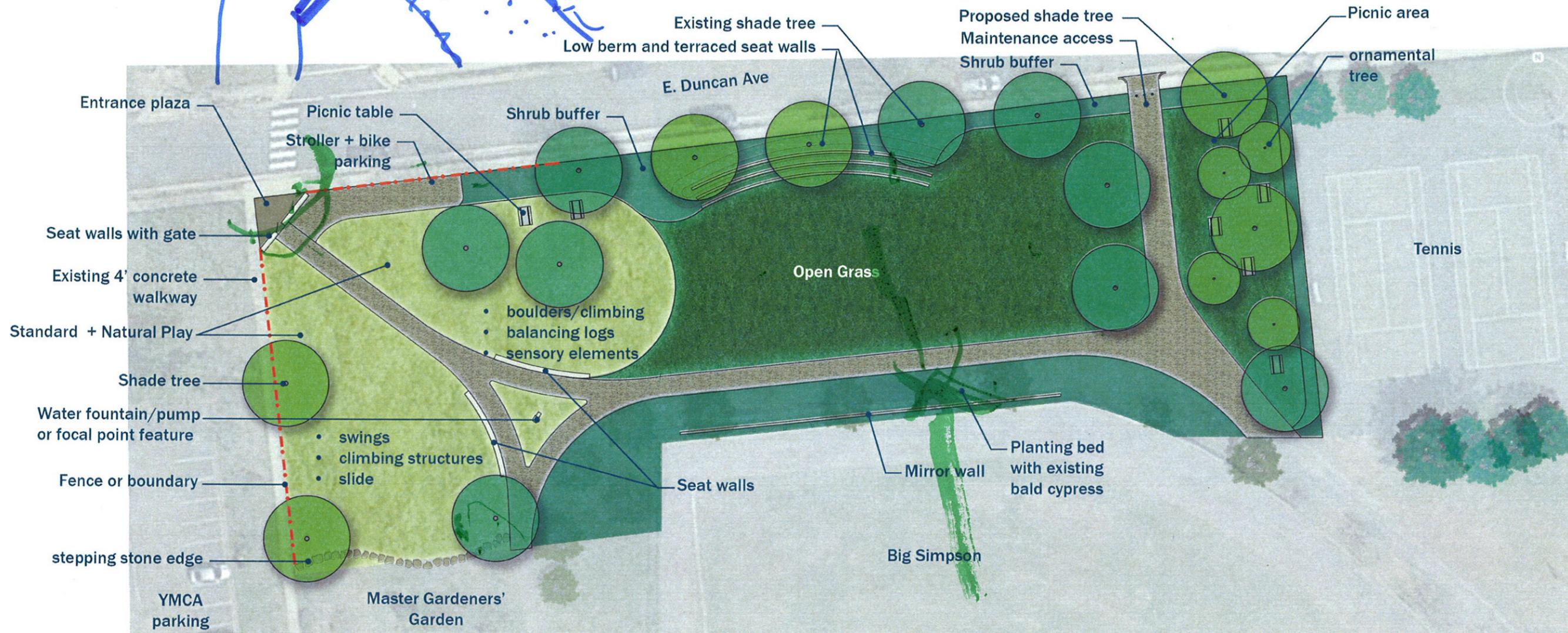
ages 5 to 7
climbing wall



5 to 7

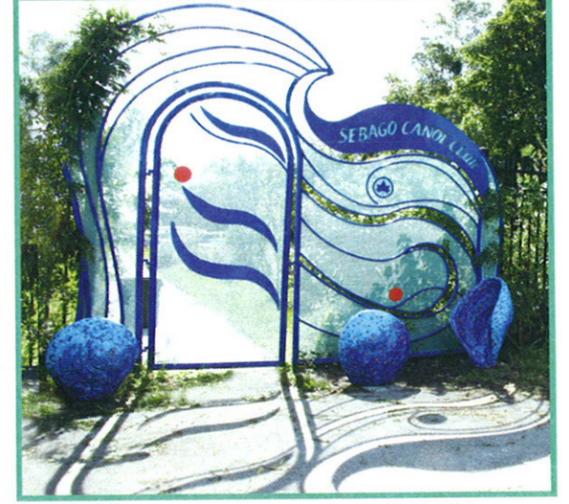
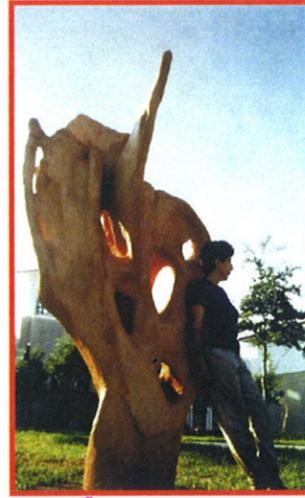
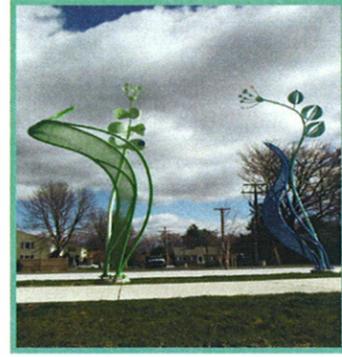
pulley
rope



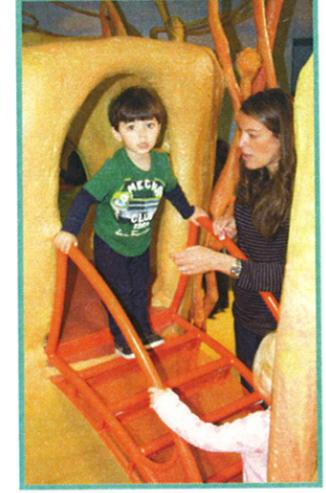
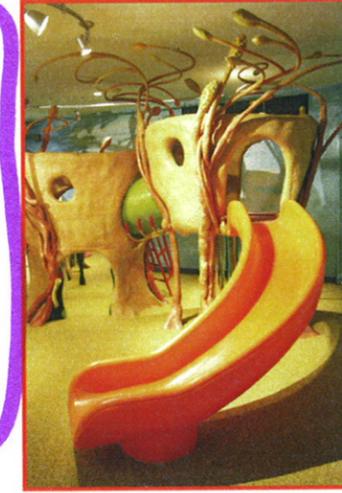
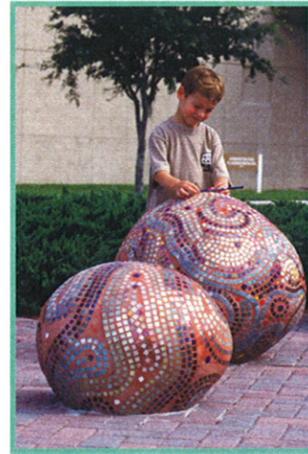
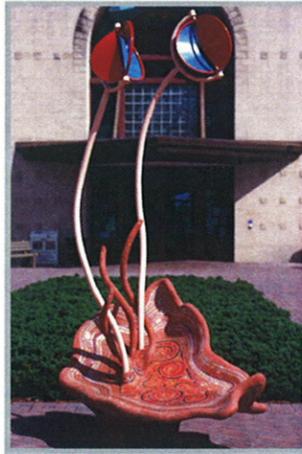


SIMPSON PARK PLAYGROUND + PASSIVE LAWN RENOVATION : CONCEPT 2
DRAFT MAY 2016

ENTRANCE



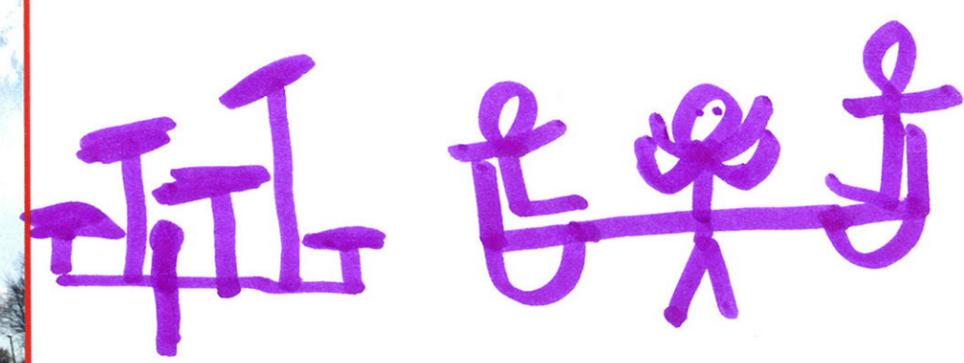
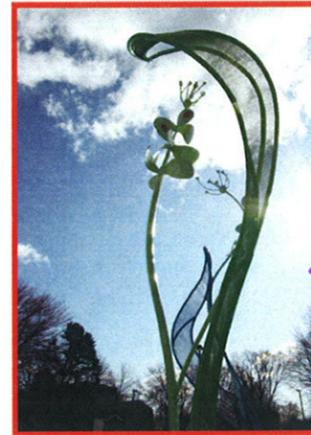
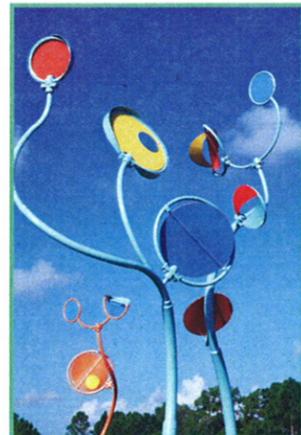
CLIMBABLE



SEATING



KINETIC



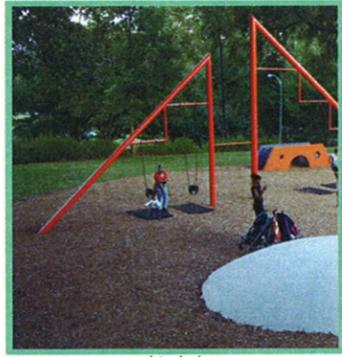
SIMPSON PARK PLAYGROUND + PASSIVE LAWN RENOVATION
PUBLIC ART INSPIRATION BOARD DRAFT 5/25/16



SWING



swings for all ages



sculptural swings



basket swings



baby swings

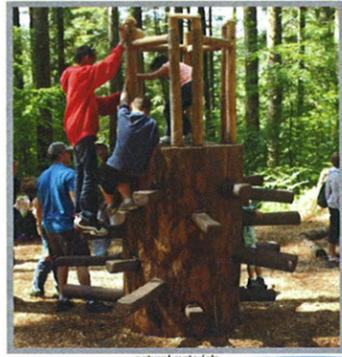


standard swings

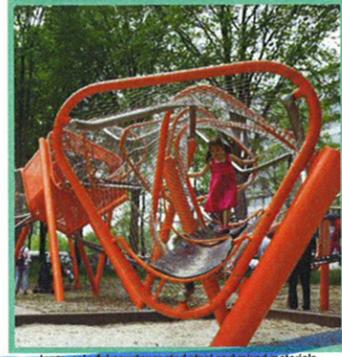


accessible swings

CLIMB



natural materials



large, colorful powder coated steel and mixed materials



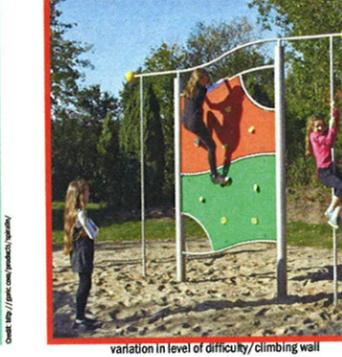
natural materials + powder coated steel/age groups separate



web climbing



spiral climbing sculpture

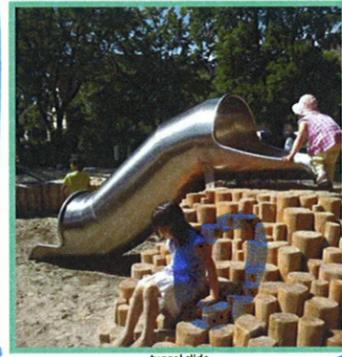


variation in level of difficulty/climbing wall

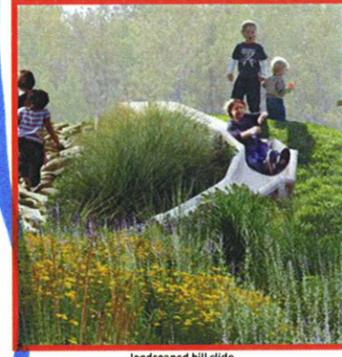
SLIDE



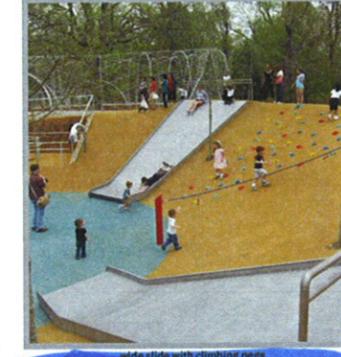
combined with play structure or tower



tunnel slide



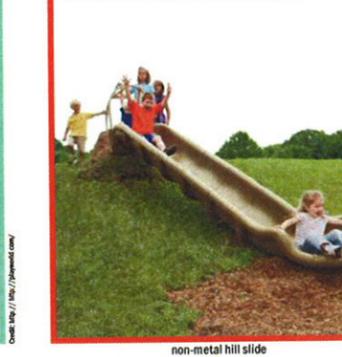
landscaped hill slide



wide slide with climbing pegs



free-standing slide with climbing features



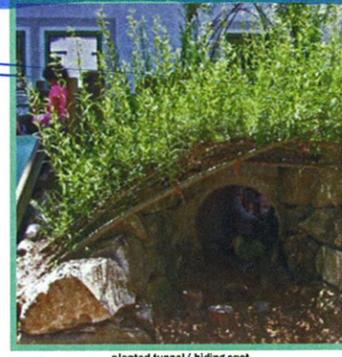
non-metal hill slide

combine over & through strategies

EXPLORE



insect magnifying station



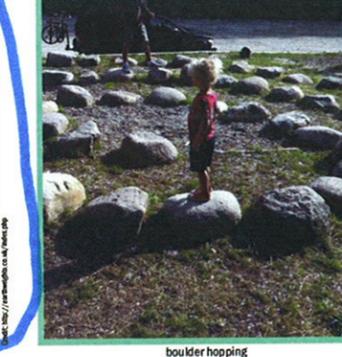
planted tunnel/ hiding spot



chalk drawing surface



wide tunnel and climbing mound



boulder hopping

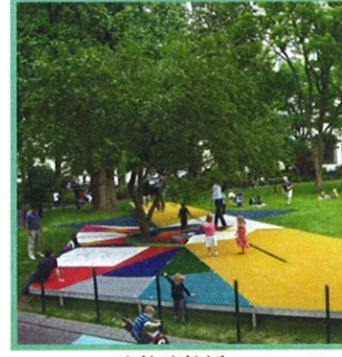


musical fence

PRETEND/IMAGINE



mini-stage and amphitheater



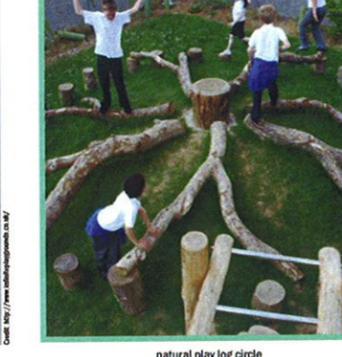
playful, colorful platform



house play/stage



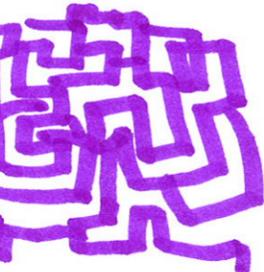
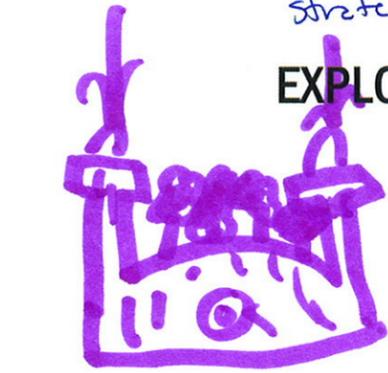
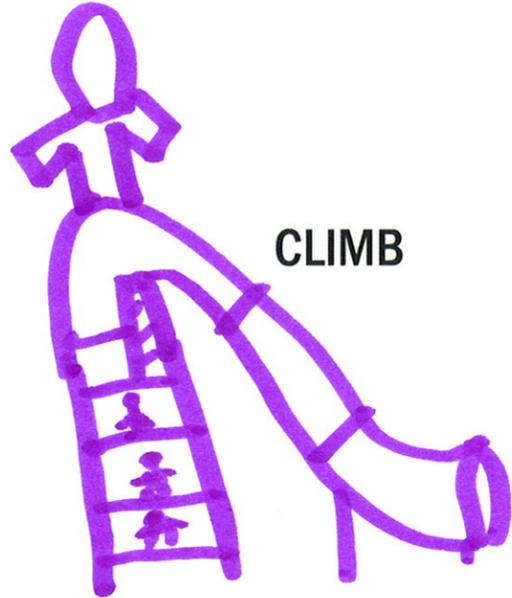
mirror play



natural play log circle



boat play





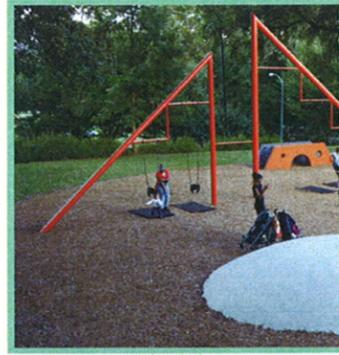
SOURCE OF IMAGES: PINTEREST

SIMPSON PARK PLAYGROUND + PASSIVE LAWN RENOVATION
INSPIRATION BOARD DRAFT 5/18/16

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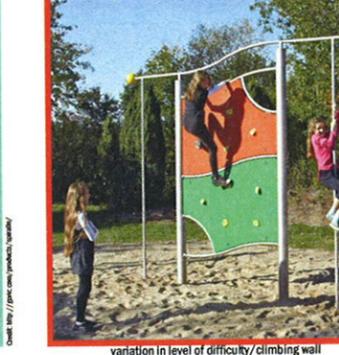
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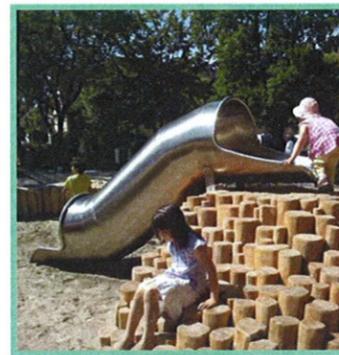


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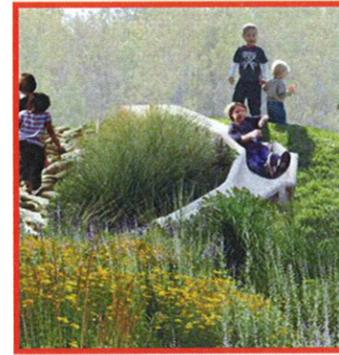
SLIDE



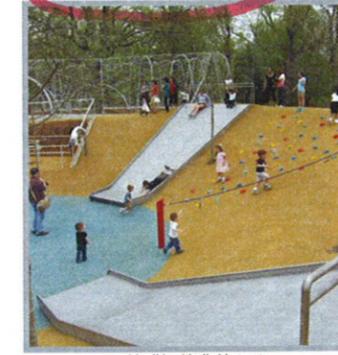
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tunnel slide



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free-standing slide with climbing features

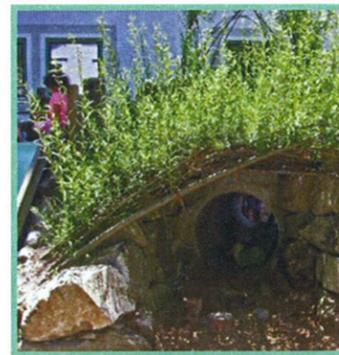


non-metal hill slide

EXPLORE



insect magnifying station



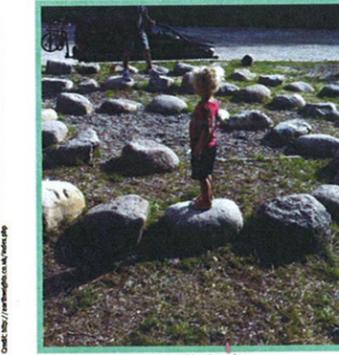
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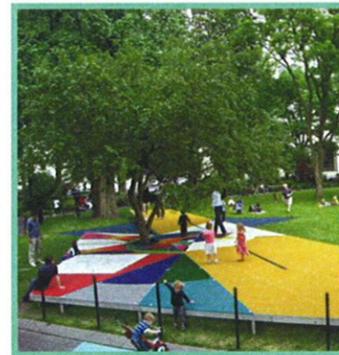


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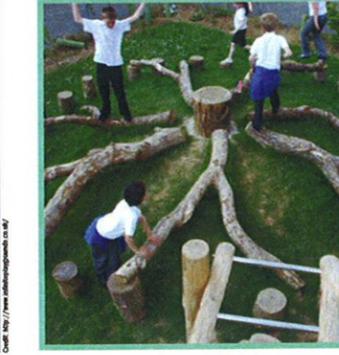
playful, colorful platform



house play/stage



mirror play



natural play log circle



boat play



**SIMPSON PARK PLAYGROUND + PASSIVE LAWN RENOVATION
 Concept Alternatives Discussion, May 25, 2016
 MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET**

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