

PARK REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL



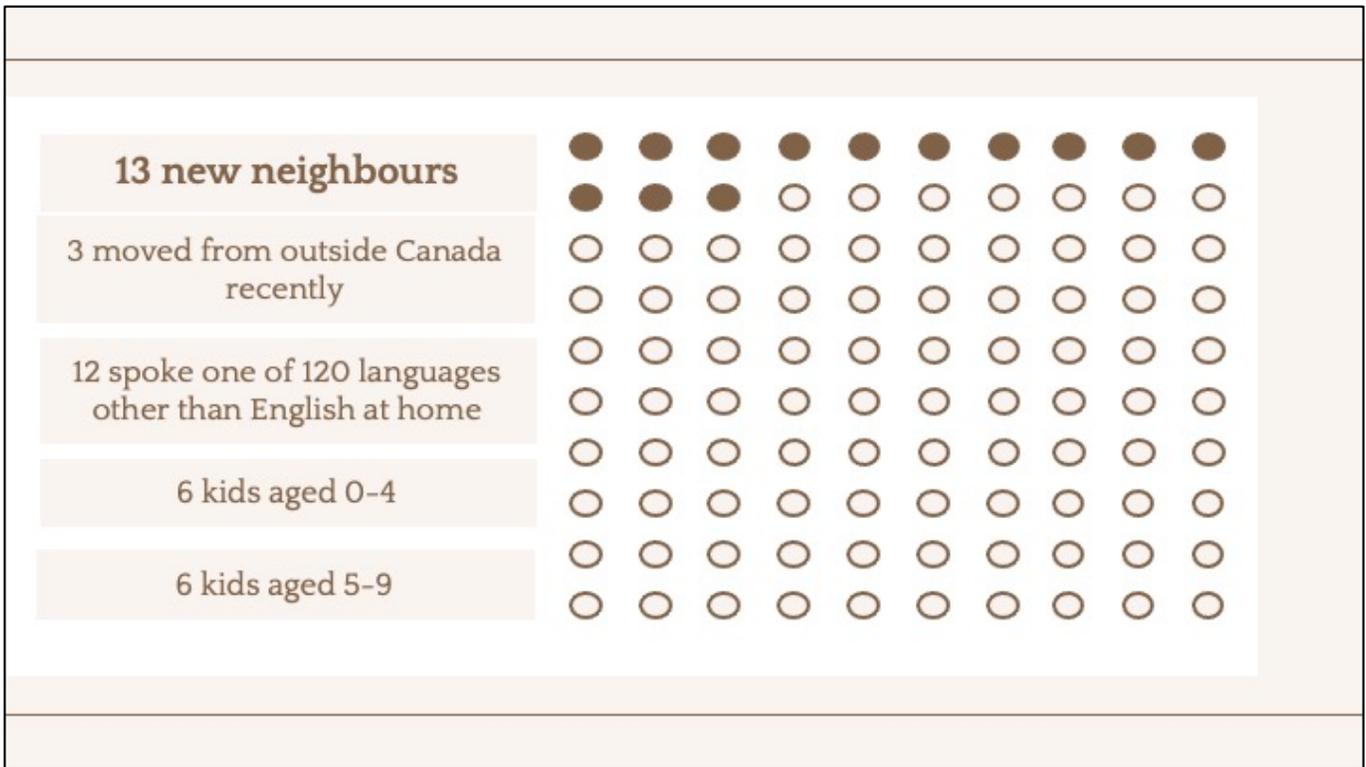
Camila Font, Olivia Baker, Lisa Li, & Anne Tetreault
Virtual presentation to City of Waterloo Parks Staff, Waterloo, ON
December 10 2021

Term project in partial fulfillment of requirements for Course PSYCH470F
Language Development and Social Inequality
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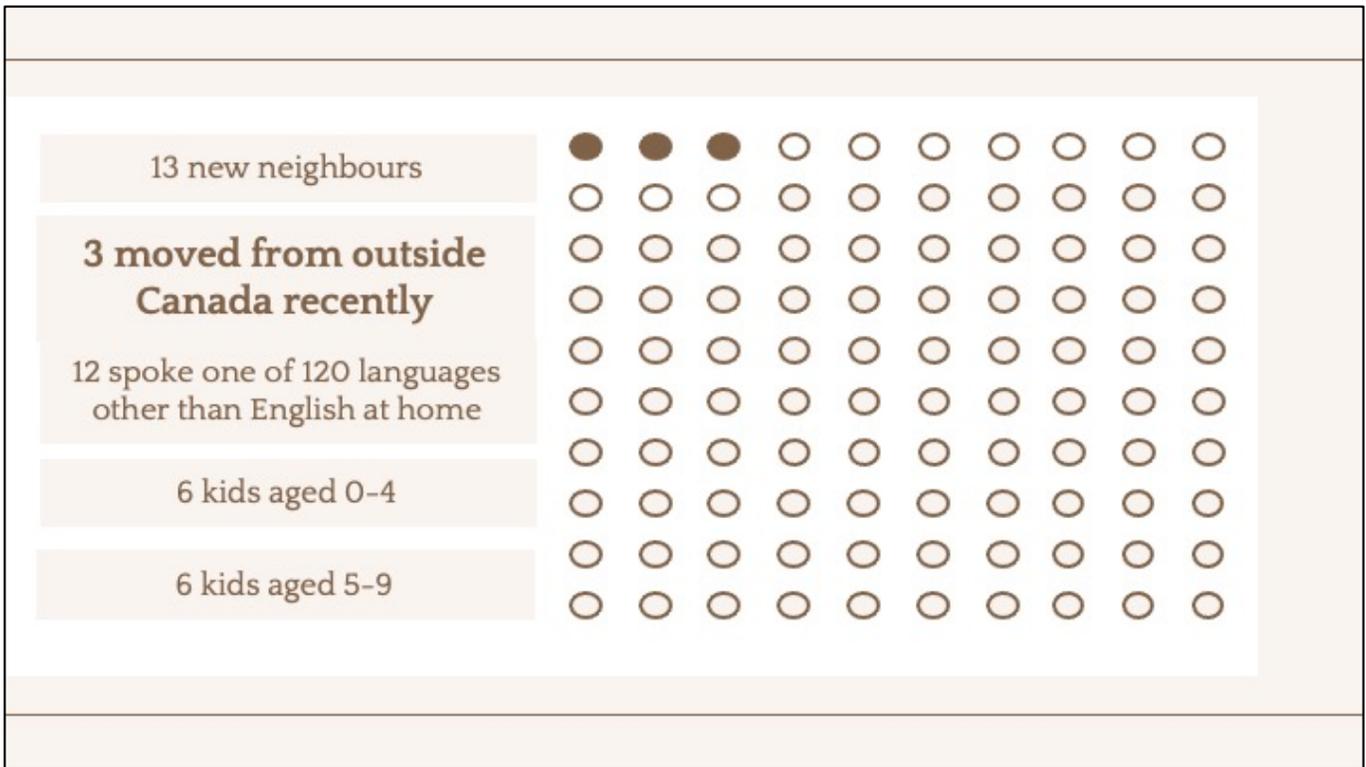
Hello Waterloo parks committee! We are Camila Font, Olivia Baker, Lisa Li, & Anne Tetreault, and we want to thank you for meeting with us today to discuss our redesign proposal. We hope you find our ideas exciting, insightful, and possible.

IF THE WATERLOO COMMUNITY WERE 100 NEIGHBOURS:

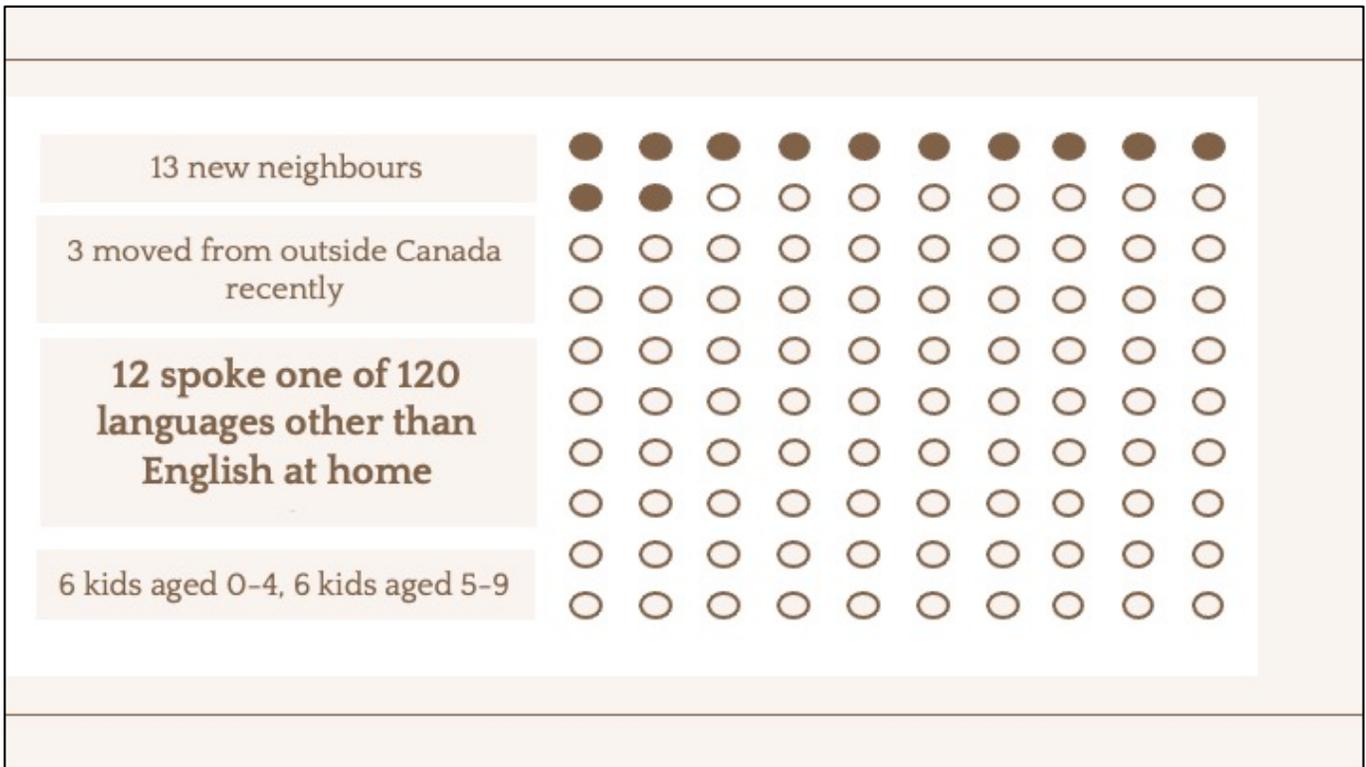
In May 2016, Waterloo's census reported a population of 535,154 (five hundred thirty five thousand, one hundred fifty four), but if our community was made up of 100 neighbours...



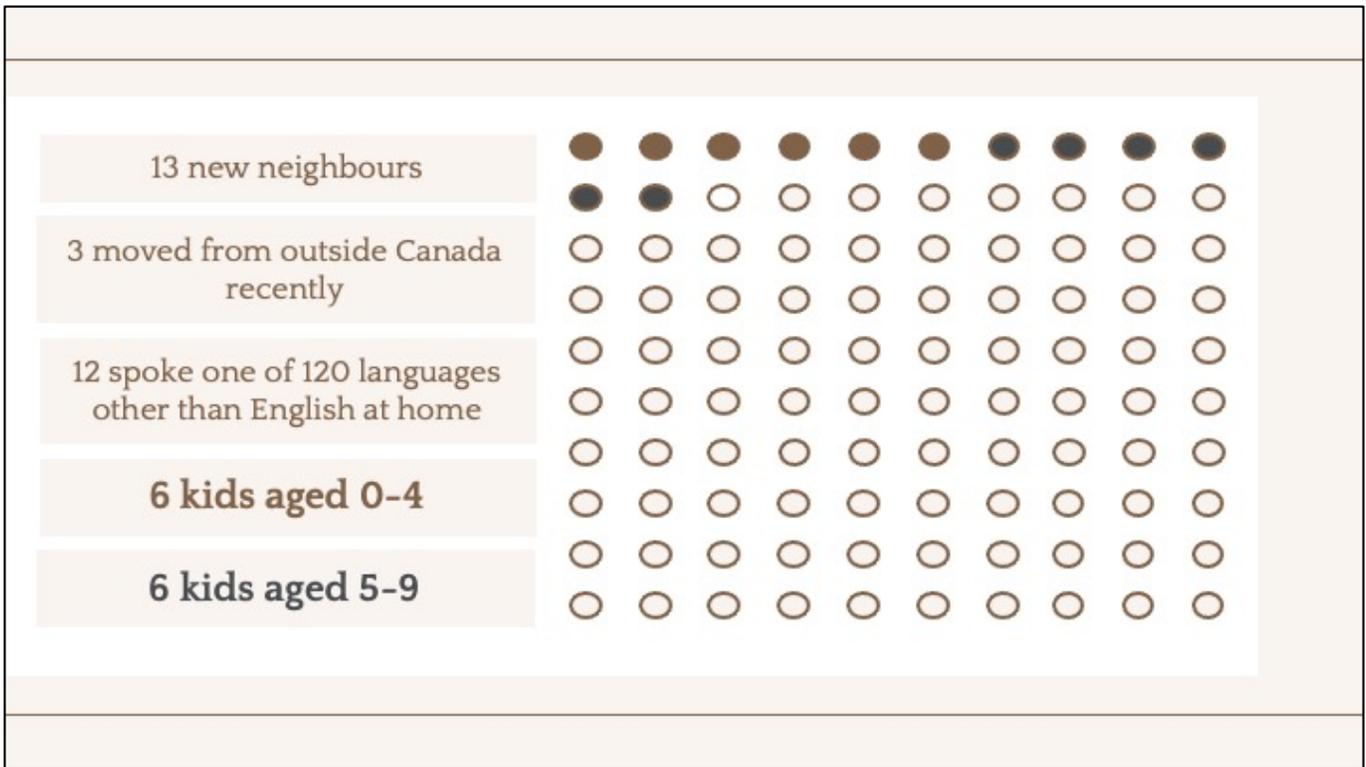
In 2011, 13 neighbours moved in the last year, and 3 of them moved in from outside Canada (A community fit for children). In 2016, at least 12 neighbours informed the census that at home they did not speak English, and instead spoke one of the 120 reported “mother tongues” (census).



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A growing population, in 2016, 6 of our neighbours were aged 0-4, and 6 of our neighbours were aged 5-9 (census). These age ranges are identified as having the highest rates of return to human development and potential compared to older ages (McCain et al., 2007).

HOW CAN WE MOBILIZE COMMUNITY PARKS TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE?

We imagined a park redesign answering how can we mobilize public spaces to promote children's language development and community resilience.

Using a resilience framework (Walsh), we understand how by investing in public spaces built for children the interlocking values of flexible connectedness, collaboration, and language development and communication, we are promising a community with increased capacity to overcome adversity (Walsh).

FOCUS AREAS



Our proposal is anchored in three areas of focus addressing the overarching goal of promoting intersectional language development through play. Our areas of focus were envisioned as follows:

1. Community building binds this proposal. As a “public” space in settled land, Waterloo Park is a resource hub that should cater to, nurture, and build its community. We envision the park as a center for building community knowledge, gathering, relating to other neighbours, and recognizing these spaces as free and available to use.
2. Interactive & Narrative play: We recognize the roles of play, engagement, and narrativization in language development, and propose creating immersive learning experiences and interactive spaces to engage with community narratives, fostering imagination, exploration and self-confidence.
3. Accessibility & Inclusion: Through our design, we sought to represent different cognitive and physical abilities, reflect the different languages spoken in the region, and center Indigenous perspectives.

We included symbols representing each of our focus areas, so watch out for

them during our presentation!



Our proposal consists of the redevelopment of 3 different areas within Waterloo Park: Eby Farm, the forest area, and the Victorian Gardens.

OVERVIEW OF OUR PROPOSAL



EBY FARM

1-3 year olds

**Nurturing connection
and confidence**



FOREST

3-4 year olds

**Encouraging imaginative
play through folklore**



VICTORIAN GARDENS

3-6 year olds

**Building community
knowledge**

We designed each of these areas around specific milestones to enhance the learning and development of children ages 1-6—all in accordance with our 3 focus areas.

01 EBY FARMHOUSE

Expanding their world through books



As you already know, this location is composed of two main areas: the mulch area where the statue of the 3 little pigs can currently be found, and the grass circle area which is located right in front of it. We chose to make use of these sections, by creating a calm reading area in one, and an active play area in the other.

We propose building the play area in the mulch section. The statues of the 3 pigs would, therefore, be moved to the grass area in order to make room for 2 climbing structures and 2 sets of talking tubes. The reading area would then be located in the grass circle, and would contain the 3 little pigs statue, along with other comfortable seating, and a Little Free Library. Finally, interwoven throughout both areas would be a sensory path, guiding children throughout the two proposed areas, and even connecting to the nearby playground.



EBY FARM



READING AREA &

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

01 Dual-Purpose Seating

02 Increase reading

03 Multiculturalism



Little Free Libraries are a quiet and accessible way to share the pleasure of reading with the rest of your community. Working under the principle of “leave one or take one”. Caregivers would easily be able to pass through the park, grab a book, or sit down in the reading area to read to children.

Reading Area & it’s dual-purpose seating: Inspired by the seating available at the Chicago O’Hare Airport, we propose adding these modular eye-catching colourful benches to the reading area. Kids could either sit on them with their caregiver, or climb/crawl around them. As mentioned before, the pigs statue would be moved to this area and will be placed among these benches, each a little saddle for kids to sit on.

Benefit of reading: Why even have a little library? By reading with caregivers children can increase their vocabulary and learn conversational skills (Rowe, 2012; Gomez et al., 2021), while also sharing a communal familial experience.

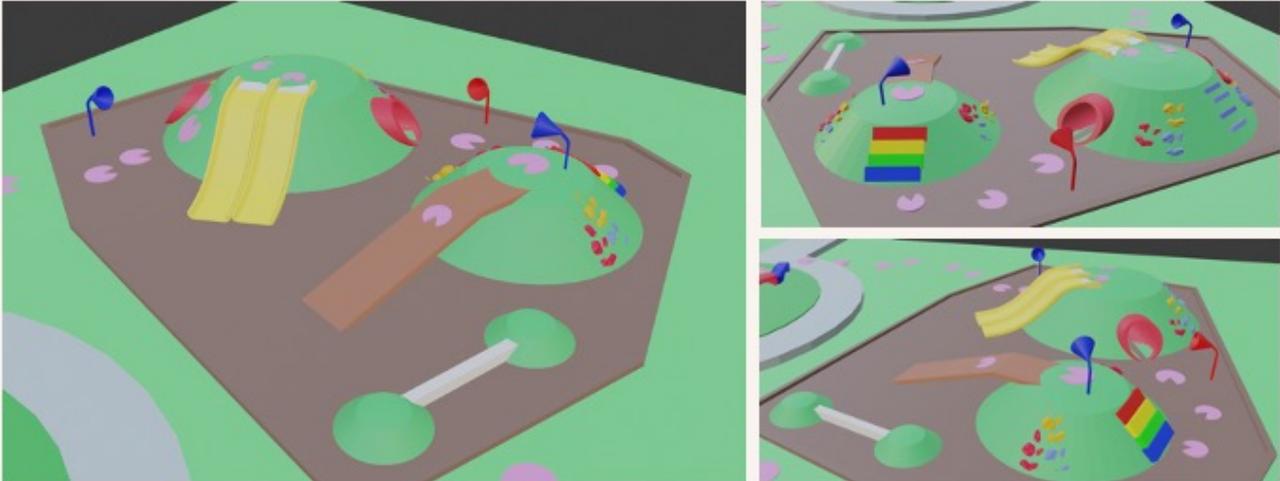
Increase reading: This Library would also provide free and easy access to books for families that might struggle to access them.

QR Codes: We're aware that many families that come to visit Eby Farm don't have English as their first language (Region of Waterloo, 2016). Which is why we propose adding a QR code on the library which will link users to an online public domain book catalogue called WorldStories that provides online free multilingual children's' books. This will ensure that everyone visiting the park has access to books they can read and connect with.

Photo credit: (From Left up, to Right)

1. Staub, K. (2020). Uma Szczesny checking out a Little Free Library on Walnut Street [photograph]. InkLink. <https://manchesterinklink.com/little-free-libraries-where-you-dont-need-a-card-and-theres-never-a-fine/>
2. Font, C. (2021). *Modular seating* [photograph]. Chicago o'hare Airport.
3. Baker, O., & Tetreault, A. (2021). *Pig statue* [photograph]. Eby Farm.

PLAY AREAS & ARCHIPELAGO MOUNTAINS



Next, we have our proposed play area containing climbing structures, which we have lovingly dubbed ‘the archipelago mountain range’

The structures, covered in synthetic grass, would be surrounded in climbing grips. As seen in the 3D model here, one would have a tunnel going through it along with a slide, while the other would have a “lookout” which would be made accessible with a wheelchair accessible ramp and/or via chunky steps.

This open-ended play space would help children develop their stability, strength, and gross motor skills (Leonard et al., 2015).

PLAY AREA & TALKING TUBES



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U
B
E
S



Next, we propose adding 2 colour-coded sets of talking tubes. The blue talk tubes would be positioned at opposite ends of the play area (one of them being at the top of the “lookout” of one of the structures). The red talk tubes would connect both areas as seen in the picture.

These tubes facilitate and encourage speech amongst children and between children and caregivers. Through this type of play, children would learn different conversational skills, such as how to take turns when talking to someone.

Photo credit:

LittleTikes. (2021). Talk tube [photograph]. Little Tikes.
<https://littletikescommercial.com/product/talk-tube/?lang=can>

SENSORY PATH



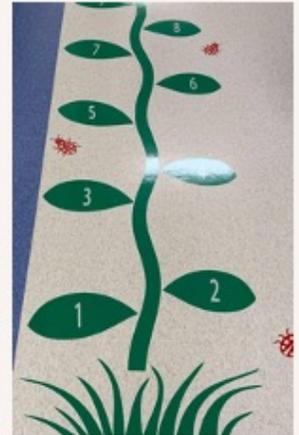
Interactive



Builds Stability



Guides through area



And finally, the last element we would like to propose for the Eby Park location is a sensory path. It would provide a fun interactive way to guide children throughout the activities while helping them build their motor skills.

Photo credit:

1. Thesensorypath. (2020). Original Sensory Path looks! [photograph]. Instagram.
https://www.instagram.com/thesensorypath/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=3e77adce-02dc-4ec8-b672-a7f7c80294f0
2. Thesensorypath. (2021). Looks like Captain Samuel Brown Elementary School is loving their Sensory Path! [photograph]. Instagram.
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CMfKGgdhpAK/>

02 FOREST AREA

An immersive world of folklore



This is an overview of the forest area. Since there is so much expansive natural space, we wanted to redesign this place with imagination and interactive play in mind. It would contain: a stage, objects hidden throughout the forest, a hide 'N seek game, and finally a path that coils throughout the forest making all activities accessible.

There is a steep hill from the Eby Farm area leading up to the main concrete path that could be difficult for young children and those with accessibility issues to climb. We wanted to add a ramp and pathway to bridge these two areas and invite the community to explore.



The main focus of the forest area is the story cubes and stage with drums. To continue with our focus of community and inclusion, we want to include folklore elements proposed by the community members that are served by this park,, the Haudenosaunee. Using the theme of folklore, our story mosaic is imagined as a 2x8 grid of rotating cubes, with different story elements: characters, settings, tools, and values. On three of its sides, each cube will feature a graphic, with the fourth side remaining blank. For example, characters could include a hare,a fairy, and a dragon. Settings could be an enchanted forest, a volcano leading to the center of the earth, and a castle in the clouds.

Children are free to interpret these symbols in whichever way they deem and act out narratives from the story cubes or their own imaginations. The stage would be particularly important in providing a space for families to participate in other people's story telling and their own.

We decided to include musical instruments in this area because music and storytelling have historically been linked in numerous cultures.

Image Credits (left to right)

1. Lisa Li, 2021
2. Camila Font, 2021

FOLKLORE HIDE N' SEEK



Find
me!



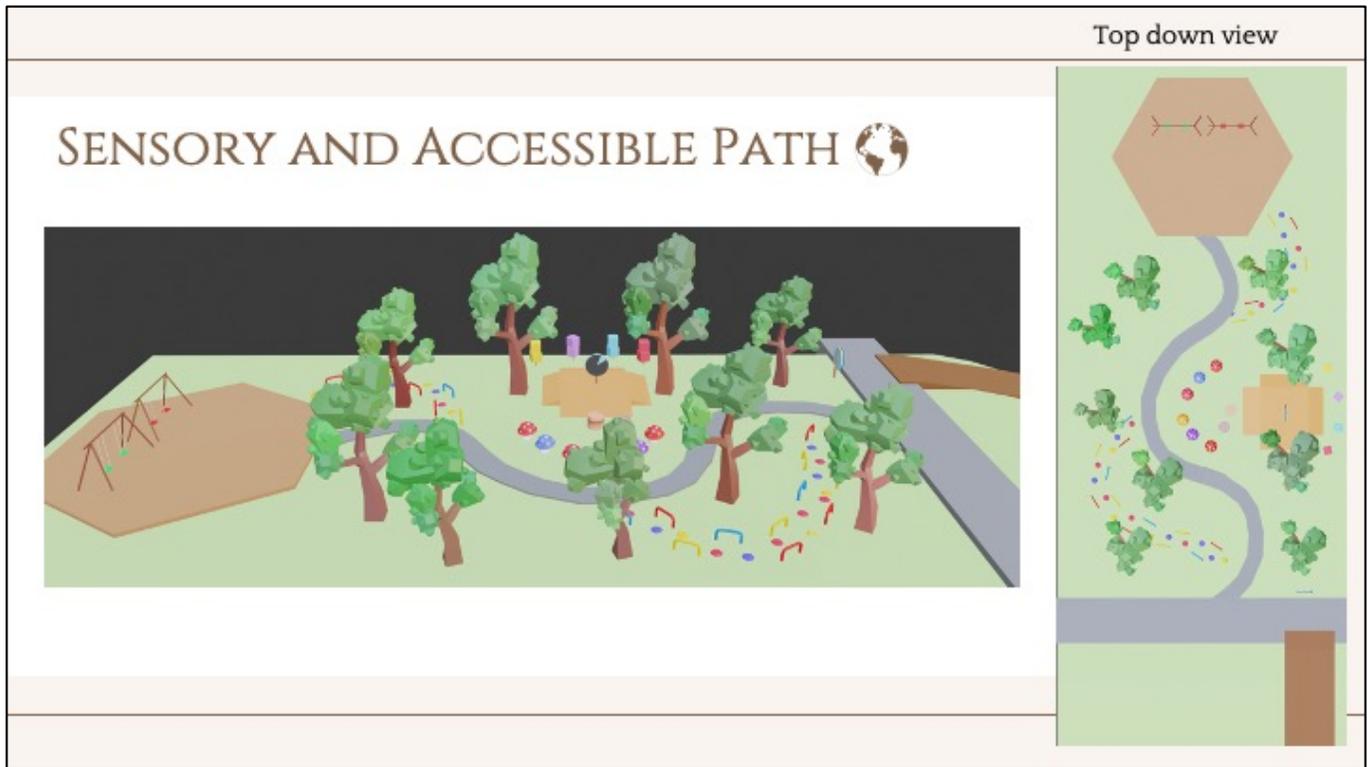
For our next idea we wanted to incorporate community building through folklore and combine it with interactive play. The rules are simple: children will spin a wheel located at the bottom of the hill the instructions: "Find me!" and search for the item chosen by said wheel. And by items, I mean the folklore characters and objects dispersed in the forest.

As children and their caregivers explore the park, they will encounter different objects and statues of creatures that were taken from popular diverse folktales. For example, they may encounter a little owl perched on a branch looking down at a rabbit (from the Haudenosaunee legend *The story of how the Owl got big eyes*), or a kobold (a goblin-like creature originating from Germanic folklore). In terms of objects, they might see little houses made out of rocks, mushroom circles, or a little hut.

Finally, many of the creatures and objects found within the forest will be located on the story mosaic. Imagine a child exploring the forest after playing with the story mosaic and finding the main character of their story.

Photo credits (from left to right)

1. Noah's park & Playground. (2017). Find 'N Seek Free Standing Panel [photograph]. Noah's Park & Playground. <https://noahsplay.com/playground-equipment/find-n-seek-free-standing-panel/>
2. Irongate. (n.d.). Owl sitting in a tree statue [photograph]. Irongate. <http://www.irongatege.ca/product/owl-sitting-tree-statue/>
3. Taarika, J. (2020). The Pheiccham [illustration]. Taarika John. <https://taarikajohn.com/mythical-creatures.html>
4. Smith, S. (2013). Rock Garden Stone Cottage [photograph]. StoneArtBlog. <https://stoneartblog.blogspot.com/2013/03/miniature-stoneworks-giants-amongst.html>



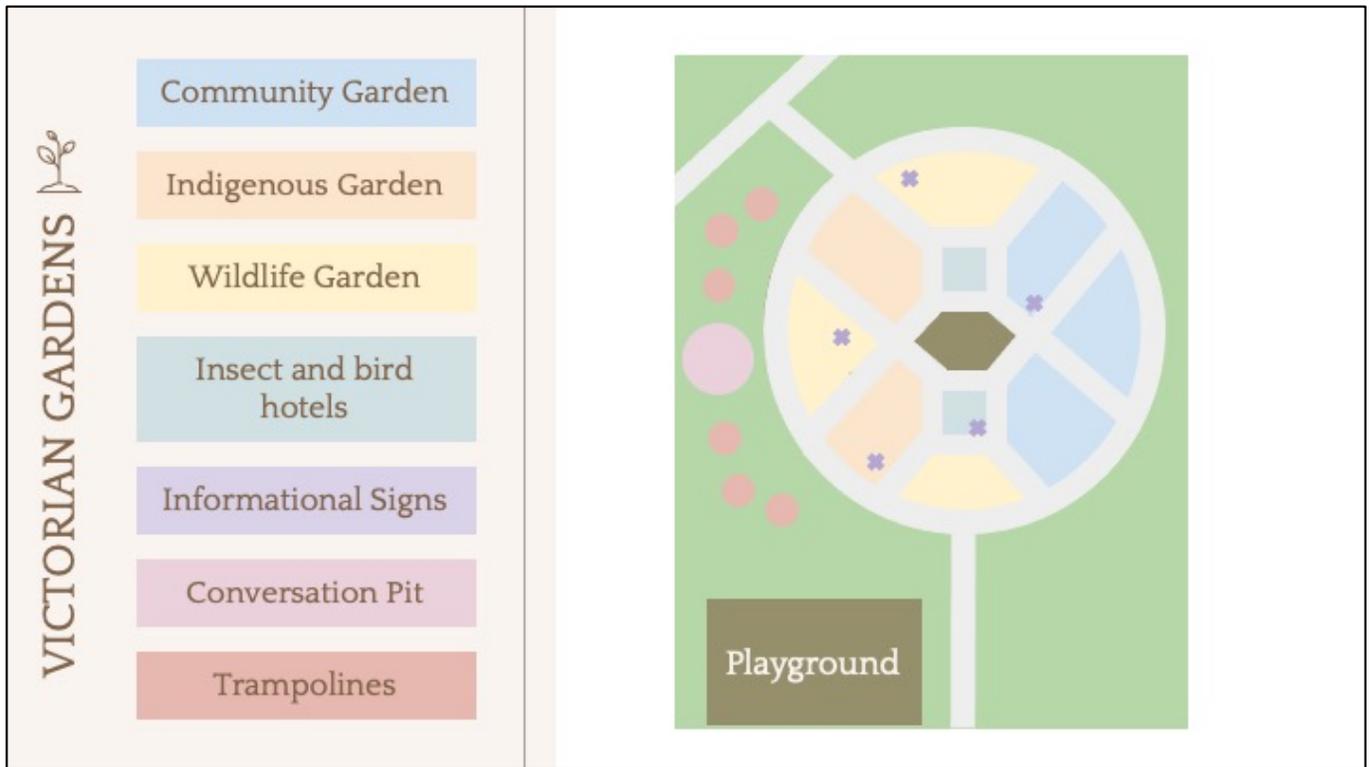
The forest area has a lot of trees planted on both sides of the ground that acts as a natural pathway to the swings. We want to add a concrete zig zag path that leads directly to the swings for accessibility reasons.

Calling back to our "Find 'N Seek", our sensory path encourage children to explore in between the trees to find the folklore items would be hidden. For children with differing walking abilities, we also included hand rails along this path so everyone in the community can utilize this space.

03 VICTORIAN GARDENS



A garden where children can grow



The Victorian Gardens area would include: A community garden, a wildlife garden that attracts different insects and animals, an Indigenous-led teaching garden, some insect and bird hotels, a few informational signs identifying wildlife, a conversation pit, and finally some wheelchair accessible trampolines.

VICTORIAN GARDENS |



COMMUNITY GARDEN



Located on the left side of the Victorian Gardens, the community garden would contain a variety of easy to grow seasonal fruits, vegetables, and herbs chosen and planted by the community. This would create a free and open learning space for children that encourages them to ask questions about their environment. It would also create a networking opportunity for community members and encourage them to eat more fruits and vegetables.

WISAHKOTEWINOWAK COLLABORATION

Wisahkotewinowak (wisahk-tew-win-o-wak) is an urban Indigenous garden collective building Land-based relationships across the Grand River Territory.



Wisahkotewinowak (wisahk-tew-win-o-wak) is an urban Indigenous organization that builds Land-based relationships across the Grand River Territory.

They cultivate and care for four different garden locations across Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo, and Cambridge, including a produce garden at the University of Waterloo. One of their projects, pictured above, is a teaching garden at the Blair Outdoor and Environmental Education Centre. The garden provides experiential learning opportunities for children, relationship building between children and the Land, and provides food assistance to community members who attend the local schools.

We think that consulting with Wisahkotewinowak could greatly enrich the experience at the Victorian Gardens by building relationships with the Indigenous community, helping children connect to the Land, and providing an accessible way for all children to relate to their local environment.

More information about Wisahkotewinowak can be found at <https://www.wisahk.ca/>.

Photo credit:

Wisahkotewinowak (n.d.). Teaching Garden [photograph].
<https://www.wisahk.ca/teaching-garden>



In addition to the community garden and Indigenous-led garden, we wish to attract local fauna with a wildlife garden. We wish to incorporate these attractions to connect the different spaces in the Victorian Gardens and add vibrance to them. This concept includes bird hotels, insect hotels, and a critter village.

Images:

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/02/17/what-makes-these-birds-splash-around-in-oakland-birdbath/>

INSECT AND BIRD HOTELS



To attract pollinators and seed dispersers to the garden, we want to give birds and insects a 5-star experience at Waterloo Park by creating bird and insect “hotels.” The bird hotels could consist of a creative arrangement of birdhouses, feeders, and fountains. The insect hotels use mixed materials (such as wood, cardboard, bricks, and twigs) to create burrows, tunnels, and other habitats. The installation and maintenance of the hotels can become a community activity and opportunity for gathering. Observing these creatures can encourage children’s curiosity to learn and communicate about them.

Images:

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/beneficial/how-to-make-a-bug-hotel.htm>

CRITTER VILLAGE



We also want to implement a “critter village” with whimsical attractions for small critters like squirrels, chipmunks, groundhogs, and toads, incorporating a fantasy element to their already established presence in the park. The critter village would consist of small structures, like the above squirrel diner, tree crossing, and burrow home.

CONVERSATION PIT



The importance of community and storytelling has been a recurring theme in this presentation, as these focuses help facilitate children's learning. Much like the stage from our forest redesign, the conversational pit is meant to create interaction between families. The pit will be sunken into the ground, with a circular design that is reminiscent of campfires. It would act as a place for people to rest, eat, and interact. The park could hold gatherings here for events, families could sit here to admire the gardens, and schools may even use the space for field trips.

Images:

<https://www.houzz.com/photos/fireplaces-and-fire-pits-half-circle-seat-wall-and-fire-pit-craftsman-patio-oklahoma-city-phvw-vp~20152445>

<https://www.shelterness.com/outdoor-conversation-pit-ideas/pictures/54328/>

TRAMPOLINES



Trampolines are not only fun, but can also build coordination, muscle, motor skills, balance, and social skills (Edward, 2020). As shown in the slide, parks in China utilize these small in-ground trampolines, which are safe and engaging for everyone. With safety as a concern, having in-ground trampolines that are stiffer than typical trampolines to restrict bounce height would be ideal. They attract kids of all ages and provide an active element in Victorian Gardens. We want to give everyone a reason to visit this area, from those who love nature to those who need something a little more engaging.

To fit in with our nature theme, the trampolines could be arranged in a flower pattern with bright colors.

Images: <https://zhejianghuadong.en.made-in-china.com/product/cXgJELQsWkz/China-Home-Outdoor-Fitness-Breathable-Mini-Trampoline-for-Children-Park-Ground-Trampolines.html>

https://www.alibaba.com/product-detail/outdoor-playground-kindergarten-trampolines_60832537384.html

THANKS!

Do you have any questions?
doneill@uwaterloo.ca

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