



Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, Apr. 17, 2024

4:30 p.m.

Vancouver City Hall

Aspen Room

415 W. 6th Street

Vancouver, WA

Commissioners Present:

Wille, Kuntz, Thompson, Fletcher, and Robbins

Commissioners Absent:

Haygood, Otto, Piland, and Panter

Staff Present: Perlick, Donovan, Snyder, Douglas, Nilo, Meade, Brosius, Cook, Burton, Stokke, Hull, Guzman, C. White, Gutierrez, and Tubberville

Guests:

Stacey Donovan, Sean Douglas, Angela Brosius, Andy Meade, Melody Burton, and Roman Gutierrez.

Item 1: Call to Order

Vice Chair Fletcher called the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) regular meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. in the Aspen Room at Vancouver City Hall and online via Microsoft Teams. Commissioners Haygood, Otto, Piland, and Panter were absent.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes

PRAC approved the March 20, 2024 meeting minutes by consensus.

Item 3: Public Comment

None presented.

Members

Jayne Haygood

President

Angilo Fletcher

Vice President

Jeremy Robbins

Mathew Kuntz

Jenny Thompson

Stephen Wille

Kerry Otto

AJ Panter, VPS

Cale Piland, EPS

Vacant, Parks Foundation

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Item 4: Summer Event & Recreational Programming

Perlick highlighted that community interest is quickly outgrowing our capacity to deliver programs, however we are working to maximize our impact. Meade and Brosius (Recreation Facility Managers) gave a high-level debriefing as we reach program capacity and make new changes.

Recreation programming is designed for all ages and abilities, bringing the community value. We offer free and fee-based programs with scholarships available to eliminate barriers. We also provide critical childcare for working families when school is out, including day camps. Our program supports public health and safety and prioritizes programs for vulnerable, underserved populations.

Full-day camp programs are operated by PRCS staff and are scholarship-eligible with payment plans offered. Summer Playgrounds Camps are free, outdoor camps operated by PRCS staff, and provided at no cost to people who live within specified school boundaries with lunch provided. There are diversified offerings for youth, teens, adults, seniors, and people with disabilities. Partnerships help address challenges and fill gaps with innovation as interest in summer programs will exceed community demand this year.

Our community center facilities are important resources in the community, with ongoing memberships and 3,000 drop-in visitors a month. New Summer Youth Passes and pool use are popular programs offered. The centers also host graduation parties and private rentals and serve as a safe, free public space during heat and wildfire emergencies.

Kuntz asked about community interest in the payment plan; Perlick confirmed that upwards of 50 resident families opted into the payment plan. Thompson asked about hiring returning staff for the summer; Meade explained that there can be difficulty rehiring staff for the same position, based on the ability to retain them outside of the summer season. Folks who are interested in returning are strongly encouraged to contact us as we hire for the summer season.

Donovan (Cultural Services Manager) and Douglas (Special Event Permitting Manager) gave an overview of the Special Events Team, City-sponsored events, City partnered events, and permitted events. Summer Concerts include the Waterfront Concert Series at Waterfront Park and Sunday Sounds Concert Series at Columbia Tech Park. Summer Movies are featured on Fridays at dusk in parks across the city, taking program events into different neighborhood parks. Cultural Event Partnerships include Juneteenth, Family Play Day, Vancouver Arts & Music Festival, Dia de Muertos, Holiday Tree Lighting, and Menorah Lighting.

WRPA is hosting its annual conference here in Vancouver this May. PRCS staff and Anna Cruz (Vancouver Ballet Folklorico) will be presenting on Illuminating Community through Cultural Event Partnerships.

Douglas highlighted permitted event growth and challenges; interest in summer programs will exceed what we can offer. Permitted Events, Shelter Reservations, and Park Use Permit requests have increased beyond the levels we experienced pre-pandemic. To help manage public expectations and prepare for the future, we have included 1 FTE in the supplemental budget request, and 1 FTE in the 2025-26 biennium budget request.

Kuntz inquired about building metrics on the percentage increase of requests year after year to make a case for the budget requests. Douglas confirmed this year we'll have over 112 permitted events so far. Donovan agreed to get commissioners the requested metrics information; Kuntz offered to be behind staff to support all FTE requests. Kuntz asked if the pavilion used at the waterfront concerts is an inflatable temporary stage/band shell; Donovan confirmed that it is City-owned and that we also rent it out to other events.

Commissioners were asked to share summer job and volunteer opportunities for camp staff, aquatics staff, and special events staff.

Item 5: Oakbrook Park Communications Update

Burton gave an overview of the history, project background, and master plan approval. The park was reclassified in the 2022-2031 Comprehensive Plan, with robust community engagement facilitated throughout 2022. The master plan and Phase 1 were approved by PRAC in December 2022. Planned construction in Fall 2023 was pushed to Spring 2024 to have the playground removed. Further delays pushed construction to Fall 2024.

Gutierrez shared about the modifications to the Phase 1 plan and the revised Phase 1 graphic. Features include a new wetlands-themed inclusive play area (taller play mound with slide and ramp, new rope climber, seat walls, shade trees, and new shrubs), added a Natureplay area to be expedited for neighbors (log climbers and stump steppers on the east side of the park, shooting for July 2024), 4 new pickleball courts (reoriented), Portland Loo restroom, sidewalk along 99th Ave (widen NE 99th Ave, fire access and legal street parking), habitat restoration and improvements, native planting areas, and a picnic shelter.

Next steps were shared on an updated communications timeline. After the PRAC update, PRCS will notify neighbors, followed by Nature Play Area construction, and Phase 1 Construction will begin in fall 2024 with an estimated completion in summer 2025.

Kuntz inquired whether the setback of the project was budgetary-driven, or due to staffing limitations. Gutierrez confirmed delays were due to the permitting process, including the widening of the street. Robbins asked about 99th Street expansion; Gutierrez confirmed it will be expanded across the whole property. Robbins expressed that neighbors are hoping to see progress; the mailings are an effective way to keep everyone up to date; he will advocate and spread the word on project updates. Burton added that in addition to a mailing, the project webpage will be updated later this week. Robbins expressed appreciation for the team's research for this project, especially around pickleball solutions to set us up for the future.

Item 6: Director's Report

Update Summer registration opened at 7 a.m. today for people who live within Vancouver city limits. This is the first time we've offered a 24-hour priority registration window to city residents. People who live outside the city limits will be able to start registering tomorrow.

As expected, it's been less than 12 hours since registration opened and our youth day camps are filling quickly, and some weeks are already full. This highlights how important these summer recreation programs are for local families. It was emphasized that this is a critical area where the community need far outpaces our capacity right now.

We're working on installing the Portland Loos at Esther Short Park and looking forward to having those open later this spring. In May we will also remove the existing restrooms over at Marshall Park and install new Portland Loos, which will open in the summer. We will continue to have portable toilets at Marshall Park until the new loos are open.

A new piece of play equipment for ages 2-5 has been installed at Arnada Park to replace a track slider that was no longer safe to use. This small improvement project was a collaboration between our parks team and the Arnada neighborhood association. The effort was led by a community member who identified the need for equipment that is appropriate for younger children at Arnada and helped fundraise and advocate for the project. It's a great example of how small changes can still have a big impact.

Upcoming Events

- We are excited to be celebrating Earth Day with Indigenous communities at three free public events on Saturday, April 20. · From 10 a.m. to noon at the Fort, the Nez Perce Tribe is hosting their annual Chief Redheart Memorial Ceremony, honoring Chief Redheart and his band, who were imprisoned there from 1877-78.
- Then join Fourth Plain Forward and Naturespaces for Grandmother Camus Unveiled, from 1 to 4 p.m. at St. Johns Blvd. and Q St. This event will unveil a new welcoming figure carved by Yakama Nation artist Toma Villa. This public art piece represents Grandmother Camus, who out of profound love for her grandchildren, transformed into camas bulbs to save them from starvation. The program will start shortly after 1 p.m., followed by food, dancing, a community resource fair and family activities. · You can close out the day at the [Rising Generations Powwow](#), presented by the Native American Parent Association of Southwest Washington at Clark College O'Connell Sports Center. There is a grand entry ceremony at 6 p.m. with dancing, vendors and food until 10 p.m.
- Save the Date for [Spruce the Couve](#) on May 11, our annual downtown volunteer cleanup event. Flower planting shifts are already full, but we still need people to sign up for the cleanup activities. You can sign up on the City's website calendar.

Reminder, we are hosting the [Washington Recreation and Parks Association conference](#) here in Vancouver, May 21-24. This is a fantastic opportunity to connect with other parks and recreation agencies from across the state and learn about the latest trends and best practices in our field. Our staff will also be hosting a variety of tours and workshops during the educational component of the conference.

Item 7: Chair Report

None presented.

Item 8: Evergreen School District Report

None presented.

Item 9: Vancouver Public School Report

None presented.

Item 10: Open Discussion & New Business

Robbins asked about a curb cut at Marrion Park Playground to allow a wheelchair user to access the park. Snyder will look into it and work with Transportation to see what can be done. Wille expressed that he is looking forward to attending all of the weekend events. It was suggested that the PRAC members get nametags to show representation at events.

ADJOURNED

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.



Elizabeth Austin Playground at Fruit Valley Park

Terry Snyder
Senior Park Developer
Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
May 15, 2024





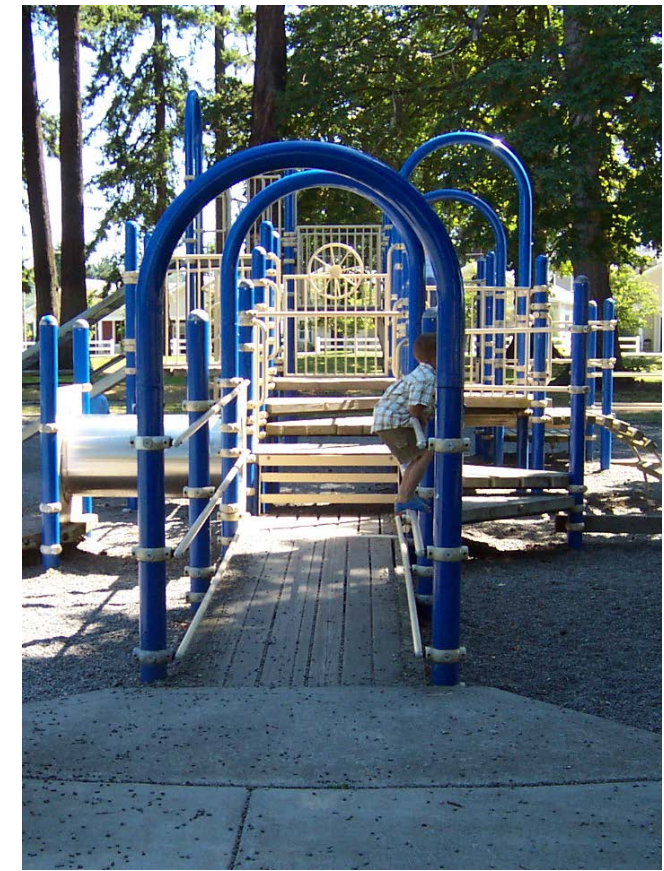
Agenda

- Park overview
- Kuni Foundation donation
- Community engagement
- Playground design
- Project timeline
- Future improvements



Park Overview

- 6-acre neighborhood park in west Vancouver
- Serves over 1,000 households
- Beautiful natural environment with many large trees
- Current amenities include a playground, sports court, community garden and large open lawn area



Kuni Foundation Donation

The Elizabeth Austin playground at Fruit Valley Park

- The Kuni Foundation donated \$1 million to build an inclusive playground at Fruit Valley Park
- The playground will honor the legacy of community leader and mother, Elizabeth Austin
- Elizabeth championed inclusive spaces that were accessible to youth of all abilities before her death in 2021 from cancer



Community Engagement

Designing together

- Outreach began Summer 2023
- Hundreds of neighbors helped select the playground theme
- Online surveys helped identify the specific pieces of equipment and design features
- Strong community support



Elizabeth Austin Playground

- Inclusive play environments encourage strong physical, mental and social development in all children
- Theme: Play Like a Bird
- Highlighting the natural beauty of the park setting and supporting bird habitat and conservation education



Playground Design



Key Inclusive Features

- Accessible rubber surfacing
- Full support seat and harness on the track ride
- Spinning equipment with level entry surface for easy access
- Sensory spaces with instruments, sculptures and quiet retreats
- Clear edge definition
- Water play
- Climber with transfer station



Elizabeth Austin Playground Timeline



Future Park Considerations

More change coming to Fruit Valley Park

- The Fruit Valley Community Center is a small, City-owned building in the park that was open for limited event rentals through the Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association
- A recent assessment deemed the building in very poor condition, it will be removed during construction of the new playground
- We are working with neighbors to identify other amenities that could be added to the park in the future
- Community Development will also start work on a new Fruit Valley Action Plan in 2025, which could inform future park improvements



Full Fruit Valley Park Timeline





Discussion

Questions or comments about:

- Kuni Foundation donation
- Community engagement
- Playground design or accessibility
- Fruit Valley community center building and future plans





Motion to Approve

- Motion requested:
Move to approve the Elizabeth Austin playground design and construction plan at Fruit Valley Park.



Thank You



STAFF REPORT

TO: Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission **DATE:** 5/15/2024
FROM: Terry Snyder, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department

Subject: Playground design for the Elizabeth Austin Playground at Fruit Valley Park

Key Points:

- Fruit Valley Neighborhood Park (3200 Fruit Valley Rd.) is a six-acre park located in the Fruit Valley Neighborhood in west Vancouver. Fruit Valley is the largest neighborhood in the city by landmass, and the park serves more than 1,000 households.
- Fruit Valley Park is a popular gathering place for neighbors and offers a beautiful natural environment that includes a playground, a sports court, loop path system, community garden and enough space to host community events like summer movies in the park
- Fruit Valley Neighborhood Park has been selected to receive a fully inclusive playground thanks to a generous \$1 million donation from the Kuni Foundation.
- The new playground will honor the legacy of community leader and mother, Elizabeth Austin.
- Increasing access to inclusive play spaces is a priority for Vancouver Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services, it is also one of the two funding priorities for the Kuni Foundation.
- The Elizabeth Austin Playground will be the first all fenced playground in Vancouver.
- In addition to making the park more inviting for people with disabilities, inclusive play environments also encourage strong physical, mental and social development in children who do not experience disability.
- Community engagement began in July 2023 and has run through May 2024. A variety of in-person and online opportunities have invited neighbors to help choose the playground theme (Play Like a Bird) and shape the playground amenities. Materials were provided in English and Spanish.
- This presentation is seeking approval of an inclusive playground design. The new playground will be built in the same area as the existing playground, limiting other impacts to the park.
- The community broadly supports the playground design being presented today and is excited for construction to begin, pending PRAC approval.
- Construction is slated for winter and spring 2025, with plan to be open in summer 2025. A master plan is a big vision for the design and use of a park.

Objective:

Current CDC data indicates that one in four Americans (26%) have [some type of disability](#). Most playgrounds incorporate basic ramps and a few wheelchair-accessible play options to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act's 2010 playground rules. Those accommodations only address some mobility disabilities and still leave many members of our community on the sidelines. Inclusive design reduces barriers for people with physical disabilities, while also providing engaging play opportunities for those experiencing cognitive, developmental, sensory and neurodevelopmental disabilities.

In addition to making the park more inviting for people with disabilities, inclusive play environments also encourage strong physical, mental and social development in children who do not experience disability. Inclusive playgrounds also invite parents and caregivers with disabilities to actively engage in play with the children in their lives.

The new playground at Fruit Valley Park will be a place where people of all ages and abilities can thrive together through play.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

Vibrant and Distinct Neighborhoods

- Offer a variety of accessible places and spaces to interact and enjoy nature, art, culture and community.

Safe and Prepared Community

- Vancouver feels like a safe place to live, work, learn and play.

Climate and Natural Systems

- Environmental stewardship and efforts to address climate change to ensure everyone has a sustainable future.

High Performing Government

- The City is reliable, fiscally responsible, equitable and open to compromise.

Present Situation:

The playground at Fruit Valley Park was installed in the mid-1990s and will require replacement within 5-years, per the typical playground use expectancy. The Kuni Foundation approached PRCS with the goal of donating \$1 million to build a new inclusive playground to honor Elizabeth Austin. After reviewing potential locations, Fruit Valley Park was selected because of its pending need for playground replacement and a desire to increase investment and opportunity in the community the park serves.

The new playground will be named the Elizabeth Austin Playground at Fruit Valley Park. The donation and playground name were approved by Vancouver City Council in 2023. Outreach began with the neighborhood to identify a preferred theme and design components for the playground. The final preferred design concept was presented to neighbors at a community open house held at the park on May 9, project materials have also been made available online at www.beaheardvancouver.org/fruit-valley-park. There is strong support for the new playground.

Once the plan is approved by PRAC, park planners can begin preparing for construction and obtaining permits. Construction is expected to start in early 2025 and be completed by summer 2025. This timeline ensures that children in Fruit Valley will still have access to a playground this summer and pushes construction impacts to the winter and spring months, when park use is less frequent due to weather.

Advantage(s):

- Expands recreation opportunities at the park
- Enhances accessibility to the site and provides a fully inclusive play area
- Funds a future capital project need through Kuni Foundation donation

Disadvantage(s):

- No known disadvantages at this time.

Budget Impact:

None, funding is secured through the Kuni Foundation donation.

Action Requested:

Move to approve the Elizabeth Austin Playground design and construction plan at Fruit Valley Park.

Attachment(s):

Elizabeth Austin Playground Preferred Concept Design (PDF)
Elizabeth Austin Playground Key Accessibility Features (PDF)
Fruit Valley Park Open House Handout (PDF)



To request other formats, please contact:
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Park Background

Fruit Valley Neighborhood Park (3200 Fruit Valley Rd.) is a 6-acre park in west Vancouver. A popular gathering spot for neighbors, Fruit Valley Park offers a beautiful natural environment that includes a playground, a sports court, a community garden and enough space to host large events like summer movies in the park.

New Playground

Fruit Valley Neighborhood Park is receiving a fully inclusive playground thanks to a generous \$1 million donation from the Kuni Foundation. The new playground will honor the legacy of community leader and mother, Elizabeth Austin.

The community chose “Play Like a Bird” for the design theme of the playground, which celebrates the natural beauty and habitat of Fruit Valley Park. The playground plan incorporates the play equipment and design features that were selected as the most popular among community members at in-person meetings and in online surveys.



Site Elements

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Safety Surfacing | 5 Crab Trap Climber & Slide | 9 Waterplay Basins & Bubblers | 13 Babel Drum Instrument | 17 Fencing & Gates |
| 2 Concrete Paving | 6 Inclusive Spinner | 10 Waterplay Channel & Weirs | 14 Custom Bird Sculptures | 18 Park Bench |
| 3 Planting and Bioswale | 7 ZipKrooz Track Ride | 11 Custom Bird Nest | 15 Habitat Houses | 19 Picnic Table |
| 4 Turf Lawn | 8 Playmound with Slide | 12 Bell Lyre Instrument | 16 Bird Footprints | 20 Existing Asphalt Paving |
| | | | | 21 Bark Mulch |



PREFERRED CONCEPT **PLAY LIKE A BIRD**



Fruit Valley Community Center

The Fruit Valley Community Center is a small building in the park that used to be available for limited event rentals under the management of the Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association and volunteers. The building is owned by the City of Vancouver. The lease agreement that had been in place with the Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association ended in 2023.

A recent Facility Condition Assessment determined that the building is in very poor condition due to:

- Environmental dangers (lead paint, asbestos, mold, radon gas)
- Minimal ADA access
- Not meeting seismic standards
- Not meeting Life Safety Code for occupancy
- Roof is not in safe condition

The cost of repairs and renovations is more than the value of the building. It is not a safe resource for the community anymore, so it will be removed when construction begins on the new playground.

Future Opportunities at Fruit Valley Park

We are inviting the community to share their ideas for new amenities and improvements that could be added to the park to create safe and inviting spaces for neighbors to play, gather and celebrate after the building is removed. Initial ideas include:

- Picnic shelter
- Portland Loo restroom
- Fitness equipment
- Skate spot
- Swings (the community chose a zipline for the new playground design)
- New benches and ADA picnic tables
- Utility improvements to support larger events and festivals

Fruit Valley Park Project Timeline



WHAT MAKES ELIZABETH AUSTIN PLAYGROUND AT FRUIT VALLEY PARK INCLUSIVE?



1 ACCESSIBLE SURFACING

The material used to cover the ground is called “surfacing.” Accessible surfacing is solid rubber, so it’s easier to move across, and supports smooth transitions between different areas of the playground.



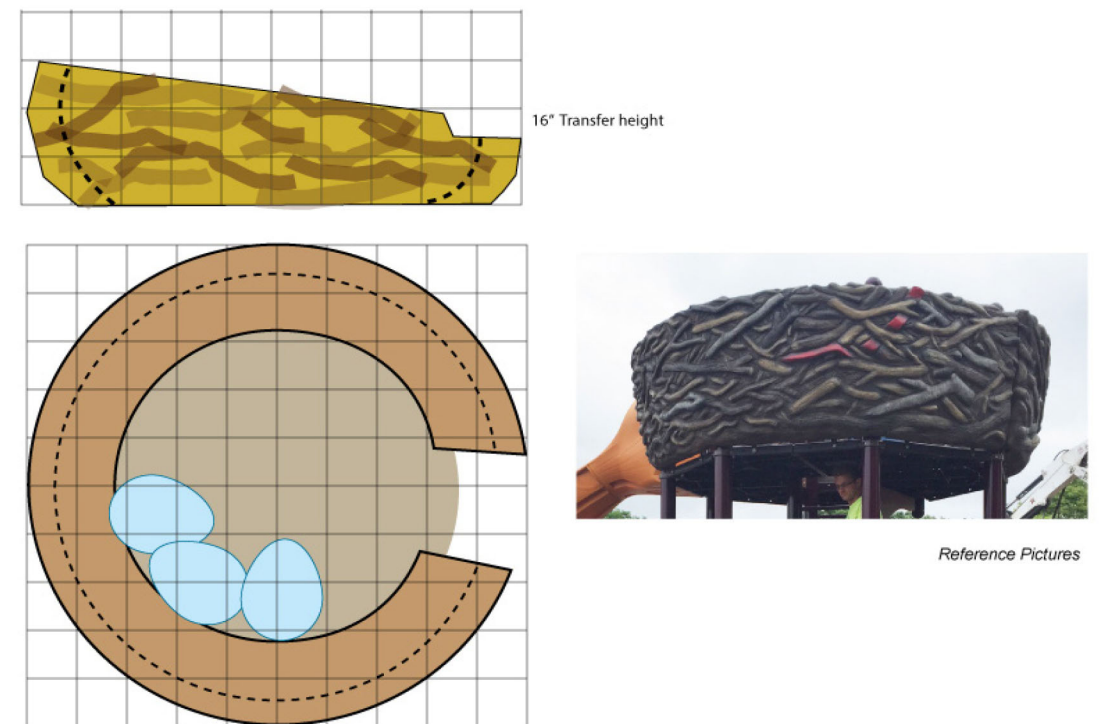
7 INCLUSIVE SEAT ON TRACK RIDE

With a full support seat and harness, this equipment is accessible to users with a variety of abilities. The playground design encourages people to stay connected during play, even though individuals may interact with the equipment differently.



6 SPINNING EQUIPMENT

This equipment provides opportunities for spinning (vestibular movement), which helps develop balance, equilibrium, muscle tone, and coordination. The spinner has a smooth and level entry surface for easy access.



11 QUIET RETREAT NEST

Inviting retreat spaces create opportunities to rest, reflect, and enjoy quiet play in areas that are tucked away from more active play zones.



12 SENSORY SPACES

Sensory spaces create play opportunities beyond running, jumping, and climbing. A number of instruments offer ground level accessible play and reflect the bird theme through sound. There are also ground level bird sculptures for visitors to interact with.



17 CLEAR EDGE DEFINITION

Clearly defining the play area with visual cues like symbols, colors and fencing helps people safely navigate and understand how to use the space. The play area is fully fenced in with two access gates for public safety.



9 WATER SENSORY INTERACTION

Waterplay encourages sensory development with a multi-sensory experience that engages touch, sound, sight and smell. The waterplay basins and channels provide opportunities for elevated and at ground waterplay for users of differing heights and mobility types.



5 CRAB TRAP CLIMBER

The crab trap climber has a classic transfer station with a rubber ramp where everyone can climb or crawl up to a slide at the top of the climber. It has ground level activities and interest as well as higher climbing and sliding challenges.



Site Elements

- | | | | | |
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PREFERRED CONCEPT PLAY LIKE A BIRD

ELIZABETH AUSTIN PLAYGROUND AT FRUIT VALLEY PARK | PLAYGROUND CONCEPT

CONCEPT PLANS | MAY 2024

