RESEARCH IN ACTION:
THE HAYSBORO COMMUNITY PARK
ABSTRACT AND GOALS

Abstract

What is a natural playground? Is it the newest trend or could a return to old-fashioned ideology be the solution to a search for sustainable high quality play spaces?

How do you measure the success of a park? Wait, first you need to define park success. This symposium- "Research in Action: The Haysboro Community Park" is designed to leverage the evaluation of a playground revitalization project and to show how specific research strategies can be used to measure the success of future play and recreation projects.

The Haysboro Community Park Project is a community-driven initiative, revitalizing a City of Calgary playground into one of the first nature playgrounds in Calgary. Conceptual design began in 2014 with Phase One construction completed in November 2015 and Phase 2 underway in the fall of 2017. Two research projects have evaluated the success of this playground design using different quantitative methodologies to provide insights into usage data both before and after the revitalization.

By using this project as a case study, this symposium is designed to address three key themes; making a case for nature playgrounds, sharing lessons learned from this playground revitalization project, and demonstrating the value of research in measuring the success of a public park and recreational space.

Sharing the lessons learned from this project with the various departments within the City of Calgary and with other play focused organizations helps to ensure the success of future like projects.

Including targeted, quality research on park usage has proven both feasible and invaluable for this project and can be used as a model for future play projects. This symposium will present two proven methodologies to evaluate the effectiveness, utility, and thereby success of a community play space.

Goals of the Symposium

The goal of this symposium is to spark a conversation in Calgary about the use of research to drive play space design decisions, and to share data that supports the case for nature playgrounds as a worthy option.

Attendees will:

- Follow the process of designing a nature playground from conception, community input, design, construction, evaluation and Phase 2 planning.
- Gain insight into why nature playgrounds are a great choice for community parks.
- See the success of the Haysboro Community Park marked in measurable, objective, metrics.
- Gain a better understanding of the types of methodologies available to research and evaluate community play spaces.
- Understand how data can be used strategically to make design changes to parks, to increase usage, and to influence activity levels at parks.
- Participate in an open discussion about the future of research and nature play in community playgrounds.
HOW DO YOU MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF A PARK?
HAYSBORO COMMUNITY PARK PROJECT

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning."
—Mr. Rogers

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:

Environment Canada

Parks Foundation

CALGARY FOUNDATION

Neighbour Grants

ground³

WILCO

HAYSBORO

COMMUNITY ASSOC.
WHO’S AT THE PARK?

- Local families
  - Young families, day homes
- Haysboro Preschool
  - Monday-Friday
  - 1-2 hrs/day
  - Included in Curriculum
- Jr High special needs class
  - Daily
WHAT ARE ALL THE PLAY OPTIONS IN HAYSBORO?
PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS

- City of Calgary
- Haysboro Community Association (HCA)
- Haysboro Community Preschool
- Haysboro Residents
ENGAGEMENT AND BRAINSTORMING

Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.

— Jane Jacobs —
SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

- 25 participants
  - Most lived in Haysboro
  - Everyone had played at the park at least once
- Majority had 3-5 year olds
- 80% would like to see swings remain, 75% for slides
Survey Results
Playgrounds We Love

Edworthy Park

Prince’s Island Park

Helicopter Park

Kelvin Grove Woodland Park
WHAT FEATURES DO YOU LOVE?

- Creative, imaginative spaces
- Unique items, ziplines, bouldering wall, dome monkey bars, mobius strip
- Swings, traditional, baby, and disc
- Climbing rope structures
- Boulders or logs of different shapes and sizes to jump between, climb on
- Paths
- Multiple ages including adults can play

People travel the farthest for safe/fun parks for younger aged children
OUTCOME OF SURVEY

- Recognized that we have fantastic large playground structures in our community.
  - 3 elementary schools with playgrounds
- Lack of parks for the 0-2 and 3-5 age groups.
- Want and need:
  - a destination park
  - a community hub
  - a comfortable place to spend the day and meet our neighbours.
Happy, Healthy Children Play Outdoors

Outdoors, children can run about and have a sense of freedom which otherwise they would not experience indoors.
HOW DO WE MAKE OUR PLAYGROUND UNIQUE?

- There are many great playgrounds nearby, we want something different
- Let’s look at what we like about other parks and try and create something even better at ours
- What are the newest developments in playground equipment and ideas
- Let’s also revisit what was popular from our childhood and see what has stood the test of time
6-23 Months
6-12 Year Olds
WHERE DO WE PLAY BEST?
HOW DO WE MAKE OUR PLAYGROUNDS SUSTAINABLE?
THE DECISION: NATURE PLAYGROUND

Nature is the best playground.

"Teaching children about the natural world should be seen as one of the most important events in their lives."
~ Thomas Berry

Natural Healthcare Store: www.NaturalHealthcareStore.com
MAKING A CASE FOR NATURE PLAYGROUNDS

Nature Playgrounds

Health in Nature | British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association

1 How to Use This Information
This information will introduce you to nature playgrounds, their benefits and, in particular, design and safety considerations when building them.

> Promote the concept
Use this information to help promote and build awareness of nature playgrounds in your area.

> Spread the word!
• Share this information with parents, members of the public, fellow staff members, municipal leaders, community partners and others.
• Incorporate this information into proposals, communication materials or correspondence with municipal council and community partners.

2 What is a Nature Playground?
Nature playgrounds have many names: natural playground, discovery play ground, outdoor play space, nature-inspired or playground. They refer to outdoor spaces that are designed to provide safe environments for children to engage in play and exploration. The key element that defines a nature playground is the provision of natural and semi-natural elements such as rocks, logs, trees, plants and water. These elements allow children to interact with the natural world in ways that are not possible in traditional playgrounds.

3 Benefits of Nature Playgrounds
Playing in nature playgrounds provides children with numerous physical, mental and social benefits. Key benefits include increased motor skill development, social interaction and self-confidence. Participation in nature playgrounds encourages emotional development and allows children to think critically, solve problems and make decisions. During their play in this setting, children learn to take and manage risks and overcome barriers.

4 Playing in Nature Playgrounds
• Invites new and unusual experiences.
• Facilitates emotional and social development.
• Promotes the development of new and unusual experiences.
• Provides opportunities for creative play, open space, music, art and nature.
First of its kind in Calgary
City was willing to do this as a pilot project
Maintenance was main concern
Sourcing and approving vendors, CSA guidelines
Concern with wood pieces & tunnels – slivers, starting fires, sleeping & ‘getting up to no good’
Can we secure funding for this type of playground?
FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

HAYSBORO COMMUNITY ASSOC.

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN
HAYSBORO COMMUNITY PARK

TARGET - $300,000
BUILD DATE - SUMMER 2018

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN
HAYSBORO COMMUNITY PARK

FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

HAYSBORO LEGACY BRICKS

The engraved bricks will represent you as community members and your relationship to the park. You can leave a personal message to honour friends and loved ones.

Only 185 bricks are available at $50 each. To reserve yours:

Bricks are 5 x 8 x 15 minimum thickness of 50 characters per line including spaces.

HAYSBORO COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER

Let’s Dance

Saturday, April 27th
6 PM - 9 PM

Join us for an all ages family dance.

February 7th
HAYSBORO COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER

For more information visit haysboro.com

Party for the PARK!
A fundraiser for the Haysboro Community Park

When: Saturday, November 24th, 7pm
Where: Calgary Aquatic Yards and Gym
Ticket Info: $20 each, no admission

One neighbour’s trash is another’s treasure!

Garage sales can make a huge impact on the financial health of our parks and community. Consider hosting a garage sale to raise funds for the Haysboro Community Park.

Haysboro Legacy Bricks

Haysboro Legacy Bricks will be placed within the park, a prominent feature of the Haysboro Community Park.

Brick orders are now open at www.haysboro.org or stop by the Community Hall during office hours.

SILVER DANCE!

Silver Dance Fundraiser for the Haysboro Community Park

Tickets:
- $10 per adult
- $5 per child

Dance at 7:30 PM, $10 cash entry

Tickets include a silver dance and entertainment package

For more information, visit haysboro.com.
WHERE DID WE FIND THE FUNDS?

- Grants - $140k+
- Legacy Brick campaign - $25k
- Community fundraisers - $8k
- Sponsorships - $9k
- In-Kind City Parks, labour & material - $35k
- In-Kind Community Volunteers, labour - $7k
- Haysboro Community Association - $80k
PHASE 1

Completed Fall 2015
HOW DO YOU MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF A PARK?
OUR PROJECT’S SUCCESS – SO FAR!

- **Community Ownership:**
  - 450 community volunteer build hours
  - 166 Legacy Bricks sold at $150 each to create labyrinth

- **Comfortable:**
  - 2 picnic tables remain in original locations
  - Established tree locations maximized for shade
  - Accessible path through park

- **High Play Value, Traditional Pieces**
  - Swings, slides

- **Nature Elements installed:**
  - log slice obstacle course, rope bridge, log nest, labyrinth, 140 native plantings, river bed

- **All-season play value**

- **Increase use and average length of stay appears longer; usage data to be provided by local research team**
PARK EVALUATION AND METRICS
PARK EVALUATION AND METRICS

• **SOPARC**

  Tracey Martin
  Vivo for Healthier Generations

  Dr. Dwayne Sheehan
  Dr. Karim Youssef
  Mount Royal University
OBSERVED USERS BY GENDER

- Female: 29 (Summer 2015), 55 (Summer 2016)
- Male: 35 (Summer 2015), 62 (Summer 2016)
OBSERVED USERS BY ACTIVITY LEVEL

- Sedentary: Summer 2015: 28, Summer 2016: 17
- Walking: Summer 2015: 18, Summer 2016: 53
- Vigorous: Summer 2015: 18, Summer 2016: 47
OBSERVED USERS BY DAY TYPE

Weekday
- Summer 2015: 42
- Summer 2016: 63

Weekend
- Summer 2015: 22
- Summer 2016: 54
PARK EVALUATION AND METRICS

• **Targeted-Play Piece Research**

  Meg Kendall

  Data and Metrics Specialist, Independent Researcher and Haysboro Resident
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What <strong>did we know?</strong></th>
<th>What <strong>did we need</strong> to know?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed space</td>
<td>How are people playing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories</td>
<td>What are people doing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOPARC data</td>
<td>How can Phase 2 add to our success?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT DO YOU SEE?
OUR SPACE
OUR TEAM
OUR TOOLS

Summary: People Statistics

Look around the Park

How many people in total are in the Park?
Your answer

How many people are 0-5 years old?
Your answer

How many people are 6-10 years old?
Your answer

How many people are 11-18 years old?
Your answer

Check which play pieces/areas are being used right now.

- River Bed
- Obstacle Course
- Swings
- Labyrinth
- Large Berm/Slide
- Small Berm/Slide
- Bird's Nest
- Rope Bridge
- Goat Trails
- Side Berm
AN EXAMPLE: THE FIRST ROUND

- August 8th- 22nd 2016; 7 Observers; 16 Observations

- **Day of the Week**
  - Weekday: 81%
  - Weekend: 19%

- **Weather**
  - Great: 56%
  - Fair: 38%
  - Poor: 6%

- **Time of Day**
  - Morning (8-12): 38%
  - Afternoon (12-4): 37%
  - Evening (4-8): 25%
RESEARCH PROJECTS TO DATE

2 years
3 projects
2 practicum students
6 parks
2 hockey rinks
160 observations
631 people
DETAILS: ACTIVITY LEVEL BY PLAY PIECE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of the Park</th>
<th>Sedentary</th>
<th>Walking</th>
<th>Vigorous</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>River Bed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstacle Course</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swings</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labyrinth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Berm/Slide</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Berm/Slide</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Berm</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rope Bridge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic Area 1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic Area 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIVE KEY FINDINGS

Age Gap

Areas for Development

Parents and Babes

Go Girl!

Stay Where We Say
WHAT DO YOU SEE THIS TIME?
Phase 2
FULL BODY CLIMBER
(Macdonald & Lawrence Design)
PLAY HOUSE
(Habitat Design)
CHILD SIZE SEATING
(Habitat Design)
FOOD FOREST
(reGenerate Design)
LABYRINTH & LARGE BERM IMPROVEMENTS (Habitat Design)
BERM PATHWAY
(Interpretive Forest, Habitat Design)
RAISED BEDS & LOOSE PART AREA

(PHASE 3)
ADDITIONAL NATIVE PERENNIAL PLANTINGS (PHASE 3)
MUSICAL & MANIPULATIVE PIECES

(PHASE 3)
COMMUNITY ART INSTALLMENT

(PHASE 3)
– THE FUTURE OF PLAY & RESEARCH IN THE CITY OF CALGARY

Play Charter  Play Value  Risky Play  Adventure Playground

Physical Literacy  Community Hub  Play Strategy  Generation H

#GetMovingYYC
We want to see your healthy selfie!!
SHARING OUR WORK

- Gathering information, best practise & play initiatives - successful projects, play networks, conferences, workshops
- Where do we play? - defining parks, playgrounds and play spaces
- Defining park success – values, principles, guidelines, play value
- Measuring park success – research, strategies, user experience
- Play Strategy & Play Charters – what is in the works, how do we support and share
- Funding for Play Initiatives - grants, funding streams,
- Play Coalition & Play Networks – Who Document our stories, celebrate successes and build off our energy?
SUMMER 2017
FREE HAYSBORO PLAY OPPORTUNITIES

Haysboro Community
Summer Outdoor Playgroup

Thursday mornings from 10:15am - Noon
Starting June 22nd and running until August 31st.

The Haysboro Community Preschool will host this weekly event.
We’ll be rotating through various facilitators, including the First 2000 Days Southwest Coalition, the Calgary Public Library, and our Preschool Teachers.
The focus is on outdoor play and building community.

The first half will be programmed circle time and fun, development oriented games to be played by you and your preschooler together.
The second half will be unstructured free play and snack time.
(Please bring your own picnic blanket & nut-free snacks)

Check the Haysboro Community Facebook page or @HaysboroCA for last minute cancellations due to extreme weather.

Haysboro Community Hall • 1204 89th Ave. SW

HAVE YOU EVER BUILT & DESIGNED YOUR VERY OWN CARDBOARD FORTRESS?

JULY & AUGUST • EVERY OTHER TUESDAY 5PM - 8PM • EVERY WEDNESDAY 11AM - 2PM

Check out the Vivo Play Ambassadors near you, with their extra-ordinary equipment, loose parts and captivating energy! In this free access, all ages, outdoor, play-based pop up, you will be encouraged to show your exhilarating personality and make the impossible possible!

Share your Play Ambassador experience using #PlayToday

For more information check out vivo.ca/pages/playambassador

Haysboro Community Park, 1204 89 Ave SW
HOW CAN THIS STORY BE USED AND NOT JUST TOLD?
EVIDENCE
Stories. Connect. People.
THANK YOU & PLAY ON

Presenters
- Sonja Sahlen – Director Planning & Development Haysboro Community Association, PM Park Project
- Meg Kendall – Data and Metrics Specialist, Independent Researcher and Haysboro Resident
- Tracey Martin – Senior Manager, Innovation, Vivo for Healthier Generations

Contributors
- Dr. Dwayne Sheehan - Associate Professor of Health and Physical Education, Faculty of Health, Community and Education, Mount Royal University
- Dr. Karim Youssef – PhD Environmental Design, Faculty of Health, Community and Education, Mount Royal University
- Matt LeBaron – MRU Research Practicum Student
- Andrew Crickmore – MRU Research Practicum Student

Let’s connect:
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