HAZELWOOD PLAY TRAIL

by Studio for Spatial Practice
for Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative
October 2017
## Project Team

| Study Client | The Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative (PPC) is a group of committed individuals and organizations dedicated to advancing the importance of play in the lives of children, families and communities in the Pittsburgh region |
| Development Partner | The Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children (PAEYC) provides advocacy, community resources and professional growth opportunities for the needs and rights of children, their families, and the individuals who interact with them |
| Urban Design & Landscape Architecture | Studio for Spatial Practice (SfSP) is an innovative award winning design firm with a multi-disciplinary approach to architecture, urban design, landscape architecture and art. SfSP specializes in public realm projects that engage clients and community members in creatively envisioning changes to their environment. |
| Development Partner | The Hazelwood Initiative’s (HI) mission is to build a stronger Hazelwood through inclusive community development, including working to balance commercial development with neighborhood needs |
| Urban Design | 1/1 Studio is an architecture and urban design practice focused on creating, preserving, and revitalizing beautiful places through an open, transparent, and collaborative design process responding to the needs and aspirations of clients and stakeholders |
| Service Partner | The Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center’s (COTRAIC) Greater Hazelwood Family Center offers free services to preschool children and their families |
| Development Partner | Edith Abeyta is an artist living in North Braddock, PA. She combines post-consumer goods and participatory gestures to form temporary installations and sculptures that explore collectivity, labor and exchange |
| Funding Partner | Councilman Corey O’Connor, of District 5, is dedicated to supporting programs, educators, and advocates that work to make sure children have the education and resources they need to grow, develop, and learn. |
# Contents

**Project Overview and Background**
- Introduction 4
- Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative 4
- Hazelwood Play Trail 5

**Play Trail Planning Process and Outreach**
- Steering Committee 7
- Ultimate Play Day 10
- Summer with the SCA 11
- Pop-Up Park Future Event 12
- SEED certification 13
- Community Meetings 14

**Play Trail 2.0**
- Linking Community Resources 17
- Play Trail Map 20
- Components 21
- Conceptual Site Designs for Elizabeth Street Park 24
- Conceptual Site Designs for Hazelwood Green 26

**Play Trail 3.0**
- Play Trail Future Expansion 29
- Coordinating with neighborhood change 29
- Next steps 29

**Appendix**
- Precedent Cards- Picture Exercise 31
- Contact Information 33
- Recommended Plants 33
Project Overview

Introduction: Why is play important?
Through play, children learn and develop as individuals; they build social skills such as sharing, taking turns, self-discipline and tolerance of others. Play assists in their emotional and intellectual development and mental health resilience, which are core building blocks for their transition years.

Emotional/Behavioral Benefits: Play affects the frontal lobe of the brain, which is responsible for executive functions and controls behavioral inhibition. Through neurotransmitter emissions and an increase in neural synapse, play promotes reflection, imagination, empathy, working memory and creativity; ultimately developing behavioral flexibility and foresight. Through play, we take risks—we try new things, are challenged and develop skills for assessing risk which enables us to match our skills with their environment.

Cognitive Benefits: Play has many cognitive benefits and is highly connected with multiple intelligences. Play can be seen through linguistic, interpersonal, logical-mathematical, spatial, and musical intelligence. Play specifically affects the area of the brain that controls executive functioning and the vestibular system. The vestibular system is responsible for balance and movement and is centered in the inner ear, allowing us to move smoothly and efficiently. The frontal lobe is responsible for executive functioning, controls organization, memory, and cognitive skills.

Adult Benefits: Play throughout the lifespan has many positive implications for adults and seniors. In a study evaluating playfulness in seniors (age 65 and older), seniors with a rich play history and current playful lifestyle exhibited more frequent positive emotions, higher resiliency to adverse situations, positive attribution bias, an increase in flexibility and mental plasticity, and higher general emotional and mental health. Playfulness has implications for child-rearing practices, career planning, and decisions regarding leisure time.

Physical Benefits: Play benefits both gross motor and fine motor developmental skills. Play provokes the usage of various muscles, bones, ligaments, and organs. These different physical entities are strengthened through natural movement that is used in play, thus, strengthening physical skill development and literacy used in different contexts. Play may also delay the onset of many different chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, and heart diseases.

Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative

The Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative is a group of individuals and organizations dedicated to advancing the importance of play in the lives of children, families, and communities in the Pittsburgh region. We work to deepen understanding of play as essential to human development and critical to the physical, intellectual, and social well-being of people of all ages; we educate decision-makers (from parents to legislators) in our region to make choices that support access to high quality play experiences for all; we raise awareness that engaging in play builds the confidence to take appropriate risks and develop personal resilience, hones creative problem solving, flexible thinking, healthy social interactions, and enhances physical fitness; we model and inspire the actions we hope our broader community will take in their daily lives. The Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative produces community conversations and learning sessions on play topics, hosts the annual Ultimate Play Day, and partners with communities to support the development and programming of creative play spaces including the Hazelwood Play Trail, and N. Braddock’s Recycle Park. We have represented Pittsburgh in the KaBOOM! Playful City USA Play Leaders Summit national conferences communicating our region’s “case for play,” and other projects and initiatives.
The Hazelwood Play Trail

A playful mind and body is a critical aspect in the lives of people of all ages. The Hazelwood Play Trail (HPT) will raise awareness regarding the benefits of play, while engaging the public with the neighborhood’s unique natural elements. Unconventional play areas would extend our belief that play is an organic mechanism for learning and exploring through tangible measures and experiences. When people of any age engage in play, they innately begin to understand the world around them and spark a fire of curiosity about environmental and human made processes.

The Hazelwood Play Trail is a currently developing project, promoting unconventional play-based learning and living in the neighborhood of Hazelwood. It is a pathway of playful elements that connects to regional bike and walking trails, and raises awareness of the benefits and many different forms of play. The trail would allow for multi-generational public use, play advocacy events, community engagement activities, and educational purposes. It will create a space for people to gather and share ideas and to engage in new ways.

The HPT is and will continue to integrate community involvement from all levels. It will change expectations on what play is or could be. It will provoke questions and conversations and allows users to view the same location within the community in a different light.
PLANNING PROCESS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Steering Committee
Ultimate Play Day
Summer with the SCA
Pop-Up Park Event
SEED certification
Community Meetings

“Play is often talked about as a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood” –Fred Rogers
Planning Process

Through funding awarded by the Heinz Endowments and the Hillman Foundation in 2013, the Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative (PPC) was established to address the importance of play in Pittsburgh communities within everyday life. Born out of PPC’s weekly meetings, conversations with residents and community members, and the ongoing conversations in the media and around the world on the importance of play, the Hazelwood Play Trail was created as a way to acknowledge the neighborhood of Hazelwood’s play desert, or shortage of playgrounds and open space within the community. The PPC hired Studio for Spatial Practice as the urban design and landscape architecture consultant to lead the HPT planning and outreach process.

The planning process began with the creation and initial meeting of a Steering Committee comprised of Pittsburgh institutions and neighborhood groups committed to the betterment of education, health and programming for Pittsburgh youth. The Steering Committee meeting established design principles for the project that influenced the development of the play trail. In various meetings and engagement activities, the community answered the question, “How do you play?” The input provided through these outreach sessions allowed the design team to infuse the play trail with viable play solutions. The following pages in this section detail the planning process to date.
Steering Committee

On March 31st, 2015, the Steering Committee met at PAEYC’s Hazelwood office to help envision the Hazelwood Play Trail. A picture exercise was conducted in which Steering Committee members picked photos that represented elements of play and explained why each photo was selected. Attendees then discussed possible sites within a half mile walking radius for stops along the Play Trail. The walking radius used the Library as its central point, but the center can be shifted to encompass different sites. Lastly, the Steering Committee helped to distill a set of Design Guidelines and Principles that emerged from the discussion.

The following notes are a record of the official meeting minutes from this discussion and follow-up e-mail conversations.

PICTURE EXERCISE NOTES- DESIGN GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES

1. GATHERING
Create places for people to gather and share ideas.
Create third places (places where people spend time between home and work) to converse and engage in new ways
Allow for interaction in all places, even everyday spaces, such as bus stops with swings or other interactive features
Develop a place to chill or relax that is not your typical bench along a trail. Refer to the picture with women sitting in pipe tube pavilion.
Allow the space to grow with the child

2. USING SLOPES
Use slopes in playful ways. Consider steps and slopes as an asset and integrate different ways to climb them

3. SENSORY/ MATERIALITY
Provide sensory integration, i.e. lights at night.
Remember that activity can happen at all hours (incorporating light is an important design consideration)
Add color and brightness to interventions
Make interventions attractive to all ages (adults and children)
Create a sense of openness and transparency. Use simple materials
Reveal and conceal within installation creating a mysterious cause and effect
Incorporate spotlighting and signage for space. Make the place feel welcome and safe for children of all ages

4. MOVEMENT AND RISK
Risk and danger! Allow children and adults to take a chance. Maybe the intervention looks handmade and slightly rickety, thus more fun. Maybe by engaging the river with the trampoline bridge as shown in the Paris Precedent Photo.
Install swings. People love swinging and movement.
Add an element of mystery with lighting or sound
Get dirty! Invent your own play, perhaps using water

5. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
Integrate community involvement from all levels
Allow for music involvement and integration - make music together in a public space
Change expectations on what play is or could be
Pop-up playgrounds capture street space. Parking is not just for cars. Pop-up parks on parking spaces may be temporary installations
Create traveling vacant lot pop-up space, as though the site had been uncovered in an archaeological dig
Community members typically want a maintained, ongoing and beautiful space with a future sense of what it may become. Community members may ask if this intervention is really necessary, so keep interventions relevant to the community
6. EXPLORATION

Allow for self-directed opportunities to explore and different ways to engage in the installation. For example, the picture featuring an overly large animal’s yellow legs set below a bridge allows for imaginative story-telling. Does this installation move to a new location over time?

Allow for playing along the way. May use footprints that may lead to additional play sites.

Look at the same destination differently through the installation.

Provoke questions and conversations with each intervention.

Blend new ideas with familiar actions and concepts.

Everyday objects can be engaged in various ways. For example, rain barrels with a pump can be discovered and used by the passerby to water gardens, spray friends, etc.

Install a Free Library somewhere along the play trail. Can this idea evolve into a free playground with jump ropes or sidewalk chalk to borrow and return?

POSSIBLE SITES

Priority sites discussed were YMCA, Library, and Center of Life.

Sylvan Trail- walking or biking trail connecting Hazelwood to Greenfield. Provides great city views along the way.

Open Market

Alex Bodnar’s building proposed for an interactive mural location.

Gazebo at Bob Vavro’s park. Easy to integrate a pop-up play installation and noticeable because of foot traffic and bus stop along Second Avenue. Gazebos are under utilized in general. How do we change that here?

Spray Park and Burgwin Park

Swiss alps homes (the Teslovich homestead on the greenway). Private but unique example of local residents utilizing slopes.

Future Kaboom Playground

Fire Union Hall

Spahr Building

Greenhouse on Chadsworth by Kyle Patterson. Excellent views from his location.

Center of Life learning garden, food forest and future permaculture installation.

Elizabeth street park, perhaps city owned, abandoned, faces tracks and bridge abutment.

Senior Towers and Car Barn are potential sites because of foot traffic along Second Avenue.

These notes are the official meeting minutes from the Steering Committee Kick-Off Meeting and laid the groundwork for the development of the Hazelwood Play Trail.
**Ultimate Play Day**

Ultimate Play Day is a yearly event held by the Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative to promote play in every day life. The 2015 Ultimate Play Day was held in Burgwin Park in Hazelwood on the afternoon of April 26th. Play vendors had participants hula-hooping, creating games from recycled materials, drumming, and exploring nature. With over 400 attendees, the day was considered a success by organizers and participants.

At the Ultimate Play Day, SfSP introduced a version of the break-out activity utilized at the Steering Committee’s kick-off meeting. SfSP asked community members to select from a pile of precedent images that describe how they would like to play in Hazelwood (see pictures below). Selections were made from the same deck of image cards reviewed by the Steering Committee and later used at additional community meetings. The selections were clipped to the surrounding chain link fence, creating a play web that grew throughout the afternoon. The majority of the images selected revolved around three themes: swings, stops (bus stops) and slides.

The theme of swings in particular inspired the design of a future Pop-Up Park event described on page 12 and the application for a Swing On grant sponsored by KaBOOM described on page 27.

Community members at the Ultimate Play Day selected images that describe how they would like to play in Hazelwood.
Summer with SCA

The Student Conservation Association of Pittsburgh provides year-round conservation opportunities to youth at sites in and around Pittsburgh. Participants build trails and restore habitats while exploring green career opportunities, building leadership skills, and learning about the local environment through field trips, outdoor recreation, and service projects.

On July 15th, 2015, the SCA, SfSP and PAEYC met at Elizabeth Street Park, a designated future stop on the Play Trail which had been preliminarily developed following the Ultimate Play Day and Steering Committee session. SfSP explained the design concept and broke the larger group into two groups. One group focused on documenting existing conditions, and the second group laid out the desire lines of the dot path and the tree centers and canopies in the grove.

Following the documentation, the group brainstormed ideas for the remainder of the plaza space denoted in blue on the plan to the right.

DISCUSSION & OTHER NOTES

The students suggested protecting the edges of the plaza with large boulders that might also be used for seating and providing signage redirecting traffic from crossing through the plaza space.

The following components were proposed for the plaza ground plane: see-saws, hopscotch, twister (or other games on the ground), bike racks, basketball court or a basketball hoop, grills for cooking, power outlets, a stage, water feature (tire pond in the lawn area), swings, gazebo (shade structure), musical instruments or drums, dance steps, Billy Jean lights (steps in the paving that light up)

The vertical face of the bridge was discussed. The following ideas were mentioned: a mural depicting the people of Hazelwood, a chalk board wall, a mural that began on the wall and turned down to continue on the ground plane, a mural that had interactive elements on it, and space for a community board

Students suggested updating the lighting around the future park space

Students suggested adding a free library and one of the play boxes that are currently under construction

Students asked for a Teen Chill Space that included places to sit, somewhere safe feeling, power outlets, elevated stage and shade structure, creative playground (not typical cookie cutter playground), a grill for cooking

Students in general thought this was a great space for teens and wanted to stay involved in the creation/installation of the park
Pop-Up Parks, Spring 2018

Pop-up parks are defined as reclamation of a car-designated area for pedestrian use or the temporarily reclaimed vacant lot as a dynamic public space. City development happens in successful neighborhoods while often forgetting the smaller, in-between areas. Pop-up parks, in the form of seasonal urban gardens, temporary lane closures, parking-lot-to-playground conversions, and street events among others, invigorate an often neglected, forgotten space within a neighborhood and allow for the testing of public space ideas without the long planning processes and fees associated with more permanent installations.

PAEYC and SfSP are planning a Pop-up Hazelwood event to be held in the spring of 2018 that would test three sites on the Hazelwood Play Trail that together formed a one mile loop. The three sites selected were the existing Market on Second Avenue, the Vavro Garden also on Second Avenue, and the former Elizabeth Street playground (now vacant) adjacent to the KaBOOM! playground. The Pop-up Hazelwood event would add programming to the three sites, including lawn games, decorated seating, and possibly instructors to lead a fitness or dance class. Additionally, a table will be staffed by Project Team members to solicit ideas for each Pop-up Park space.

The original event, scheduled for August 2015, was unfortunately canceled due to time and staffing constraints, but the planning effort helped to define Phase 1 of the Hazelwood Play Trail in the form of a manageable walking loop. The new Pop-Up Park event is now being planned for Spring 2018.

HOW DO YOU PLAY?
Greater Hazelwood Play Trail
Pop-Up Parks coming to a vacant lot near you!

CALL FOR CHAIRS

WE NEED YOUR HELP!
Residents & organizations of Greater Hazelwood are working together to create our Pop-Up Parks. We will be transforming vacant lots throughout our community to create dynamic public spaces. Help inspire this project by DONATING YOUR OLD CHAIRS!

What: Unwanted chairs (still structurally intact) from property by our summer students
Others: During library hours from June 1st to June 15th, 2015.
Location: Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - Hazelwood, 1056 Second Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15207
Questions? Contact Alexandria Grant @ 412-421-3889

The advertisement above was posted on social media and throughout the community to help gather donations to the Pop-Up Park event.

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The mailer above was designed to advertise the original Pop-Up Park event and will be reworked for the future event.

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A call for supplies and chairs was posted online and throughout the community to help mitigate costs for these temporary installations.

The original event, scheduled for August 2015, was unfortunately canceled due to time and staffing constraints, but the planning effort helped to define Phase 1 of the Hazelwood Play Trail in the form of a manageable walking loop. The new Pop-Up Park event is now being planned for Spring 2018.
SEED® Certification

What is SEED®? SEED® is a principle-based network of individuals and organizations dedicated to building and supporting a culture of civic responsibility and engagement in the built environment and the public realm. SEED® certification is a tool to promote public-interest design by engaging people in the design process and utilizing an issue-based approach to problem solving that connects design problems to human issues revolving around economic, social and environmental concerns.

SEED® assures that the design project effectively addresses the community’s critical needs and challenges and assures that a project promotes social equity and also reflects a diversity of social identities and values of the community it serves. SEED® also assures that the social, economic and environmental impacts of the project are clear and that the results will be measured and that community members and stakeholders are involved in the design and planning processes.

Why select SEED® Certification? The Project Team elected to pursue SEED® certification for the Hazelwood Play Trail in order to create a participatory design process that activates a range of community member’s voices not often heard. Certification requires the identification of the critical issue to be addressed through the design process. The HPT team selected access to recreation and play (playability) as the defining issue to be solved by the Play Trail project.

According to the KaBoom! Play Desert map, a digital mapping and census tool powered by Esri digital mapping, Hazelwood is considered a “high play need” to “very high play need” community with a majority of its playspaces requiring a one to two mile walk. Of the five Hazelwood playgrounds listed under city control, four of those playgrounds are listed under need of revitalization or decommission.

While the priority is to provide accessible playful outdoor learning opportunities for children, the HPT will also promote interconnecting strategies for neighborhood revitalization. Well-designed and maintained play spaces build community cohesion as social hubs where families congregate and develop a shared interest in the quality of life within the area. This is particularly important in Hazelwood, where much of the available land space has been subject to neglect.

The HPT brings forth the perspective of “playing on the way.” When considering ways to decrease play and recreation deficits, playgrounds are the typical, quick “go to”. However, playgrounds provide their own unique challenges. Playgrounds are considered a destination and require planning to be included in a person’s day. Parents of young children have to think about walkability, access to bathrooms, access to shade, and packing necessary items when considering a trip to the park. Hazelwood’s population primarily uses walking as a preferred mode of transportation, thus, play spaces located beyond a half mile distance can be considered inconvenient. A Play Trail decreases this barrier by dispersing play opportunities throughout the neighborhood and through typically used community entities such as, sidewalks, crosswalks, bus terminals, and vacant lots. This reinforces the idea that play can be anywhere and should be incorporated throughout the day.

In its final phase, the Play Trail is intended to connect various forms of playful activities throughout different areas of the neighborhood. In addition to this concept resulting in a larger area of access, the HPT also helps build stronger networks between community partners participating in the design.

The project’s success will be defined by playability. Playability is defined as “the extent to which a city makes it easy for all citizens to get balanced and active play” (kaboom.org). The success of playability will be measured by the distance between playable features and play opportunities within the neighborhood. Currently, the available playspaces within Hazelwood are one to two miles apart. A successful distance is a half mile or less between playspaces or play opportunities.
Community Meetings

As noted previously in this report, an initial meeting with the Hazelwood Play Trail Steering Committee (comprised of organizations and individuals actively involved in Hazelwood) was held on March 31, 2015. Participants offered feedback for what play means to each individual through a picture visioning exercise that was later used with the community at large.

Community engagement also occurred at the Ultimate Play Day 2015 where close to 400 community members were in attendance. Feedback was solicited through a picture visioning exercise meant to solicit ideas of what play means to an individual. Selected photos were displayed on an ever growing “play web” attached to the park fence. Following the Ultimate Play Day, the visioning exercise was on display at the Carnegie Library of Hazelwood for community members to select images that represented the concept of play.

The next community outreach event was with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) who offered their vision for the Hazelwood Play Trail and more in depth feedback for the Elizabeth Street Park. The SCA worked with SfSP on site to lay out the basic components of the Elizabeth Street Park and to take field measurements to confirm existing conditions and dimensions.

A community engagement meeting focusing on Elizabeth Street Park and the adjacent KaBOOM playground was held on January 25th, 2016 at the PAEYC Hazelwood office. Following a welcome by Councilman O’Connor to the community, Cara Ciminillo of Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative described the history of the HPT. Following the brief presentation, SfSP outlined the breakout activity which involved discussing ideas and possible amenities for the KaBOOM and Elizabeth Street lots (Photos 3 and 4) as well as highlighting concerns, existing issues and opportunities for the surrounding areas. The meeting was then split into two groups. Prior to the presentation and break-out activity, community members were asked to place a dot on the welcome board (Photo 1) indicating where they lived and to select their favorite activities from the open space board (Photo 2).

The following notes are from the Open Space Activity and the two discussion groups.

OPEN SPACE AND ACTIVITY BOARD SUMMARY OF VOTES AND NOTES

Players were asked to select, with green dots, their top 2 favorite images from the Activity Board in Photo 2 above. Post-it notes with comments were added where more information was needed/wanted. The results are listed below:

- Picture 1- 2 dots, Picture 2- 1 dot, Picture 3- 5 dots, Picture 4 - 2 dots, Picture 5- 4 dots, Picture 6- 3 dots, Picture 7- 3 dots

Additional elements missing (post-it notes): Wall-climbing, waterfall, benches, volleyball, bowling lanes or other games on ground, baseball and football field, activity course, 4 square, WiFi, TV or place to show movies, dog run, hopscotch

BREAK-OUT GROUP 1

ELIZABETH STREET PARK REQUESTS:

Picnic tables and umbrellas, BBQ or grill for picnic use, a park shelter, art cart, food trucks for festivals, pole with hook to allow for single person jump roping, low fence with gate to protect kids from traffic on Gloster St, garbage cans at all corners of play areas, and a movie screen on bridge abutment.
KABOOM LOT REQUESTS:
Trampoline, spider-net climbing structure, fitness or race course for children and adults that surrounds both the KaBOOM and Elizabeth St lots, and safety surface that isn’t mulch and more durable than typical rubber playground surface.

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND DISCUSSION:
Group expressed concern about safety for play area users, lots of drug use happens under the bridge
Clean up trash under the bridge and used needles in vacant lot (bio-hazard)
No one stops at the stop sign on Gloster at the bridge and people drive the wrong way down the one-way street
Concern about kids crossing tracks to get to parklet rather than going up and over bridge
Repair railing and stairs at bridge, creating a safe way to cross Gloster Street
Add security cameras to capture activities at night
Provide lighting during festivals that do not run continuously at night. We do not want to encourage illicit activities late at night.
Q: If there are sexual offenders in the neighborhood, do they have to move once the playground is created? Is there a minimum distance from a playground that must be maintained? A: Answer unknown

BREAK-OUT GROUP 2
ELIZABETH STREET PARK REQUESTS:
Ice Rink that in the summer flips into chess board, Merry-Go-Round for all ages, shade structures, climbing wall, hopscotch, stage area with artistic benches, plants and trees, exercise space for yoga or other classes, and a water fountain
A shadow wall (maybe on the bridge) where children play with their projected shadows
Changing mural on bridge with rotating art (i.e. wise sayings, Hazelwood role models, history, etc)

KABOOM LOT REQUESTS:
Ample lighting for play area, play for older children too, active space for handball, racquetball, baseball, kickball etc, movies in the park, and game day in the park

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND DISCUSSION:
Provide teen specific activities and programs such as: board games, anime- art programs, and electronic games (such as an interactive mat or giant simon says)
Keep children away from the railroad
How do you mitigate sound?
Provide parking
Utilize teens and youth as a “shoveling and cleaning gardening team” to provide regular park maintenance
Create a basketball court near Blair Street Field
Keep/ restore natural foliage so that people see animals in native habitat
Add more garden planting on the lots
Q: What is happening with Blair Field? A: Answer unknown
Q: What’s happening with old basketball court by Blair Field? A: Answer unknown

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
From the HPT planning process, a new group of community advocates, named the Hazelwood PLAYers was formed. The mission of the Hazelwood PLAYers is to give a voice to community members in the design phases of future HPT projects in the neighborhood. To date, the Hazelwood PLAYers have met three times and have scheduled a follow-up meeting for Fall 2017.

Community meeting held at PAEYC’s Hazelwood Offices
PLAY TRAIL 2.0

Linking Community Resources
Components
Conceptual Site Designs

“Play is the highest form of research.” –Albert Einstein
Linking Community Resources

Within the community, potential Hazelwood Play Trail advocates exist in the form of neighborhood development groups, service organizations, educational institutions, and concerned citizens. By connecting with these groups and informing them of the mission of the HPT, the connection of existing play spaces with potential new destinations through an integrated play trail, may take on a new life and gain traction within the community. These advocates may also serve as future stewards of the play trail, assisting with ongoing maintenance, programming and future planning.

Hazelwood Green

Immediately adjacent to Hazelwood is the planned development of Hazelwood Green. Hazelwood Green’s master plan includes a future bike and pedestrian trail and park system that will potentially tie into the HPT. By introducing a playful element or play space within the Hazelwood Green site, the play space can serve as a mediator between the existing neighborhood and future development. A potential play space concept is detailed on page 26.

Tieing into Hazelwood Green’s trail and park system provides the opportunity for an expanded play trail network that links to new parks and public spaces. Additionally, artist Tim Kaulen has donated a fifteen foot metal flower sculpture, currently residing on Hazelwood Green’s property, as a future HPT marker.
The Market

Once a prosperous area with an abundance of flourishing hazelnut trees, Hazelwood in recent years has become a forgotten, high-need brownfield site with a large aging urban population. Although located five minutes from downtown Pittsburgh, the area has been struck by food deserts and abandoned businesses due to the decline of the steel industry.

Established in July of 2014 by Dianne Shenk, The Market was created when Shenk bought an old hay wagon and, with the help of builder Joni James, converted it into a farm stand, which she parked on the side of Second Avenue on vacant land rented from the URA. The stand attracted immediate attention from community residents and daily commuters. With the opening of Dylamato’s Market in February of 2016, the Second Avenue market space is not currently activated. On Saturday, September 16, 2017, The Mission Continues worked to reframe the existing structures on site with the hope being that this space will be re-activated by the Summer of 2018.

Adding a playful element(s) to the Market would help to foster and develop appeal for a wide range of ages, making The Market a lively stop along the Hazelwood Play Trail.

KaBOOM! Playground

Six vacant lots sandwiched between Lytle Street and Roma Way were purchased and consolidated by the Hazelwood Initiative in 2016, however, the design and funding process for the KaBOOM playground began as early as 2013. The Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative applied for a KaBOOM! grant to develop a playground program in the neighborhood. Members of the Greater Hazelwood Community Council (GHCC) worked to find a mutually agreeable site, and the current site at Lytle and Elizabeth Streets was chosen.

KaBOOM! held a Design Day on July 23, 2016 encouraging residents (adults and children) to participate in a site walk and input meeting and stay after for a block party in the future playspace. PPC pursued additional funding in order to create an atypical all-inclusive playground design.
KaBOOM PLAYGROUND INSTALLED: On September 17, 2016, members of the community joined together to install the KaBOOM playground equipment on the Hazelwood Initiative site. The playground equipment challenges children's developing motor skills while offering a wide range of experiences, including for those children with autism spectrum disorders, by providing an enclosed space for a child to escape the playground when over stimulated. Simultaneously, a small rain garden was planted by community members to capture a large portion of rainwater runoff in the southwestern corner of the site within a natural low point.

Since then additional planting (three trees and twenty-three shrubs) has been installed, a new limestone path leading to the playground ramp was created, debris was cleared from the site, and existing trees were trimmed. These modifications were lead by the Mission Continues (a veteran service organization) and community members.

Today, Jim McCue, a master gardener and founder of Everybody's Garden located across the street from the playground, helps to maintain the planting on site and hopes to develop a master gardener program that will create a steward program for future HPT gardens and play spaces.
Play Trail Map

Linking the pre-existing community resources (the Market, Elizabeth Street-KaBOOM playground and Vavro Garden,) produces an easily traversed one mile long play trail loop. This loop can be extended to encompass the edge of Hazelwood Green’s new neighborhood extension while another stop at the library can be added.

While the Play Trail stops listed on the map to the right are already dynamic public spaces, hands-on educational programming introduced into the sites will help to introduce playability and familiarize the greater community with the unique qualities of the neighborhood.

The following pages discuss possible play space components easily added to further activate Play Trail stops and the connective elements that will link one space to the next.

1. HAZELWOOD MARKET: fresh food, musical performances, and future play opportunity
2. HAZELWOOD GREEN: natural play area transitioning new planning to existing neighborhood
3. EVERYBODY’S GARDEN: existing garden cultivated and maintained by local residents
4. ELIZABETH STREET PARK & KABOOM: Enjoy a colorful non-traditional playground and imagine the possibilities adjacent
5. VAVRO GARDEN: enjoy the pavilion, play a few lawn games and relax
6. CARNEGIE LIBRARY OF HAZELWOOD: Take out a book, enter our HIVE or enjoy programming on our raised plaza overlooking Second Avenue
Play Trail Components

The Hazelwood Play Trail links various play destinations throughout the neighborhood with the use of repetitive wayfinding techniques that encourage the user to play along the way. These wayfinding elements are potential play encounters unto themselves if organized in creative patterns discovered by the trail user.

While each playscape is unique in its layout and location, there is a palette of suggested components that should be incorporated into each site. This palette may be the starter kit for a potential playscape and offers a low cost, temporary way to introduce play to an underutilized space.

The following paragraphs describe our proposed wayfinding system and the components proposed to activate space along the Play Trail including swings, chairs, chalkboards, play chests, and planting.

Play Trail Wayfinding

In order to link play spaces throughout the neighborhood, the design team drew on precedents from around the country that utilized spray paint to designate temporary space or pedestrian trails. The team proposed utilizing stencils with the word “PLAY” capitalized in varying sizes to be painted onto the sidewalk between stops. The team also suggested using circle stencils in varying sizes to delineate the perimeter trail at Elizabeth Street. These dots can continue to be utilized at a variety of sites throughout the neighborhood. These Play Trail markers are quick, inexpensive and easily installed by community members in a Block Party or Build Day format.

On January 10, 2017, at the monthly Hazelwood Neighbor’s Meeting, the design team presented possible wayfinding options for the future play trail. Community members placed dots on their favorite concepts. This exercise was repeated at the bi-weekly Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative meeting. The most selected options were numbers 3 and 6 from the board to the right.
Swings

One of the most selected type of precedents during our picture exercise activity were images of swings. The selected images contained swings that played music when in motion, swings installed on subways and buses, and swings hung from the underside of highway overpasses.

Dutch designer, Ter Kulve, uses everyday city fixtures as a means to increase playability, temporarily activating them in playful, unexpected ways. A standard light pole is now a swing, for instance. Kulve believes that, “thanks to these designs, dull and derelict places become hangouts of choice...It’s my strong belief that in a time of economic hardship and individual isolation, we should address ourselves to public space as a collectively owned domain and possible ways to use it to our joint benefit.”

Children and adults alike benefit from the addition of a swing within a space for the fun it provides. The act of swinging brings many additional physical and mental benefits including:

• Strengthening core muscles and developing balance
• Stimulating the cerebral cortex which helps develop focus
• Helping with sensory integration, providing a foundation for later, more complex learning and behavior
• Encouraging social interaction and development
• Developing perceptual skills, spatial awareness and gross and fine motor skills

For these reasons, including some type of swing within future play spaces is highly recommended for the Hazelwood Play Trail.

Chairs, Chalkboards and Playchests

Upcycled chairs, chalkboards and play chests filled with lawn games were proposed by the Design Tem and community members as temporary means to activate a potential play space. The upcycling and decorating of donated chairs could be a community engagement activity that would begin to instill a sense of ownership of the Hazelwood Play Trail.

Chalkboards are a low cost, easy solution to encourage the user’s imagination through drawings, written verse, or as a way to leave notices for Play Trail visitors. Chalkboards can be attached to existing fences or building walls with a bucket of chalk left within the proposed play chest.

Play chests could also be built following a simple construction pattern and adorned by community members. Donated lawn games, chalk, jump ropes, or other play items could be left within the chest for the Play Trail user to discover. The play chests should be
large enough to accommodate the above items but also small enough to be easily relocated to a new site in order to test the best play locations along the trail. If possible, play chests should be located in covered areas or be designed to withstand the elements.

**Planting**

No play space is complete without a thoughtful palette of native landscape materials to define, enhance and revitalize open space. Planting increases the quality of life by bringing natural elements and wildlife habitats into urban settings. Canopy trees adjacent to playgrounds allow community members to gather in the shade they provide during outdoor activities with family and friends. Shrubs help to delineate recreational zones and provide a green buffer to adjacent properties. Rain gardens planted with drought tolerant, low maintenance native plant material provide seasonal interest while also collecting stormwater runoff from adjacent sites. By replacing portions of lawn with meadow or other native perennial planting, wildlife habitats are restored or created.

Educational opportunities abound when thoughtfully planted beds, trees and shrub rows are planted within or adjacent to a playground. Jim McCue from Everybody’s Garden is currently developing a master gardener program in Hazelwood that may work in conjunction with the HPT, helping to maintain existing and future play trail stops. Developing a landscape steward program for all ages will continue to foster the development of the play trail.

Please see the appendix for a list of recommended native plant material for play spaces.
Conceptual Site Designs: Elizabeth Street Park

PLANNING: Following input from the original meetings for the HPT, the design team applied the guiding principles to Elizabeth Street Park in order to develop a design that would complement the KaBOOM playground. The design team drew on previously developed student work by the Penn State Extension that suggested a perimeter walking path. Looking for affordable yet impactful means to delineate and activate the space, a painted perimeter dot path was proposed. This path would also strike a diagonal desire line from the bridge staircase to the KaBOOM lot. During the site reconnaissance phase, pedestrians were observed utilizing this path making the design decision easy. Additionally, a tree grove that buffered adjacent residential property was added as well as a mural on the bridge abutment.

The remaining paved space at Elizabeth Street was thought to be ideal for large painted games on the ground as seen in the precedent images below.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: In addition to working with the SCA and the first community meeting involving Elizabeth Street and KaBOOM planning, the community met on June 29, 2016 to review two concepts for the design that covered both playspaces. Both schemes involved vacating a portion of Roma Way and planting and repaving a portion of Elizabeth Street Park. The first scheme used a more orthogonal layout while the second utilized curvilinear geometry to define spaces. The community unanimously preferred the orthogonal concept scheme because it seemed to best unify the spaces. The preferred scheme highlighted on the following page, also featured a rain garden on both properties, a mural on the bridge wall, additional seating around the play area, a small raised platform for performances, and a tree grove on the Elizabeth Street lot.

Precend images of painted games and murals on ground surfaces. Community members often participate in the pavement painting.

Early model of Elizabeth Street Park showing a perimeter dot path connecting the bridge stairs through Elizabeth Street to KaBOOM’s playground.

Design board presented at the June Community Meeting. The dashed box indicates the community’s preferred scheme.
DESIGN DRAWINGS: Following the community meeting, KaBOOM’s design drawings were finalized, and Elizabeth Street’s drawings continued to develop. The design team partnered with the Department of Public Works to provide in kind (donated) services in the form of paving removal, regrading the site, providing topsoil, and paving installation at the Elizabeth Street site to reduce the overall construction costs.

The design team met with the City of Pittsburgh Planning Department to review the developing drawings and to determine if vacating the right-of-way along Roma was appropriate. However, because many community members did not support the street vacation, it has been deemed unfeasible. The design team has altered the drawings to provide a painted crossing from Elizabeth Street Park to the KaBOOM playground as shown in the drawing to the right.

ABOVE: Drawing showing proposed improvements at Elizabeth Street in relation to the existing KaBOOM! playground
LEFT: Detailed planting plan for KaBOOM playground
Conceptual Site Designs: Hazelwood Green

The Hazelwood Green Development Implementation Plan (PLDP) divides its site into distinct districts. The Hazelwood District of Hazelwood Green is designed to be a natural extension to the existing neighborhood. The design for the district includes Hazelwood Park, a linear park with a playground, lawn space and bioretention gardens that front Tecumseh Street. The HPT team selected Hazelwood Park as a potential stop on the Play Trail and expanded on the high level plan proposed in the Hazelwood Green PLDP.

The playscape concept illustrated to the right develops the green space between Lytle and Blair Streets with stormwater gardens, garden rooms with lawn areas featuring berms and a natural play space. Rain garden plantings are prominent in the stormwater gardens with small footbridges crossing from garden room to garden room. The wayfinding system for the Play Trail connects this stop with the Play Trail loop and continues further into Hazelwood Green’s site to link to their proposed open space system.
SWING ON! will use an everyday street feature—bicycle racks—to create playful and artistically designed swing installations across Pittsburgh’s Greater Hazelwood neighborhood. Local artists will collaborate with community members to design and transform a basic kit of parts (bike racks, swing seats, and attachment cables) into a unique swinging experience that enhances its appearance and functionality by incorporating a multi-sensory experience with sound, light, motion, and other sensory creations we have not even imagined. Signage will accompany the installations to provide clues in a scavenger hunt challenge to find new swing locations, and to find an audio box that will share stories of the neighborhood, messages about play, and details about the swing design process.

The Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative has a long standing relationship of engaging the Greater Hazelwood community and its elected officials in thinking about and improving access to play opportunities in the neighborhood. Currently in progress, the Greater Hazelwood Play Trail is a multi-year initiative that will link together existing playful spaces, create new opportunities for play in areas of need, and engage the community to make Hazelwood the “Neighborhood of Play.” The Swing On! bike rack installations will be used along the play trail to link together playful elements in the community, and provide opportunities for children and community members to “play along the way.”
PLAY TRAIL 3.0

Play Trail Future Expansion
Coordinating with neighborhood change
Next steps- programming play trail events, building stewardship, building interest and awareness

“Play is our brain’s favorite way of learning” –Diane Ackerman
Future Expansion

Hazelwood is experiencing a renaissance. New business owners and residents are discovering the neighborhood located only minutes from downtown Pittsburgh. Affordable rents and solid housing stock make Hazelwood an attractive up and coming destination. As the population grows and development continues, instilling the tenet of playability into the public realm will be vital for the overall health of the community.

Continually adding to the footprint of the Hazelwood Play Trail is an ongoing goal for the Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative and a key discussion item in ongoing community and Hazelwood PLAYers meetings. Discussion surrounding the HPT will gauge the community’s desired outcomes for its open space and foster conversations surrounding play at all stages of life.

Coordinating with Neighborhood Change

The Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative along with the Hazelwood PLAYers group will work to keep abreast of planning and development projects within the neighborhood. Through meeting and workshop participation, knowledge of the ongoing play trail work can be imparted to attendees. Additionally, opportunities for inserting additional HPT sites may result from PPC and PLAYers engagement.

Next Steps

PROGRAMMING:

Currently, the Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative is working with neighborhood groups to create educational programming for the KaBOOM playground as one of the key destinations on the Hazelwood Play Trail. Once the Elizabeth Street Park is complete, the programming will extend to incorporate this adjacent area. The PPC hopes a regular schedule of events along the play trail will continue to raise interest and awareness in the HPT while providing entertainment and space to play and gather for the community. While the HPT has spaces already laid out within this document, the hope is that conversations with community members and stakeholders will allow for future expansion into sites not yet determined.

BUILDING STEWARDSHIP:

By involving the community in the design process of future HPT sites and the maintenance of the existing sites, the Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative hopes to establish a solid base of community stewards. The PPC recognizes that stewardship is a process, not a one-time activity. Through continued communication and attendance at neighborhood meetings, the PPC will keep people in the know about how the Hazelwood Play Trail is developing and how their input has been incorporated.

BUILDING INTEREST AND AWARENESS

An active steward base and robust programming help to generate interest and awareness in neighborhood related activities. By keeping activities centered around play trail locations, reaching out to local organizations and utilizing local resources, the PPC hopes to expand the awareness of the play trail’s mission while generating new and maintaining ongoing interest in the potential play sites.
APPENDIX

Picture Card Exercise
Contact Information

“As astronauts and space travelers children puzzle over the future; as dinosaurs and princesses they unearth the past. As weather reporters and restaurant workers they make sense of reality; as monsters and gremlins they make sense of the unreal.”

-Gretchen Owocki
Appendix

Precedent Cards - Picture Exercise

The picture exercise was conducted several times throughout the planning process. Attendees picked three or four photos that represented elements of play and explained why each photo was selected. The following images are copies of the cards presented.
Appendix

Contact Information
If you would like more information about the Hazelwood Play Trail, please contact:

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Salt Tolerant Plant List
The following list contains plant species that are highly tolerant of salt. Select species with final growth size in mind. Some species below need a larger root zone to thrive. Consider this list when planting adjacent to roadways.

Shade trees
Aesculus hippocastanum - Horsechestnut
Amelanchier canadensis - Serviceberry
Betula lenta - Cherry birch
Crataegus crus-galli var. inermis - Cockspur hawthorn
Ginkgo biloba - Maidenhair
Gleditsia triacanthos var. inermis - Honeylocust
Hamamelis spp. - Witchhazel
Juniperus virginiana - Eastern redcedar
Magnolia spp. - Magnolia
Nyssa sylvatica - Black gum
Quercus alba - White oak
Quercus rubra - Red oak
Sophora japonica - Japanese pagodatree
Taxodium distichum - Baldcypress

Shrubs/groundcovers
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi - Bearberry
Aronia spp. - Chokeberry
Caragana arborescens - Siberian pea shrub
Cornus racemosa - Gray dogwood
Cotoneaster divaricatus - Spreading cotoneaster
Cotoneaster horizontalis - Rock cotoneaster
Cytisus scoparius - Scotch broom
Hibiscus syriacus - Rose-of-Sharon
Hydrangea spp. - Hydrangea
Hypericum spp. - St. Johnswort
Philadelphus spp. - Mockorange
Potentilla fruticosa - Potentilla
Ribes alpinum - Alpine currant
Rosa rugosa - Saltspray rose
Rhus spp. - Sumac
Syringa spp. - Lilacs
Vaccinium spp. - Blueberry/cranberry

Perennials
Armeria maritima - Sea thrift
Calamagrostis acutiflora - ‘Karl Foerster’ reed grass
Dianthus gratianopolitanus - Cheddar pink
Festuca glauca - ‘Elijah Blue’ Blue Fescue Grass
Helleborus orientalis - Lenten rose
Hemerocallis spp. - Daylily
Iberis sempervirens - Candytuft
Limonium latifolium - Sea lavender
Liriope spicata - Lilyturf
Pennisetum alopecuroides - Fountain grass
Sedum spectabile - Sedum ‘Autumn Joy’
Schizachyrium scoparium - Little bluestem
Waldsteinia fragarioides - Barren strawberry
Yucca filamentosa - Adam’s-needle Yucca
Appendix

Recommended Tree Species For Pittsburgh’s Streets

There are two main categories; Shade Trees where no overhead utilities conflict with tree growth, and Utility Trees where overhead utilities call for shorter trees. The Utility Tree section has 2 parts to account for the occasional situation where wires are 25’ or higher above ground.

Shade Trees

Trees in the Shade Tree category should be planted where no overhead utilities exist. Shade trees are the most desirable size of tree for planting, and should be used at all times in the absence of overhead wires.

Acer rubrum ‘Franksred’- Red Sunset Red Maple (do not use within 5’ of sidewalks; aggressive root system)

Acer x freemanni ‘Celzam’- Celebration Freeman Maple (do not use within 5’ of sidewalks; aggressive root system)

Aesculus x carnea ‘Briotii’- Ruby Red Horsechestnut (less mid-summer scorch than hippocastanum)

Cercidiphyllum japonicum Tree Form- Katsura Tree (requires more water during establishment years than most other trees)

Corylus colurna (tree form)- Turkish Hazel or Turkish Filbert

Eucommia ulmoides - Hardy Rubber Tree (not pretty but can be useful)

Ginkgo biloba (any male variety) - Ginkgo (male example is Princeton Sentry)

Gleditsia triacanthos (any thornless, seedless, variety) - Honeylocust

Gymnocladus dioicus (male variety only) - Kentucky Coffeetree

Liriodendron tulipifera - Tulip Tree (open lawn or large parking island)

Metasequoia glyptostroboides – Dawn Redwood (requires larger than usual pit if used as a street tree, or use in open planting areas)

Nyssa sylvatica - Blackgum

Ostrya virginiana – American Hophornbeam

Platanus x acerifolia ‘Bloodgood’ - Bloodgood London Planetree

Quercus bicolor - Swamp White Oak

Quercus macrocarpa – Bur Oak

Quercus rubra - Northern Red Oak

Quercus palustris - Pin Oak

Sophora japonica - Scholartree (flower issues make this an open space tree not suited to sidewalk use)

Taxodium distichum – Baldcypress

Tilia tomentosa - Silver Linden

Ulmus parvifolia – Lacebark Elm/Chinese Elm


Zelkova serrata – Zelkova (‘Green Vase’ is not recommended in commercial areas where it may block signage)

Utility-Compatible Trees

Group A (under-wire use)

Group A applies to most plantings under utility lines. This is necessary because most wires are less than 25’ above ground. Where possible, offset trees so they are not directly under the wires.

Acer ginnala – Amur Maple 15’-20’

Acer tataricum – Tatarian maple 15’-25’

Crataegus crus-galli var.’Inermis’ – Thornless cockspur hawthorn 15’-20’

Crataegus laevigata ‘Superba’ – Crimson Cloud hawthorn (tree form) 15’-20’

Magnolia stellata – Star Magnolia (tree form) 10’-20’

Malus cultivars – crabapple (disease resistance emphasized) all under 22’ Adams, Amsalzam, Centurion, Donald Wyman, Harvest Gold, Prairifire, Professor Sprenger, Red Jewel, Robinson, Sentinel, Sugar Tyme, Strawberry Parfait (always specify tree form for crabapple selection)

Malus floribunda – Japanese flowering crabapple under 25’

Malus sieboldii x zumi ‘Calocarpa’ – Zumi crabapple under 25’

Malus ‘Spring Snow’ tree form – Spring Snow Crabapple 15-20’ (fruit makes Malus undesirable in commercial areas)
Group B (use only under wires 25’ and higher)

Group B applies only to utility plantings where the bottom wire is over 25’ above ground. Where possible, offset trees so they are not directly under the wires.

Acer buergeranum – Trident Maple (tree form) 20-30’

Acer campestre – Hedge maple (tree form) 25’-40’

Acer campestre ‘Evelyn’ – Queen Elizabeth hedge maple 30’-40’

Acer griseum – Paperbark Maple 25’-35’

Amelanchier laevis ‘Cumulus’ or “Majestic’ – Apple Serviceberry 20’-30’

Amelanchier x grandiflora – Serviceberry (many cultivars) 20’-30’

Carpinus betulus “Fastigiata’ – European Hornbeam (tree form) 30’-40’

Carpinus caroliniana – American Hornbeam (useful in full shade) 20-35’

Cercis canadensis – Eastern Redbud 25’-30’

Cornus kousa – Kousa Dogwood (esp. Rutgers hybrids) 20’-30’

Koelreuteria paniculata - Goldenrain Tree 25’-40’

Magnolia ‘Galaxy’ – Galaxy Magnolia (tree form) 20’-30’

Phellodendron amurense – Amur Corktree 30’-40’

Prunus sargentii – ‘Columnar’ – Sargent cherry 30’


Prunus virginiana ‘Shubert’ – Shubert Chokecherry 20’-30’

Sorbus species – Mountain Ash 15’-35’ (in limited quantities)

Syringa reticulata ‘Summer Snow’, ‘Ivory Silk’ – Japanese Tree lilac 20’-25’

Trees planted on city property shall be:

- 2” caliper (minimum) measured 6” above the root ball;
- set rootball level slightly above soil grade (1-2”), finished soil grade being 2” below top of sidewalk (see Tree Planting Detail).
- mulched with 2” of shredded wood mulch for weed control;
- stake trees just below the first branch with 1”-3” wide polypropylene straps (2 per tree on opposite sides of tree, connecting from tree to stake horizontally). DO NOT use rope or wire through a hose. ArborTie is an acceptable product.

- Remove all staking materials after one (1) year, or as otherwise directed by the City Forester.

- Planting beds shall measure a minimum of 3’ X 10’ in order to assure space for the root zone. Where box style planting beds currently exist, the space shall be enlarged to the above dimensions. The rectilinear shape may be substituted with Forestry approval, but a minimum of 30 sq. ft. of root zone must still be observed. Trees require ample root space for optimum growth and longevity, so planting beds larger than the minimum are welcome and desirable where there is still sufficient space for pedestrian traffic.
HAZELWOOD PLAY TRAIL