



Image by Achiraya Bangching

**A book of student work
responding to community ideas
for children and youth in Braddock**



Landscape
architecture
students in
the Fall 2024
Community
Design Studio
at Penn State
University

Foreward

This book presents the final projects of the Fall 2024 Community Design Studio (LARCH315/817) in the Department of Landscape Architecture at Penn State. Emerging from requests from community members, the students focused on **designing public spaces to support the children and youth of Braddock, PA.**

Throughout the semester, students listened to perspectives from over 65 youth and people who work with the youth of Braddock. Students heard about the challenges that Braddock children and youth face and their hopes and ideas for the future, and also learned about the *many* passionate people and organizations in Braddock currently supporting youth. In addition, students watched documentaries and films to understand the multiple stories and histories of Braddock, and conducted a geographical and demographic analysis to develop a better understanding of Braddock as a place and people with complex demographic transformations, and systemic economic, health and environmental constraints impacting Braddock’s children and youth.

Instructors

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The designs you will find in this book are *catalyst projects*, grounded in Braddock’s unique desires, needs, and practicalities, with potential to stimulate transformative positive change in the long term. The 47 landscape architecture students chose one of three publicly owned sites along Braddock Avenue to develop a project that serves one or more age groups of children and youth, from babies to young adults (0-20 years old), while welcoming caregivers and the public and potential community stewards. **The final designs were presented in a public gallery exhibition “Kid Civics” at the Nyia Page Community Center in Braddock in December 2024.** Projects range from creative playscapes, to learning gardens, to sports, to young adult hang out spots and more.

We are grateful for the opportunity to work with the Braddock community and the invaluable insights shared with our students. While these ideas are entirely conceptual with no concrete plans for implementation, because they are ***designed by young adults working with Braddock’s youth***, we hope that the collection of design proposals in this book are exciting and spark ideas within those with the power to implement that can contribute to the bright future of Braddock’s children and youth.

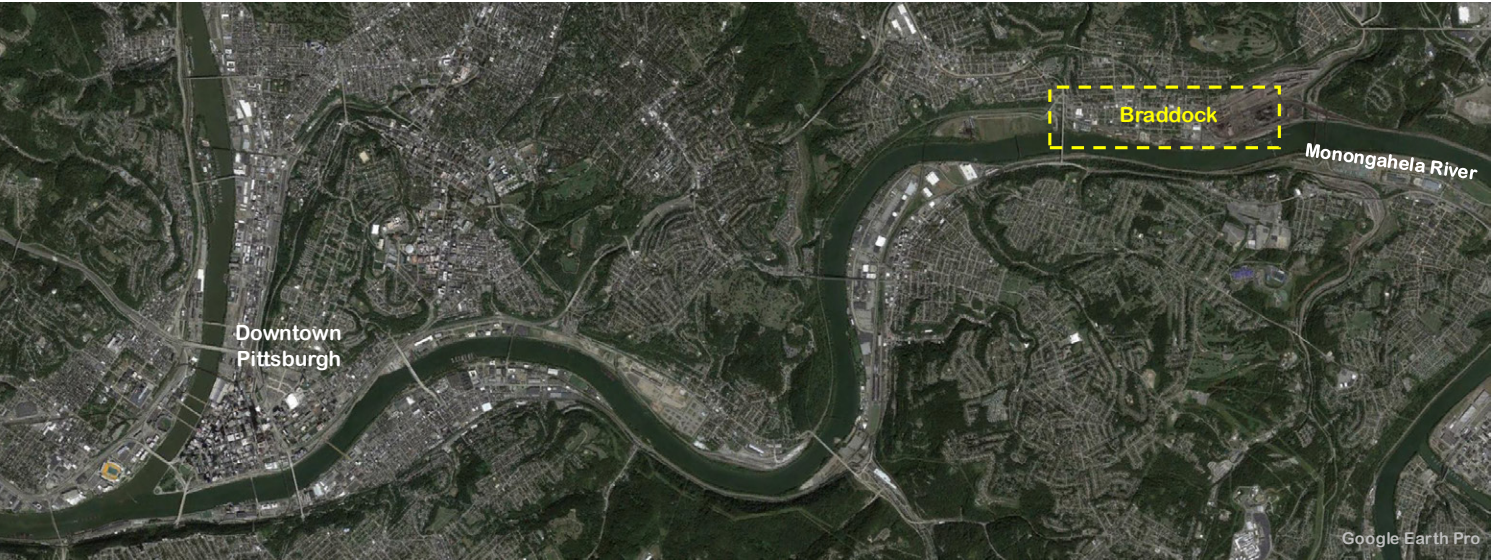


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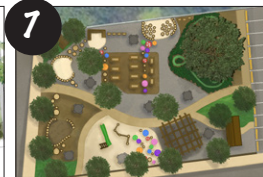
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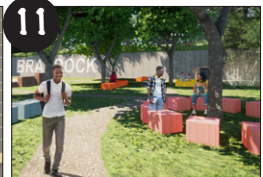
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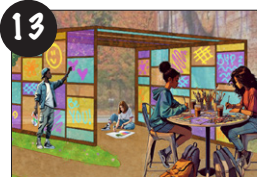
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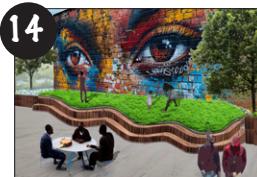
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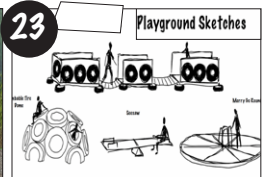
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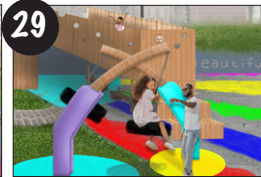
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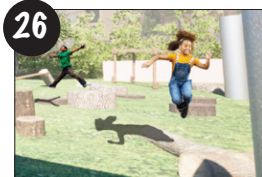
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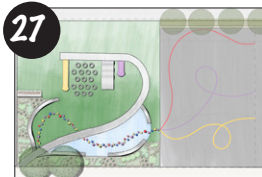
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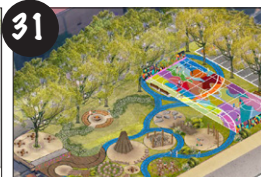
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Input from 65+ youth and those who work with youth



Penn State students met with teens at Woodland Hills High School and asked them about being a kid in Braddock

What makes you happy or relaxed?



What could make life better for Braddock children?



What is it like growing up in Braddock?



Youth in the Braddock Youth Project provided feedback on Penn State students' preliminary design ideas



PSU students also met with local businessowners, council members and the Borough Manager while visiting the neighborhood and sites.



Penn State students talked with people from several organizations who work with children and youth in Braddock

Acknowledgments

Students

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
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SITE 1



West Entrance to Braddock



1 Roots to Rise



Braddock is a town with great potential for growth, especially for its young residents. While many Woodland Hills High School students aspire to explore beyond their town, this ambition reflects qualities that, if nurtured, could strengthen Braddock's sense of identity and ownership. The town's 32.7% of vacant land (Pegah Mombeini) offers an opportunity for transformation through

creative, youth-focused projects. Revitalizing these spaces could foster pride and inspire residents to stay and contribute to a brighter future. Safe, engaging spaces for connection and expression would give Braddock's youth a sense of ownership and belonging. Initiatives like the Braddock Youth Project already empower young people and provide a foundation for broader revitalization



efforts. Reclaiming vacant lots to address youth disengagement would not only improve Braddock's appearance but also strengthen its community identity, encouraging youth retention, attracting new residents, and fostering long-term investment. Braddock's young people deserve spaces that deepen their connection to home. By encouraging self-reflection and embracing all aspects of their

experiences, such spaces can inspire pride, self-respect, and a motivation to improve their town rather than leave it. Time spent engaging in diverse activities will allow youth to make these places their own, relieving the stagnation many feel and building a stronger community.

conceptual design by Karolina Nowak

A COLORFUL SPACE



"It gets boring, we have to go to other places... everything looks the same around the steel mill" - Ella, WHHS senior

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A PLACE FOR BRADDOCK



Greater Valley Community Services (GVCS) serves the Braddock community through various programs for all age groups, with a strong focus on youth education and enrichment. Partnering with GVCS would allow them to expand their programming into an outdoor setting, enhancing their ability to offer recreation, creative arts, and events. Its proximity to the GVCS headquarters makes it ideal for hosting programs like Camp WOW and other community-focused events.

Collaborating with GVCS would ensure that the site is actively used, fostering engagement, identity, and connection among community members of all ages. The Braddock Youth Project (BYP) is dedicated to empowering young residents and improving the town through creative, community-driven initiatives. The BYP currently focuses its efforts around Library Street, but is eager to expand projects throughout all of Braddock, particularly near residential spaces. Members Kayla and

Monet expressed interest in using Site 1, located at the town’s entrance, as a way to involve more community members and create engaging spaces for all residents. Site 1’s large, flexible layout is ideal for hosting BYP events and programs, including the creation of a prominent ground mural that is a central feature of the design. Partnering with BYP would bring their creativity and artistic expertise to the project, ensuring the mural’s design and implementation reflect the

community’s identity. Additionally, their involvement would activate the space, fostering engagement and further amplifying BYP’s positive influence on Braddock.

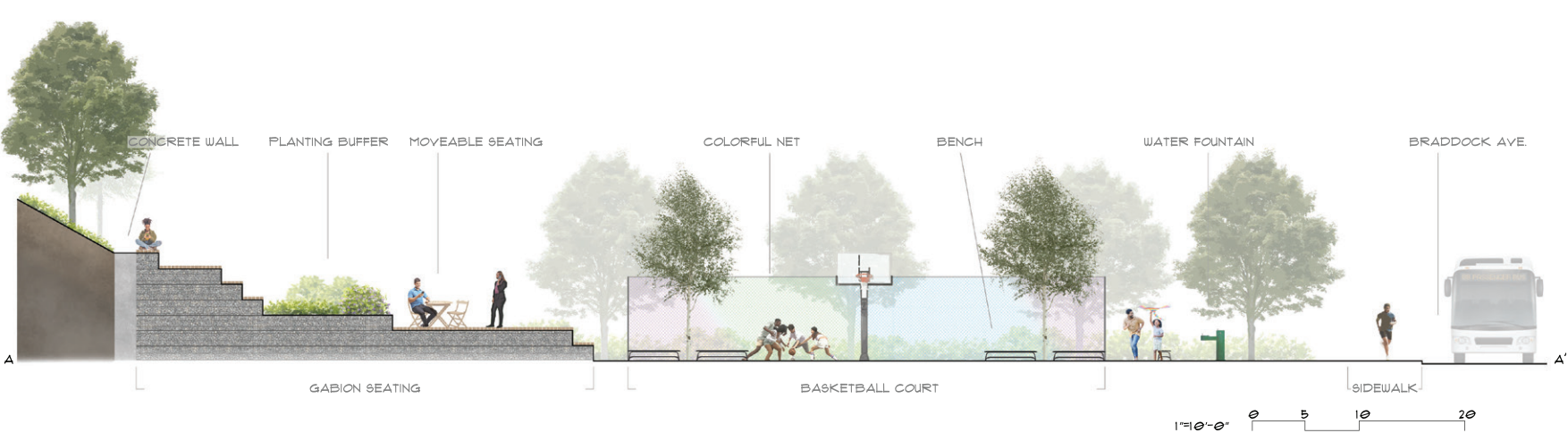


Art space with moveable cafe-style chalkboard tables, allowing residents of all ages to express themselves creatively and have an enjoyable place to sit.



Gabion stairs are affordable, eye-catching, and solve the issue of elevation change, giving Braddock residents a place to lounge and spend more time in the site.

ADDRESSING TOPOGRAPHY



5 YEAR TIMELINE... WHERE DO WE START?

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Community youth groups (BYP, GVCS, WHHS, etc.)workshop to design ground mural. Community clean-up to foster ownership of caretaking. Mural, art space, and basketball court are implemented with help from the entire community.	Events are hosted in the space on a rotational basis, as often as needed. Gabion stairs are built. Vegetation is planted. GVCS and the BYP are welcome to host their programs in the space, encouraging youth engagement.	Community vendor days are hosted in the art space. Benches and moveable tables are installed. Space above concrete wall is cleared out of overgrown vegetation and paths are installed to create a clearer connection to the site.	Ground mural is extended into the street and down Braddock Avenue, connecting important social spaces. This is suggested to be a collaboration between PennDOT and the Braddock youth community.	Small parks for community-use are replicated in vacant lots along Braddock Avenue and the street mural. Recommendations for local or new businesses being opened close to the site and new spaces to encourage time spent in the space.



2 Encapsulating the Heart and Soul of Braddock



“Beautifying is key, bland landscapes are depressing” -Gisele Fetterman



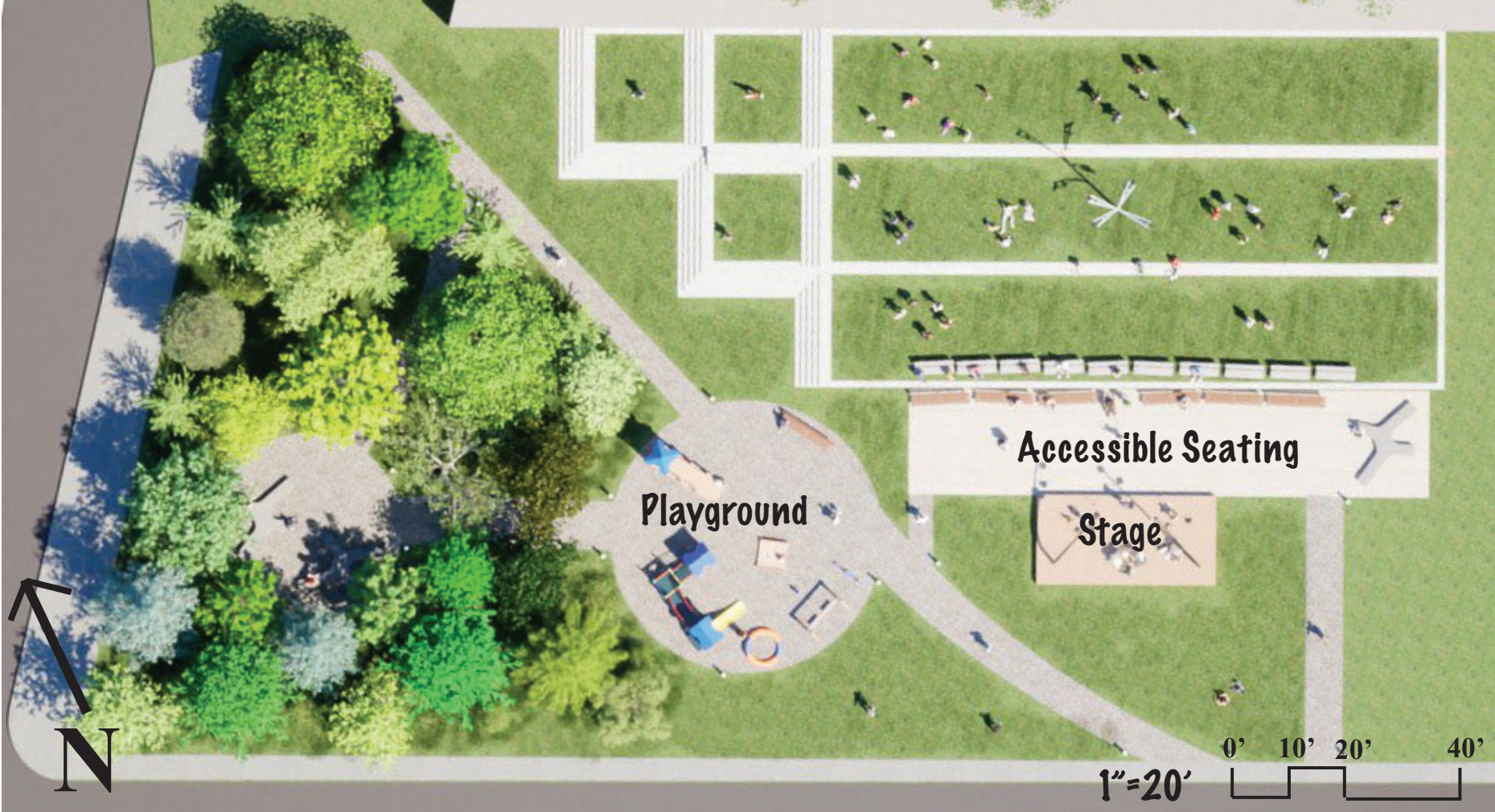
The Vision

The heart and soul of Braddock are the people and the community they create. Thus, a new park design should be by the people, for the people. This is the intention behind this design. There are multiple nodes that allow the community to decide what they want to place within these nodes. There are different spaces for different types of groups to gather. The terraces can act as a large gathering space, with a stage placed at the front for events that require it. There is a playground that allows for engaging play and exploration for children. What play features go here is entirely up to them. Lastly, there is a hidden gathering space for people who want to gather in an intimate, small setting, or just sit alone and ponder amongst the trees. With plenty of open space and intentionally minimally designed nodes, allowing for community design and installation, this space is truly for the people of Braddock, the heart and soul.

Suggestions from Braddock Youth I incorporated

1. Open space for gatherings (100-300 people)
2. Color and art are very important to the community of Braddock
3. Entertainment for all ages
4. People love to go to Aunt Cheryl’s and get food, but there is nowhere to eat outside (in most if not all of Braddock)
5. Multifunctional spaces for different group sizes and attitudes
6. Flat, useful spaces
7. Open spaces for sports
8. Fun, colorful lighting and art
9. Really liked the idea of painted terraces with lighting

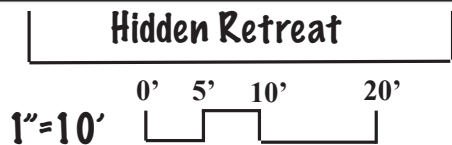
conceptual design by Woody Blaine



“a big, comfortable gathering space would be good”
-Rasaun Brown (BYP)

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“Cleaner, more beautiful spaces are safer from gun violence” -Gisele Fetterman



Design Partner:

The most effective partner for this project would be the Braddock Youth Project. They had many different ideas and suggestions on how to make these designs more feasible and appealing to the community. Additionally, they discussed how this work might be done by their groups. This was very valuable insight, and all the steps while designing have been a direct inspiration from the things discussed with them. For this reason, it makes sense to continue working with them, and include them in the design process to figure out how we might get these things installed and how to design them to appeal most to the people of Braddock. The Braddock Youth Project is composed of the most hopeful, driven, and future-oriented youth of Braddock. For this reason, they would be the best possible partner for this project. Additionally, their separate teams could all play crucial roles in this site's development.



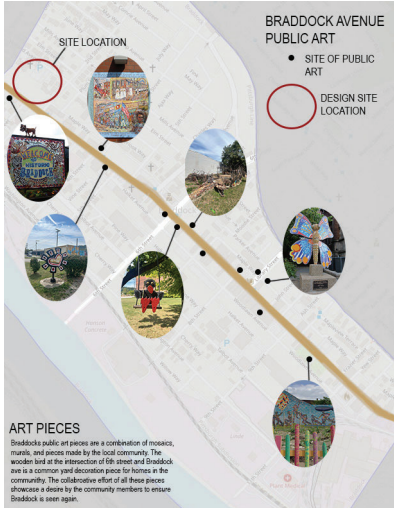
Analysis Graphics:



Timeline:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin planting projects with Braddock Youth Project gardening team and allow them to choose the plants they want and the areas they want to populate with plants• Begin community discussions about built structures and what the youth would like to see in the space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structural installations such as play structures for children, benches, terraces, etc. with feedback from the community throughout the entire process• Discuss artful designs and who will do art on installations• Begin to install artistic/colorful lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin hardscaping and artful installations• Host community events for painting and doing art related to artful installations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community outreach events to discuss current progress and changes that need made moving forward (Check-in)• Discuss/plan details of space including extra colorful lighting, more needed structures, infrastructural problems, maintenance etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete designed elements with community help and engagement• Collect feedback on process and further needed changes/updates• Address future concerns regarding maintenance/upkeep

3 Splashed Color Park



Vision Statement
Braddock is a community working with their youth to display expression and experience through public art. Creating interactive spaces for the next generation provides Braddock with increased visibility and spaces for children to relax and engage with one another in their community.

Understanding the Braddock Community
Braddock like many other steel towns across the United States was once a thriving economic center. A place where the people of greater Pittsburgh gathered to shop, dine, and be in the hustle and bustle. But as steel mills closed community members left and so did the shops in Braddock. Braddock is a community looking to reclaim their visibility, turning to artwork to represent themselves to the greater Pittsburgh community. Driving into Braddock off the Rakin bridge James Simmons Welcome to Braddock sign is the first thing seen. This theme of colorful meaningful artwork representing stories continues down Braddock avenue.

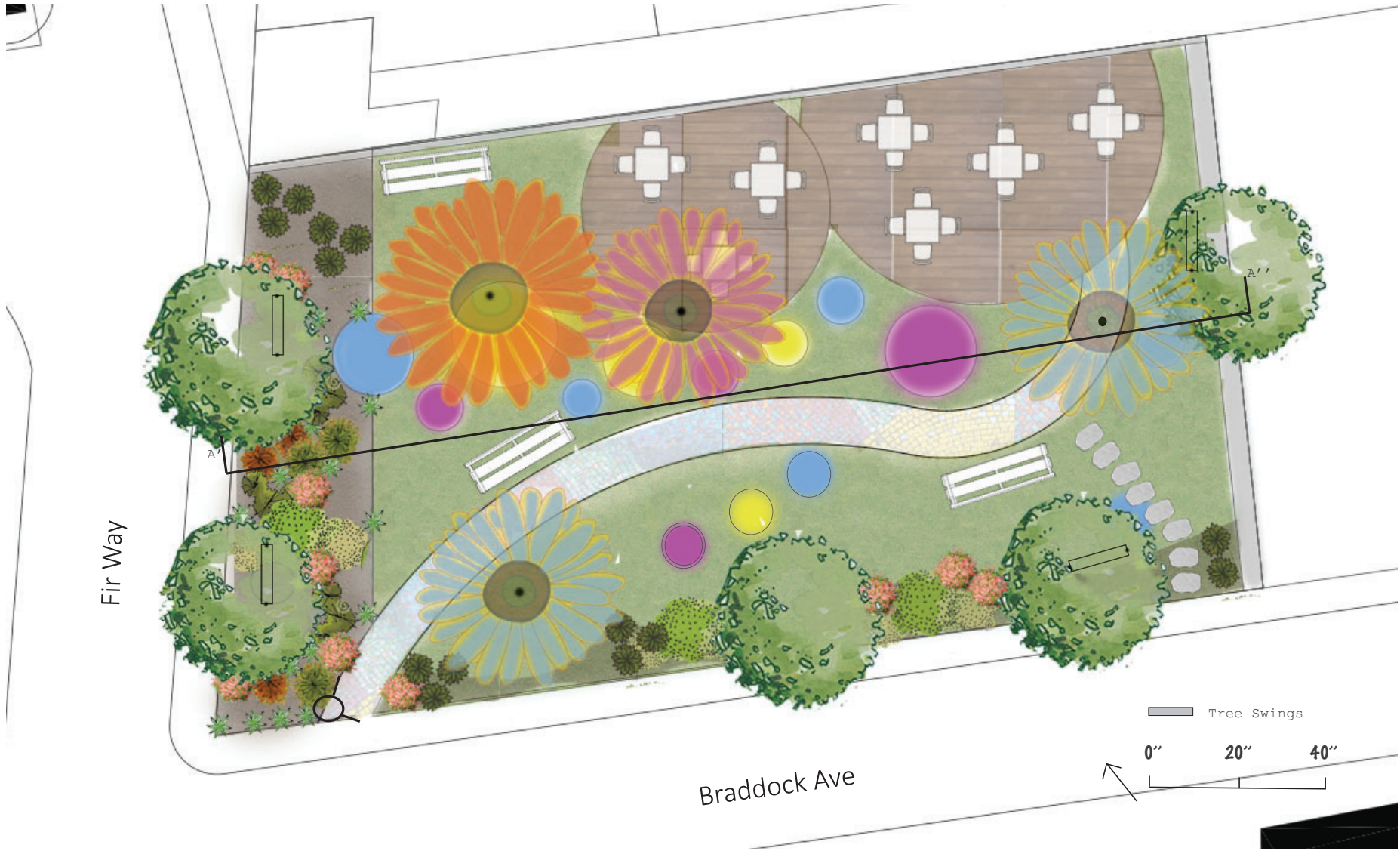
Both Cathy Welsh, representing HOOPS, and Jodi Davenport, representing Heritage Community Initiatives shared the same sentiment. Braddock needs a place where kids can simply be kids. Stemming from weaknesses and threats within the community, lack of accessible streetscapes and accessible childcare, has led to the youth struggle with trauma from housing, family, and food insecurity. A weakness in the community has been identified as a current community issue that have a lasting impact and highly affect the entirety of Braddock. Such weaknesses are a direct result of the systemic economic disinvestment of Braddock, resulting from a blend of racism and classism.

Children ages 6-11 are in need of a space where they can engage with one another outside school and their older peers, tune into their creativity, and find a sense of identity and belonging. Braddock has the opportunity for these spaces due to an abundance of vacant lots.Design goals established are to provide interactive spaces through color and verticality for children ages six to eleven along with ensuring the safety of young children visting the site through design decisions pertainting to scale. Additionally, the design will expand visual interest to the northwest area of Braddock Ave conveying Braddock's creative identity throughout the town and be legible by both child and car. Lastly the design acknowledges Braddock's history and identity through design decisions on materiality.

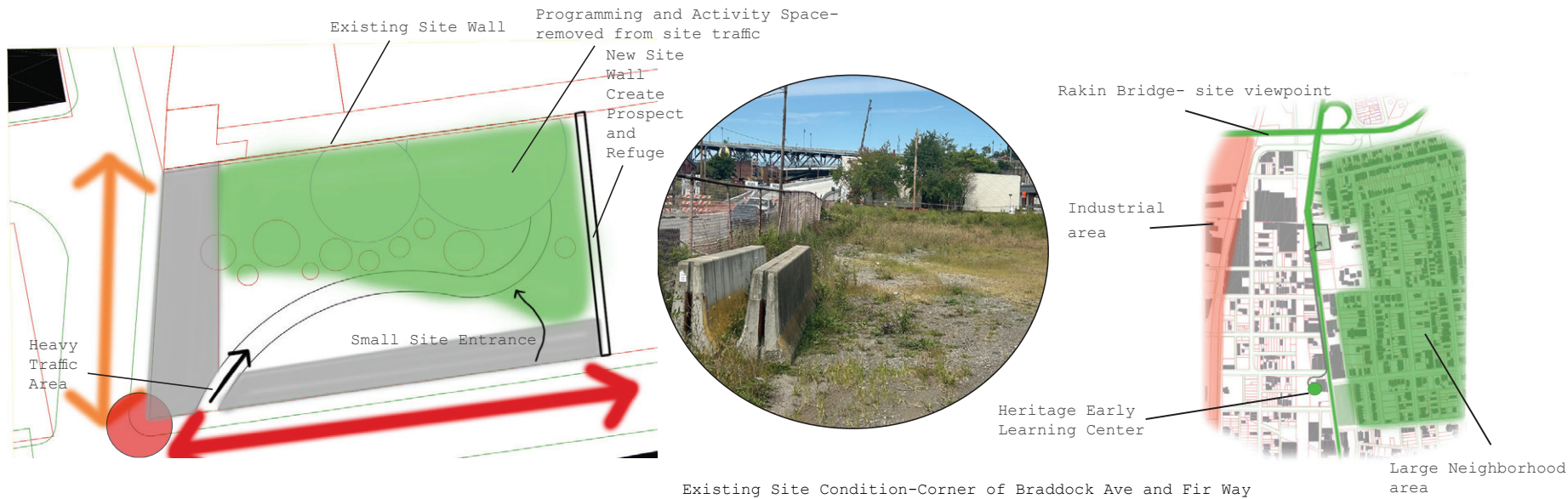
"My distinct memory of Braddock is one of a mural outside my preschool along Braddock Ave, I looked at it every day. as a kid"

- Student at Woodland Hills High School

conceptual design by Lizzie Sherman



Splashed Color Park Site Plan



“Kids need a space where they can just be kids” -Carnegie Library Staff

The intent of the design Splashed Color Park is to support in enhancing Braddock, Pa and its visibility to greater Pittsburgh through promoting artistic visions throughout Braddock avenue. Capitalizing on available spaces, vacant lots, in order to shape the landscape to foster creativity amongst the younger generation of Braddock. Achieving this by using color and scale to enhance experiences and accessibility for children ages six to eleven.

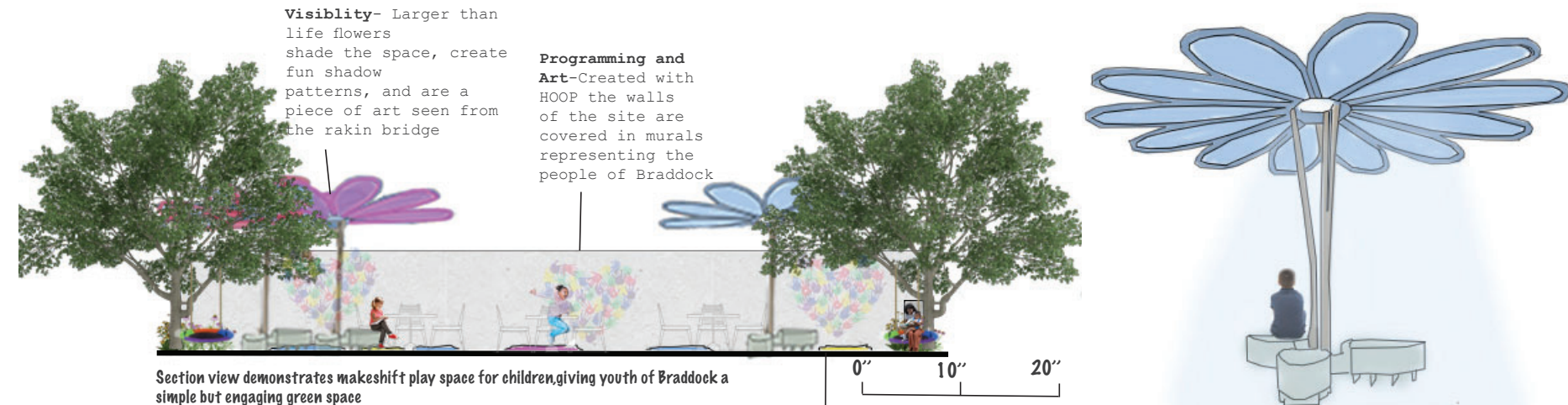


Community Partners

Partnering with existing community programs to design and create splashed color park ensures community involvement and investment. Heritage Community Initiatives runs after school program for kids in Kindergarten to 8th grade. The program engages with students in the Woodland Hills school district. The after school program is available throughout summer, meaning site has purpose throughout all seasons. The building within walking distance to site (4 blocks) Heritage is currently in need of an outdoor space outside of their current playground to run programming for their kids, and specifically want to ensure playground safety according to previous meetings with the initiative. The design will create a space that assists in Heritages programming. Also working with the Helping Other People Alliance (HOOP) with a focus on artwork HOOP can assist in creating the interactive mural wall with pieces that specifically help rely the message of mental well being and emphasis on mental health for Braddocks youth



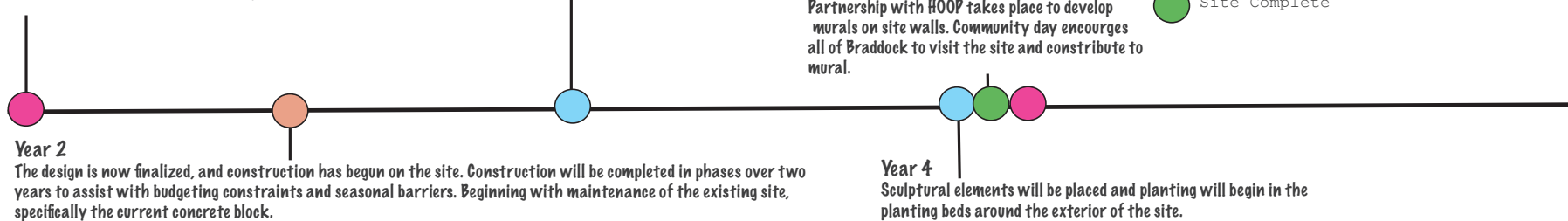
Section A-A”



5 Year Development Timeline

Year 1

During the design process the children of Braddock, specifically in the after school Heritage program will be met with to see from a child's perspective what they feel will benefit their community. Asking them what they think are missing from their parks and what would they love to have. After this the design will be finalized based off the kids ideas and presented to the community of parents for their concerns or ideas. Additional meetings with Heritage community workers will allow for the design to fit their programming needs



4 Braddock Play Zone

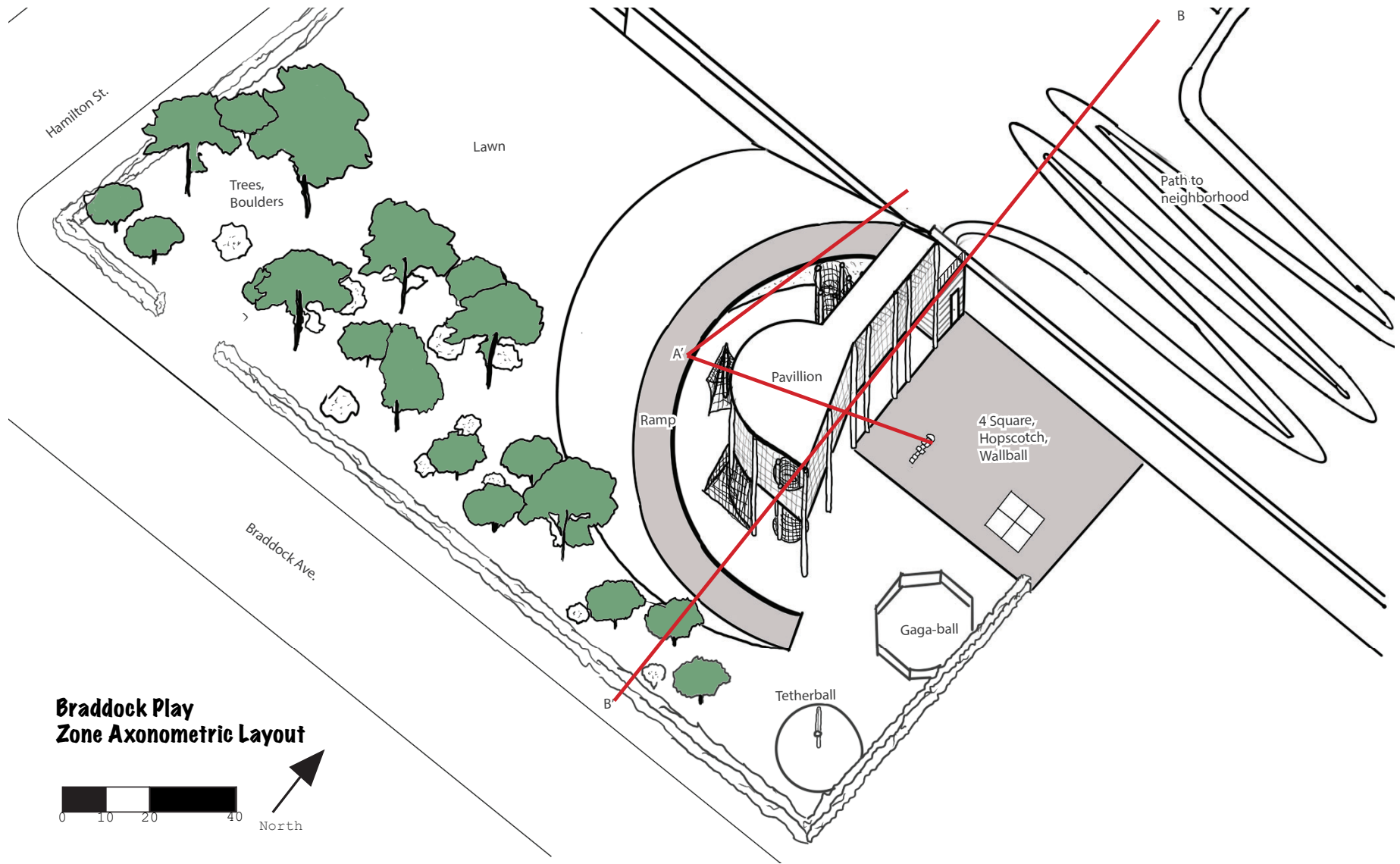


Site Selection

In selecting a site for this project, the most community focused site of the three was chosen. The site is the closest to the main neighborhood of Braddock, and this makes it ideal for community engagement as well as interaction between residents. Unlike the other sites with a more civic or regional focus, this community centered site better aligns with project goals of creating inclusive active spaces for Braddock youth and families.

Partner

Greater Valley Community Services
About:
"Greater Valley Community Services (GVCS) is a non-profit organization that provides a variety of community services for our neighbors of all ages! Our programming specifically centers around our pillars of Health & Wellness, Education, and Families. These building blocks encompass programming ranging from community committees, violence prevention, food distribution, foster care, after-school and summer student programs and much more! We serve Braddock, North Braddock, Mon Valley, Allegheny, and Westmoreland communities.
Why:
GVCS will serve as the main strategic partner for this project. The close proximity of their physical location in Braddock is optimal for basic maintenance and programming within the playground. Their commitment to health, wellness, and education of the community is in line with the goals of this project. It will strengthen their mission by providing a space which encourages exercise through play among youth ages 6-11. It may also be used as a space for their various youth after school and summer camp programs.
Note about partners:
GVCS is a wonderful partner in the project and is invited to serve as the main strategic partner in this project. However, a project of this scale would invite a magnitude of partners to the table, such as, Braddock Youth Project, Heritage 4 Kids, and The Carnegie Library Association.



Vision Statement

The intent of this design Is to create a dynamic and engaging park which encourages exercise and physical activity among the youth in Braddock. The overarching goal is to foster empowerment, confidence, and community with interactive play and fitness structures. While this project is focused on elementary age children, the site can be a place for residents of all ages to enjoy. By prioritizing creative engagement as well as dynamic use cases within the park, the aim is to make exercise an enjoyable and social experience.

Analysis

Braddock and Allegheny County have above average rates of asthma. This compounds on the issue of a poor healthcare system in Braddock. Personal exercise is the best way to promote health on an individual level, so the idea behind this playground is that children, unknowingly, can improve their health through exercise and play. According the the NIH, consistent exercise can reduce symptoms of asthma as well as improve quality of life in those with asthma. So, by exercising with play in this playground, youth in Braddock may improve their own personal health, reduce their risk of illness, and help combat symptoms that stem from high rates of asthma. Exercise has been linked to reducing risk of chronic disease and illness, which is the key point of this playground. Through exercise disguised as play, youth in Braddock will improve their health.

Pavillion and Play Structure B-B'



One of these children has athsma.



Timeline

- Year 1-

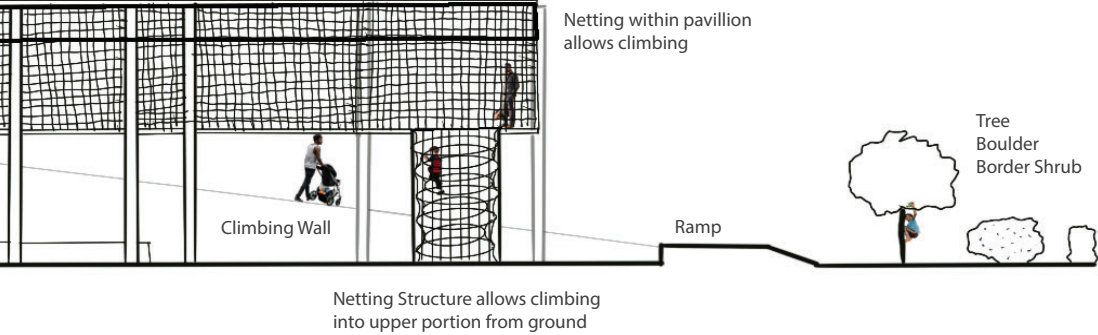
 - Install ramp/ associated earthwork, as well as climbing/retaining wall on side of ramp. Install playground mulch around constructed climbing/retaining wall. Install shrubs and temporary fence around perimeter of playground.
 - Survey patrons of the playground-ask for ideas for theme of playground.
- Year 2-

 - Install Gaga Ball and Tetherball court, Paved area, 4 square and hopscotch.
 - Narrow down theme of playground and survey patrons with 3 options for final design. Use most popular theme to guide the rest of installation.
- Year 3

 - Install trees and boulders for free form play. Install turfgrass in non-paved/mulched areas.
 - Commission local artist or community group to paint a large-scale mural on the exiting retaining wall in accordance with theme selected by community.
- Year 4

 - Raise funds and do maintenance on already built portion of playground.
 - Finalize theme and elements added to support theme.
- Year 5

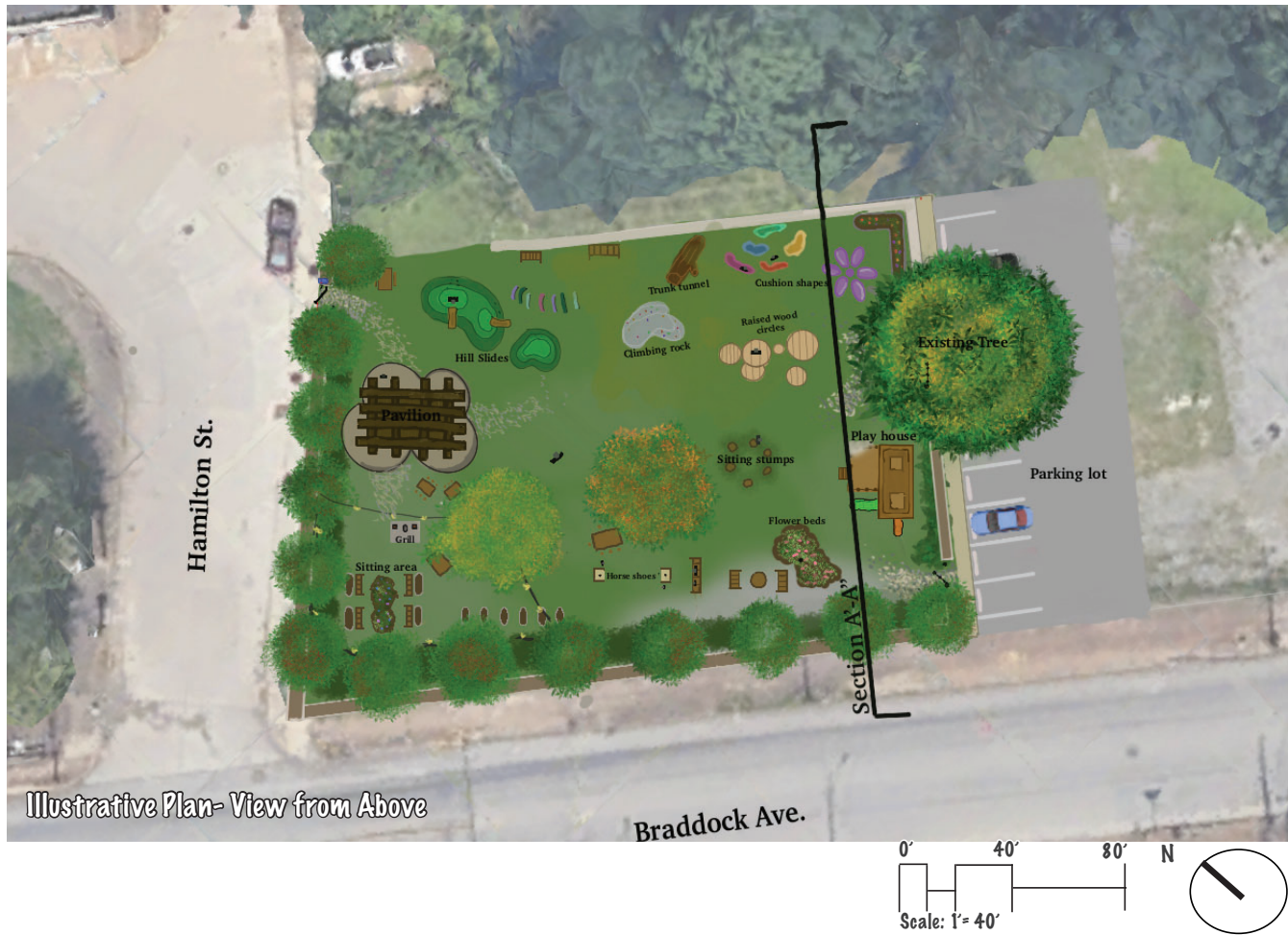
 - Install pavilion, slide, bridge, and associated play structures.
 - Install elements associated with theme of playground.
 - Grand Opening!



Ambitious Project Disclaimer:
This project is ambitious in nature and will require from the community and involved organizations efforts in fundraising as well as time, labor, and searching for grants. While this project may incur significant amounts of money to construct, each phase of the project may be considered its own project, and a worthwhile investment in the health, and social lives of Braddock youth and families.

5

Braddock's Backyard: Design to Grow Community Roots



Vision Statement

The goal of this design is to help the borough of Braddock provide the youth with vibrant and comfortable spaces of their own. A large place is enclosed with all a kid needs, play equipment, seating, open space to play with the imagination, and a peaceful garden space. The design of "Braddock Backyard" gives to the community and brings the community together. The idea of the backyard was to create the intention of gathering people from the community to fill the space. Children need a place to feel safe where they can eat, play, and nap, nothing beats the comfort of your home backyard. Braddock Roots' neighborhood backyard creates space kids don't experience quite often. The creation aims to bring the community to a new place that once was an empty parking lot to a cohesive backyard for all ages. For the neighborhood by the off-ramp where there is not a common place to go compared to

"Being in a hard situation and in poverty it is hard to imagine the beautiful possibilities"

- Miss Cathy Welsh



Inspiration for Design



Ken Smith Railyard Park



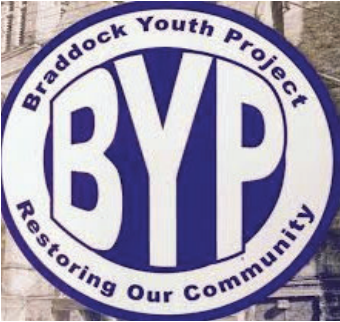
MBYland- Tree Trunk Funk



“Having a place for kids to be kids”

Miss Cathy Welsh

Possible Partnerships



The Braddock Youth Project (BYP) and Heritage Day Care will be instrumental partners in the design, construction, maintenance, and programming of the Braddock neighborhood backyard, with a primary focus on enriching the lives of children in the community. BYP, a key organization dedicated to empowering youth, will provide valuable input on how to create spaces that support learning, creativity, and social engagement. Their experience with local youth development will guide the design of play areas and educational spaces that stimulate imagination and growth. Additionally, BYP will be able to involve young people in the construction of the backyard, fostering a sense of ownership and leadership through hands-on participation. Once the space is built, BYP will contribute by offering educational and cultural programs that make use of the backyard, ensuring it remains an active and dynamic resource for children and families.

Heritage Day Care, an organization focused on early childhood education, will also play a critical role in the backyard’s design, focusing on the needs of younger children. Their expertise in child development will help shape the space, ensuring that it is safe, accessible, and stimulating for toddlers and preschoolers. This includes incorporating age-appropriate play structures, sensory gardens, and shaded areas where young children can explore and learn. Heritage Day Care will also be involved in the ongoing maintenance of the backyard, ensuring that it remains a safe, clean, and welcoming environment for all users. Beyond maintenance, they will offer programs tailored to early childhood education, including nature-based activities and parent-child bonding events, turning the backyard into a hub for developmental experiences for the youngest members of the community.

Project Analysis



The Braddock Backyard design will be built in phases. The completion of the design will be estimated to take 4 years.

The long-term success and sustainability of the Braddock Backyard will depend on the ongoing collaboration between BYP and Heritage Day Care. Both organizations will continue to be involved in the programming and upkeep of the space, ensuring that it remains a vibrant and engaging environment for children. Their partnership will also help secure the future of the backyard through volunteer efforts, fundraising, and community involvement, making sure that the backyard is a lasting resource for generations to come. This collaborative effort will create a space that meets the evolving needs of the community, providing a safe, enriching environment for children to learn, play, and grow.

While looking at the three sites I concluded using site one. e reason is that sites two and three are surrounded by programs, populations, and places for the community to go to. It is already in the heart of downtown Braddock and it would be easy to design another basic add-on/ place to fit in with the rest. Here are a lot of positive and welcoming spaces for the community and younger generations on the east side of Braddock. As for the west side of Braddock by the off-ramp Site, one is all by itself. Is in a perfect place to create a space for the younger population in the residential housing just north of it and is close to the “Welcome to Braddock” sign. Creating a design on-site will draw more people into Braddock while also bringing people from the community to a new place to be used.

- + Check/ Test the design out with the community.
- + Involve the community with the process and get feedback or help (kids, adults, partners, etc.)
- + Fundraising would be important, donations, reach out to get support.
- + Create the backyard look (fencing and vegetation)
- + Fundraise and/or have a community day.
- + Get the community engaged (makes them feel like it is actually theirs (ownership)).
- + Install the mural in the back wall “Youth live in Braddock”
- + Start finalizing the work

The Backyard Plan

Year 1

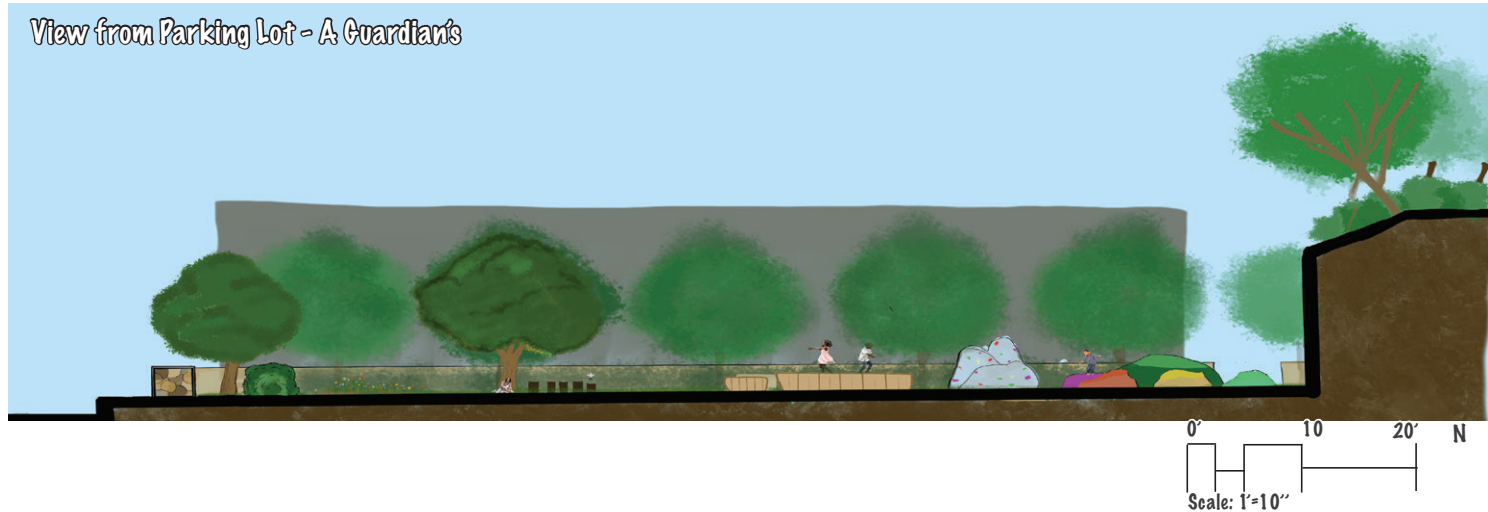
Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

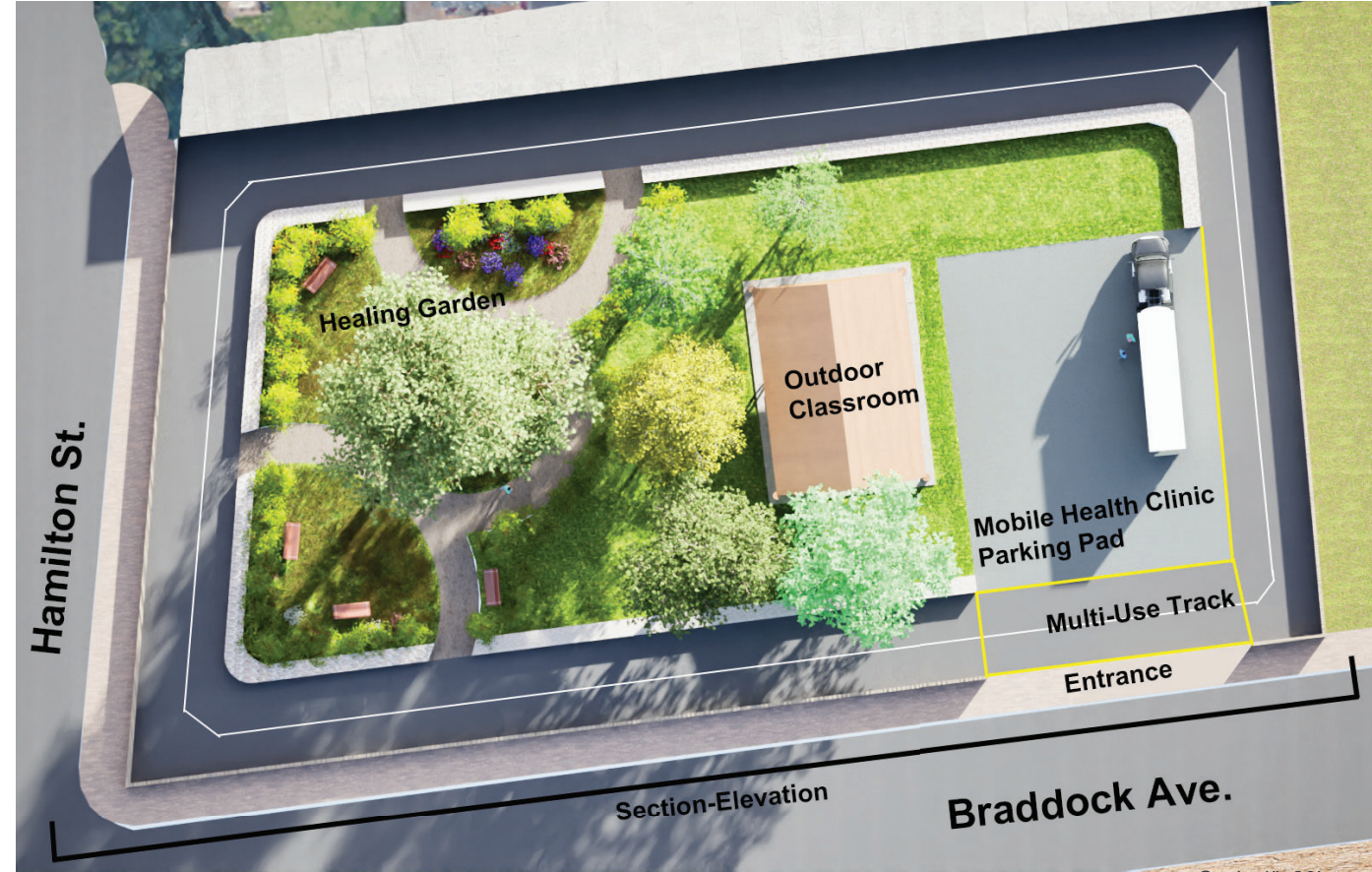
- + Start the process (clear debris and start constructing)
- + Starting from the wall to the road.
- + Plan and lay the play equipment and leisure spaces.
- + Bring in the community to help
- + Complete the gabions/fence and vegetation look
- + Start spreading the news that a Neighborhood backyard is opening for everyone.
- + Finish the final parts of the design. - Bring the community together for the opening of the “neighborhood backyard BBQ”
- + Meet with the community to set up a maintenance plan

4 year Building Timeline



6 Bridge to Braddock: Pathways to Health and Care

Designing for Braddock's Youth:



This illustrative plan highlights the different amenities within the site, including the track, mobile health clinic, outdoor classroom, and healing garden. turn to exit the site.



Braddock's youth face significant barriers to accessing reliable and affordable healthcare, a challenge this project directly addresses by creating a thoughtfully designed space for the Ronald McDonald Mobile Health Clinic. The clinic will deliver critical medical services and health education, equipping young residents with the tools they need to achieve better physical and mental health outcomes. An outdoor classroom enhances this intent by offering an engaging and interactive space for healthcare and first aid education, encouraging the youth of Braddock to develop healthy habits early in life.

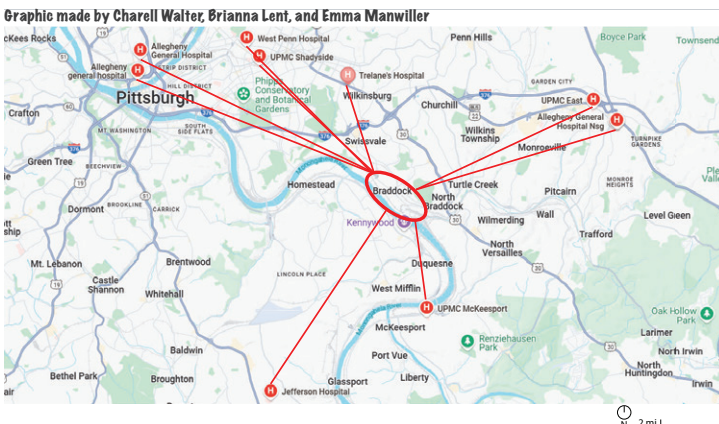
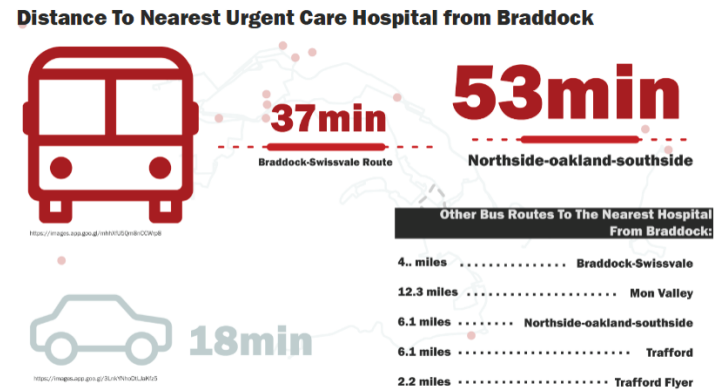
A multiuse track surrounds the site, inviting children, teens, and their families to embrace active lifestyles through walking, jogging, or cycling. This feature not only promotes physical fitness but also provides opportunities for social interaction, fostering a sense of community. While the mobile health clinic will go over the track to enter the site, it only goes over the track at the hours of 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM; to promote continuous caution, yellow striping will be painted around the parking pad and entrance.

To further enrich the environment, native plantings and shaded green spaces offer tranquil areas for relaxation and reflection, helping to improve mental well-being and providing a connection to nature.

By prioritizing the needs of Braddock's youth, this project goes beyond addressing healthcare gaps, it creates a foundation for a healthier, vibrant, and

active future for the entire community. The outdoor classroom is a great way to raise awareness of the importance of education surrounding physical and mental health. It is also a great opportunity to provide valuable classes such as first aid education and CPR certification which look great on job applications.

Existing Conditions:



Basemap from Google Maps
Braddock's Lack of access to reliable, affordable, and obtainable medical care is an enormous problem that needs rectifying. The mobile health center is a great way to rectify this problem by providing a space that offers reliable, affordable, and obtainable healthcare opportunities for Braddock's youth.

The outdoor classroom is a great way to raise awareness of the importance of education surrounding physical and mental health. It is also a great opportunity to provide valuable classes such as first aid education and CPR certification which look great on job applications.



There is currently nothing within the site, its proximity to the largest residential area makes it a fantastic choice for the updated site design

Local Involvement:



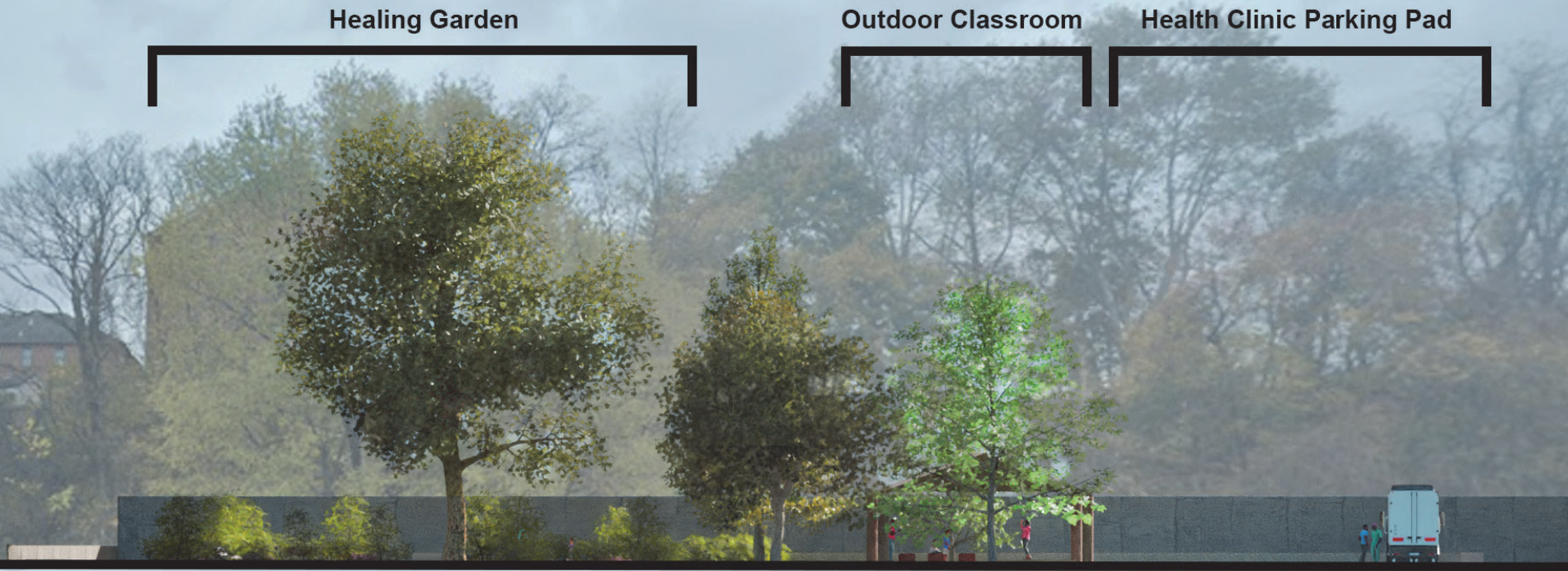
Regionally partnering with the UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and locally with the ANH Urgnet Care would vastly benefit Braddock. UPMC already houses the site's desired mobile healthcare facility.

The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile provides numerous services such as Adolescent health care, asthma care (including inhaler and spacer education), fluoride dental varnish, food and nutrition education, health and safety education, immunizations, lead and hemoglobin screenings, pediatric primary care, referrals for specialty care, routine physical exams, Sexual healthcare (including contraception, menstrual issues, and STI screenings), sick child visits, vision screenings, and well-child and infant care.

Additionally, partnering with the local AHN Urgent Care in Braddock would both create more involvement within the existing community and provide necessary medical supplies if the mobile unit either does not have enough or needs to be restocked.

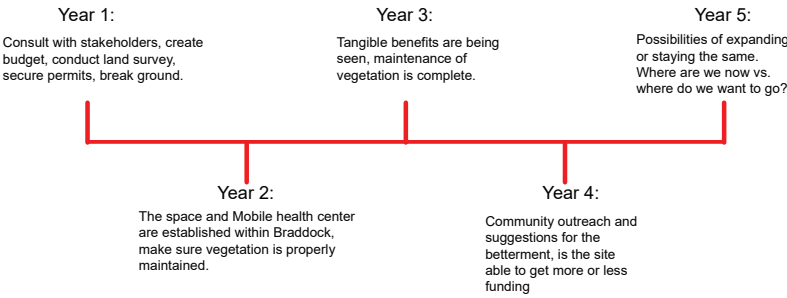
For feasibility's sake the 40'x8' truck has a turn radius of around 25'-30', the truck requires a 25' wide entrance to the site due to the tight turn, however the entrance far exceeds this minimum at a width of 45'. The dimensions of the parking pad are 50'x60' which provides ample room for a truck of this size to make a multi-point turn to exit the site.

Section Elevation: An Experiential Shift



This Section-Elevation displays the site layout from Braddock Ave, it shows citizens of Braddock interacting with the multitude of resources available within the new design

How do we get here?



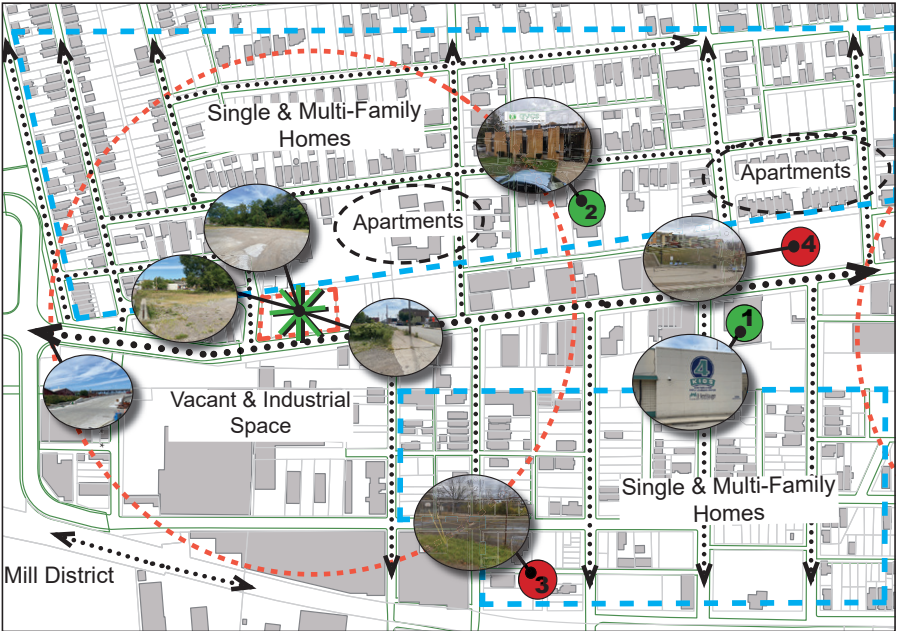
Existing Site Conditions:



Proposed Improvements:



7 Nature's Playground: Blending Nature with Imaginative Play



Project Analysis

When choosing a site for this project's given elements, Site One was the perfect place to develop this project further. This site is closely located in Braddock's residential sectors, which currently need more opportunities for outdoor play spaces due to high vacancies of lots and buildings and poor conditions of existing play spaces. By choosing this site, Braddock youth will have a place of comfort they can easily access from their homes by traveling by walking or driving with a parent or guardian. Being close to the existing neighborhoods will promote more social bonding and communication between the children, parents, and community members utilizing the site. In creating this space, a goal is to strengthen the youth's dominant early development skills by endorsing cognitive play, social interaction with others, and offering new types of play.

We are in transition, and that transition is upward. Kids need to know that life doesn't have to be like this, things can change.” – Vicki Vargo



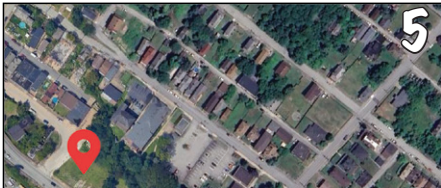
Heritage 4 Kids & Greater Valley
Heritage 4 Kids and GVCS are great community programs in Braddock that will significantly impact this site as partnerships: see “Partnerships”.



Cherry Way Basketball Court
The Cherry Way Basketball Court is the closest recreational space for the residential sectors and is in poor condition with minimal usage.



The Braddock Civic Plaza
The Braddock Civic Plaza is of poor benefit to the community, for it lacks regular usage due to its large mass of hardscape.



The Residential Sectors
These areas lack outdoor recreational spaces to go to other than the homes' backyards. These residential areas deserve a space to be able to enjoy.



A Colorful Step Back

This image represents a partial picture of what the design would look like. Places of play are scattered across the project site and intertwined with places of educational opportunity: an outdoor classroom, garden boxes, sensory boxes, and more are within cross paths of play to encourage children to explore their curiosity.

The images below showcase the desired elements of the design: focussing on developing a nature-based play space that also serves as a place of educational opportunity. These elements will introduce a new and unique space that hasn't been seen in the Braddock community before. Additionally, the colorful elements of the design will reflect the beauty of Braddock's existing artwork, establishing a connection throughout the town.

Vision Statement

The goal of this design is to envision a Braddock full of colorful play and social dynamics, all within close proximity to home. This design will focus on creating a multi-disciplinary space full of educational resources, opportunities for mental, physical, fundamental, and parental support. The project aims to foster social cohesion among all age groups, with a particular emphasis on the zero to five-year-olds in the Braddock community. This space will provide an alternative environment away from home and school, allowing for a change of scenery and a sense of independence, while still being a space where parents or teachers can facilitate and engage with their children. By having this space, the effort of interaction between one's community will be of prime focus, allowing the opportunity for more social connections for all members of the community.

“Things that allow kids to be creative and silly with an educational twist are the things that go best.” – Vicki Vargo





Meandering Through

Sensory activities are located across the site to promote early developmental skills so that children can play imaginatively while still coherently learning. These sensory places are vital for cognitive development but also act as a fun resource for play in a nature-based environment.

Multi-level painted tree stumps will be placed throughout the site, making travel in the project space more fun or allowing for creative sitting and resting spots.

“Kids need different things to ignite different senses: examples could be theme boxes, artwork space, spots with the playground equipment, but other activities like a sensory garden.” - Jodi Davenport with Heritage Community Initiatives



Across the Site

This section highlights the different activity spots located within the project site when viewed from its center. The existing retaining wall has been repainted to serve as an artistic mural, incorporating the bright colors seen throughout the site and creating a cohesive artistic element.

Places of play are scattered across the project site and intertwined with places of educational opportunity: an outdoor classroom, garden boxes, sensory boxes, and more are within cross paths of play to encourage children to explore their curiosity.



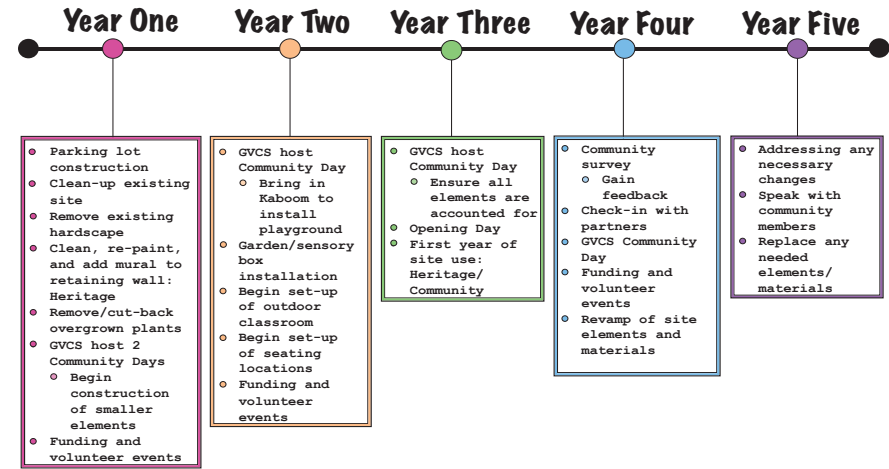
Potential Partnerships

The Braddock community hosts various programming groups that are of exemplary benefit to Braddock youth. Heritage 4 Kids Early Learning Center and Greater Valley Community Services (GVCS) are two programming institutes offering strong partnership potential for this design development. Both of these programs are close to “Nature’s Playground” and consistently host educational, community, and social events in Braddock. With strong community devotion, these groups will be incredibly beneficial in supporting and gathering visitors to the project space.

Heritage 4 Kids will be an excellent resource in bringing the younger youth of Braddock to this new space as a new outdoor education space. By getting kids comfortable with the site by having regular visits, it will persuade the kids to want to go back in their free time, driving families to visit the space on off days. GVCS will be a great community-based program to partner with for they host events for all age groups, driving for social connection between all ages.



“Kids have emotional barriers, as we are seeing different behaviors in the classroom than we are at home. Some kids are struggling with following routines and interacting with other because they missed the opportunity at a younger age.” - Jodi Davenport with Heritage Community



Project Timeline

This design project will be developed in phases. Completion will occur in sections based on funding allowances and community program interest. Ideally, the project will be completed (with most elements purchased, constructed, and in place) within three years. This project aims to provide the community with a new recreational and educational space near home, with extensive community programming and growth opportunities.

8 Pillars of Braddock

The Vision

A vision for Braddock enhancing kids’ physical health while creating a colorful, bold site. This vision seeks to provide kids with easy access to recreational opportunities in a safe low maintenance environment.

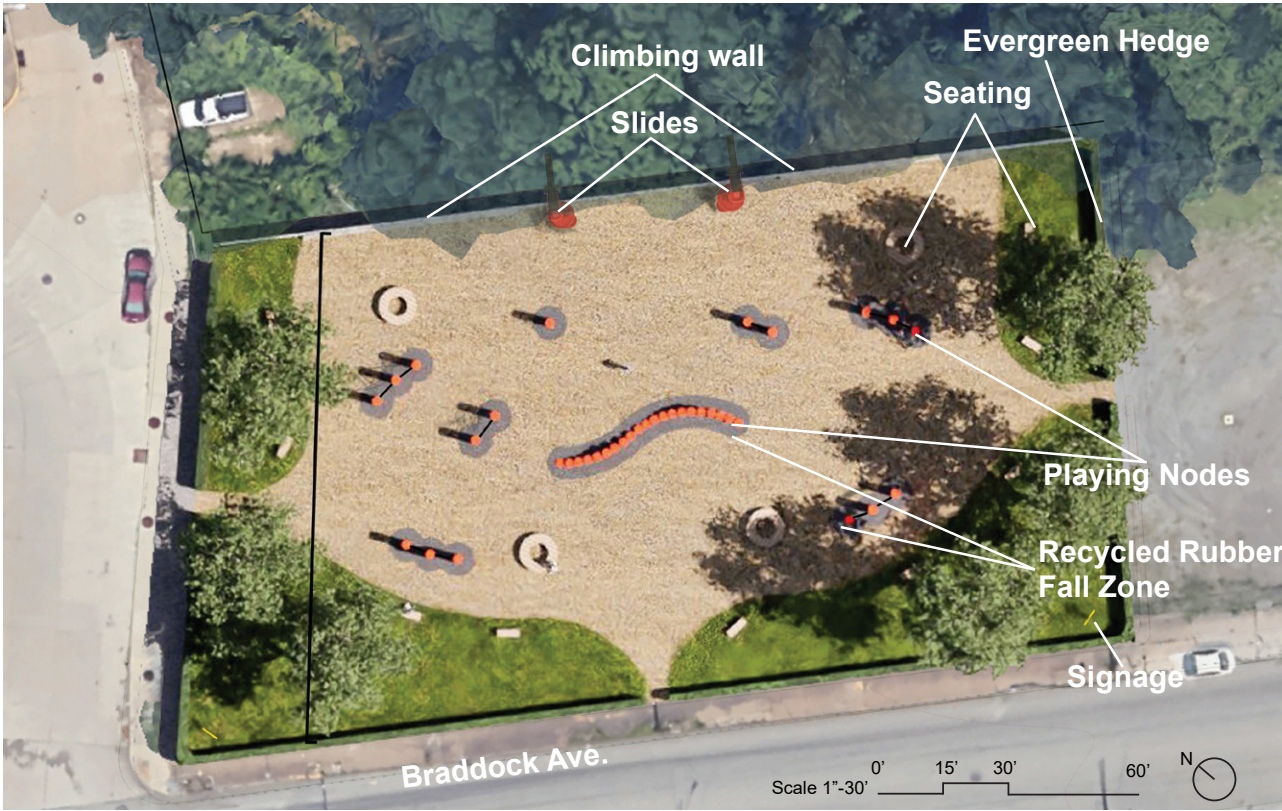
“[Kids need] a place to be”
- Cathy Welsh

Existing Conditions

Current conditions will benefit from a colorful design to give a strong impression of the entrance to Braddock. The site is also located near a large residential district making it accessible to more families.



Site Arrangement

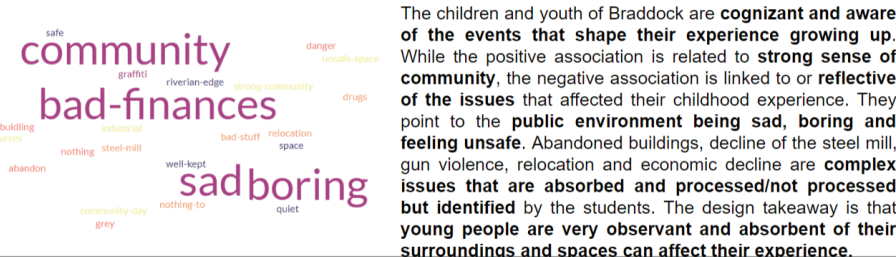


A simple gravel plane reduces long-term maintenance needs while metal pillars will require minimal touch-ups in the mid-term. Open site allows visibility for parents

Housing Structure and Condition



Whats it Like Growing up in Braddock?



The Partner

Collaborating with the BYP (Braddock Youth Project) will enrich the program by engaging their participants in constructing the site, and fostering a sense of community and ownership. This partnership aligns with the mission of the BYP by offering the youth valuable hands-on experience in the construction and design process while inspiring potential career pathways in related fields. Additionally, involving them in the park’s ongoing maintenance, such as repainting over the years will continue the sense of ownership. This will further support the BYP’s mission of equipping youth with skills that promote positive life outcomes, by providing them with a meaningful, sustainable community development project.

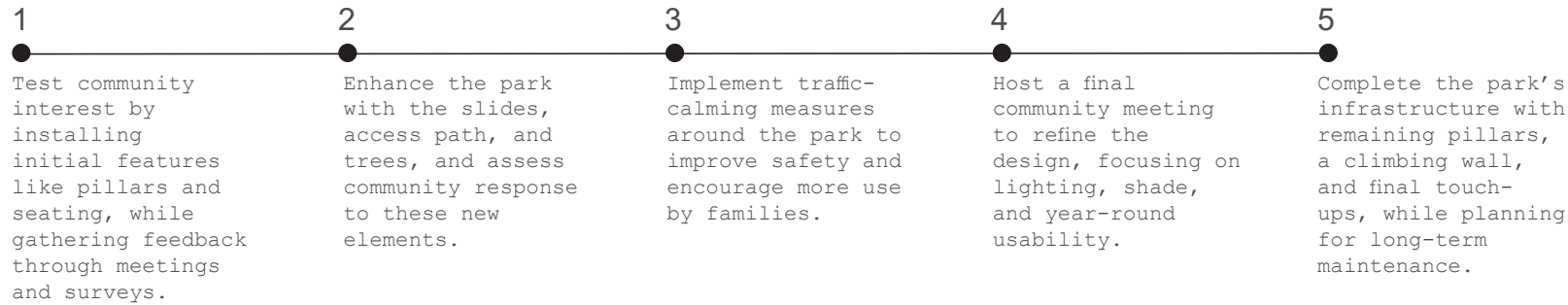
“[Kids need a place to] be together and be safe”
- Jodi Davenport

After compiling data from kids in Braddock, it is evident that they feel that Braddock lacks color and safety. My site will be able to renew some of these lost emotions. Recreation and bright colors are effective tools in promoting positivity, and recreation which the design will accomplish.

Through the Hedge



Timeline: Years



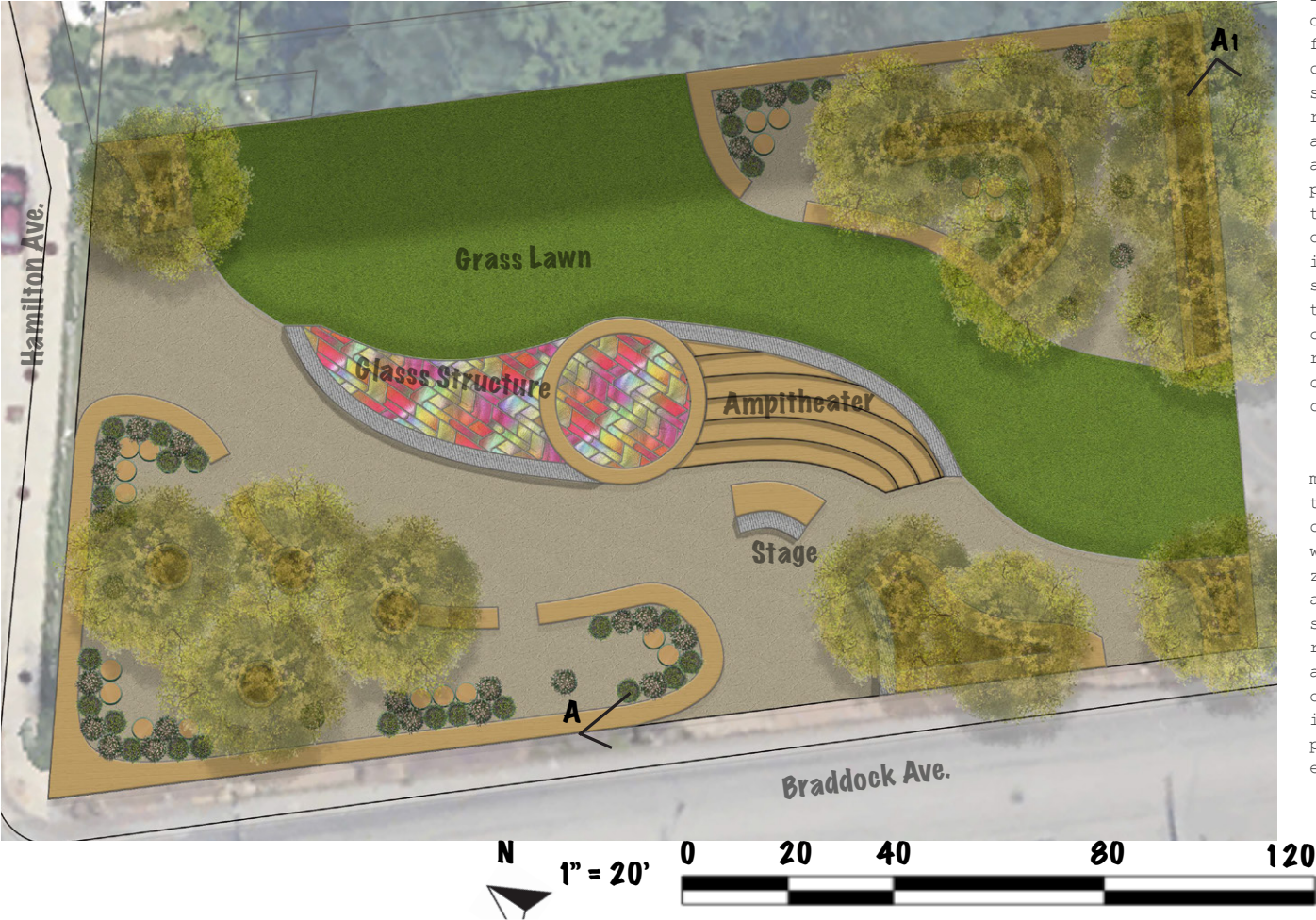
The View While Cruising Down Braddock Ave.



Bold vibrant design pulls attention off the street and onto the site giving a positive first impression of the entrance to Braddock.

9 The Barrels

Plan View

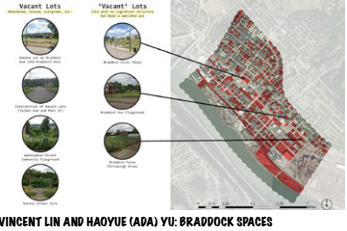


Project Narrative

This project reimagines a vacant lot on the west side of Braddock as a dynamic, multi-functional space that fosters community connection, creativity, and environmental stewardship. Located near prominent residential neighborhoods, the site addresses a pressing need for accessible community spaces, providing a welcoming extension for the Braddock Youth Program and other outreach initiatives. By incorporating reclaimed materials, such as repurposed metal barrels, the design not only reflects the community’s resourceful spirit but also champions sustainability and creativity in urban revitalization.

The design emphasizes adaptability and inclusion, offering multiple gathering spaces that cater to a variety of activities, from casual conversations to structured workshops and events. These gathering zones encourage residents of all ages to engage with one another, strengthening community ties. The reclaimed barrels and open spaces also provide opportunities for community-led initiatives, such as public art projects, gardening programs, and educational outreach.

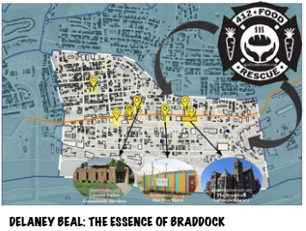
Vacant Lots



Section View A-A



Non-Profit Community Locations



Analysis

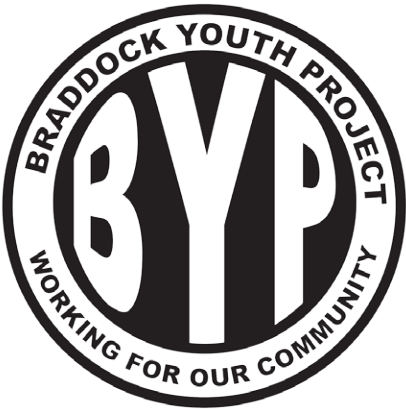
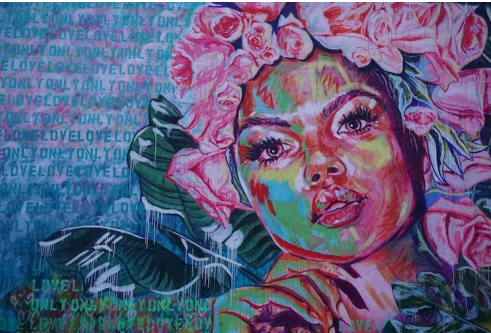
This space, located on the west side of Braddock, not only provides a valuable extension for the Braddock Youth Project but also addresses a critical gap in accessible community spaces. Many existing programs are located farther from the primary residential neighborhoods, making it challenging for residents, especially children, to regularly participate. By transforming one of the area’s many vacant into a vibrant and accessible community hub, this project bridges the physical and social gap between programs and the residents they aim to serve.

By transforming one of the area’s many vacant into a vibrant and accessible community hub, this project bridges the physical and social gap between programs and the residents they aim to serve.

Its proximity to prominent residential areas ensures ease of access, fostering greater engagement and cultivating a sense of pride among participants. This effort not only revitalizes an underutilized space but also strengthens connections within the community, symbolizing hope and progress for Braddock’s future.

Partners - Braddock Youth Project

The Braddock Youth Project provides various opportunities for art projects that served as an inspiration for this design. The Barrels will serve the BYP in their artistic and ecological pursuits, through providing many opportunities for colorful murals which the BYP is commonly known for, and also for more flower garden opportunities. Taking ownership of The barrels will not only provide more artistic opportunities, but also ecological ones as well. The reused metal barrels will provide planting opportunities to not only ecologically beautify the space, but also provide a new garden opportunity for the program.



Seating Diagram



3' Foot Wood Wall



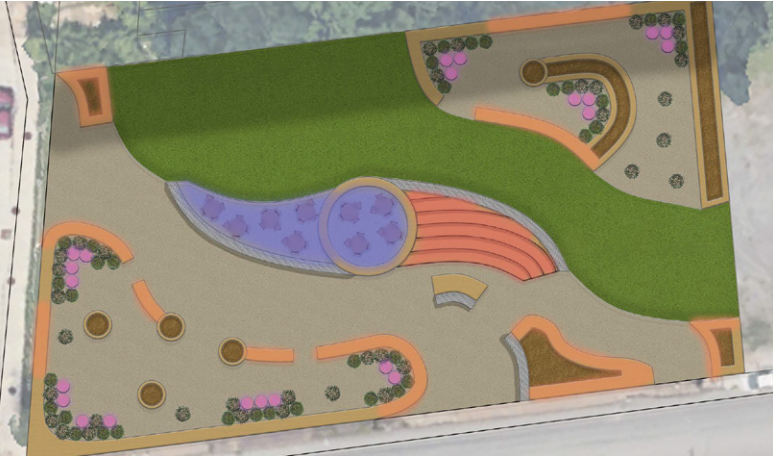
Table Seating With 4 Chairs



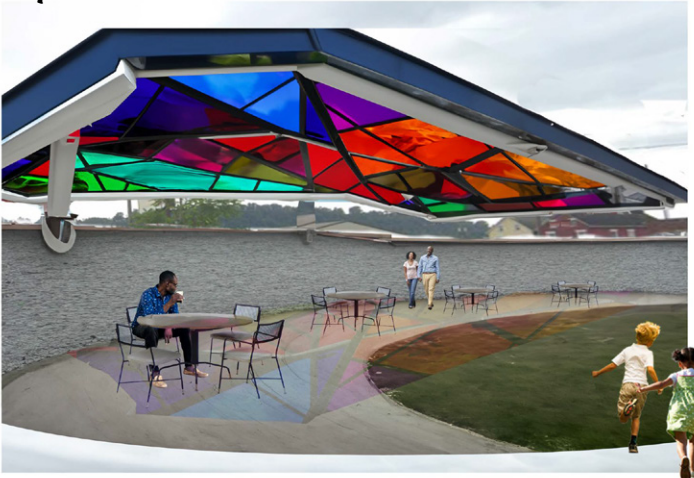
Reclaimed Barrel Seating



Ampitheater Seating



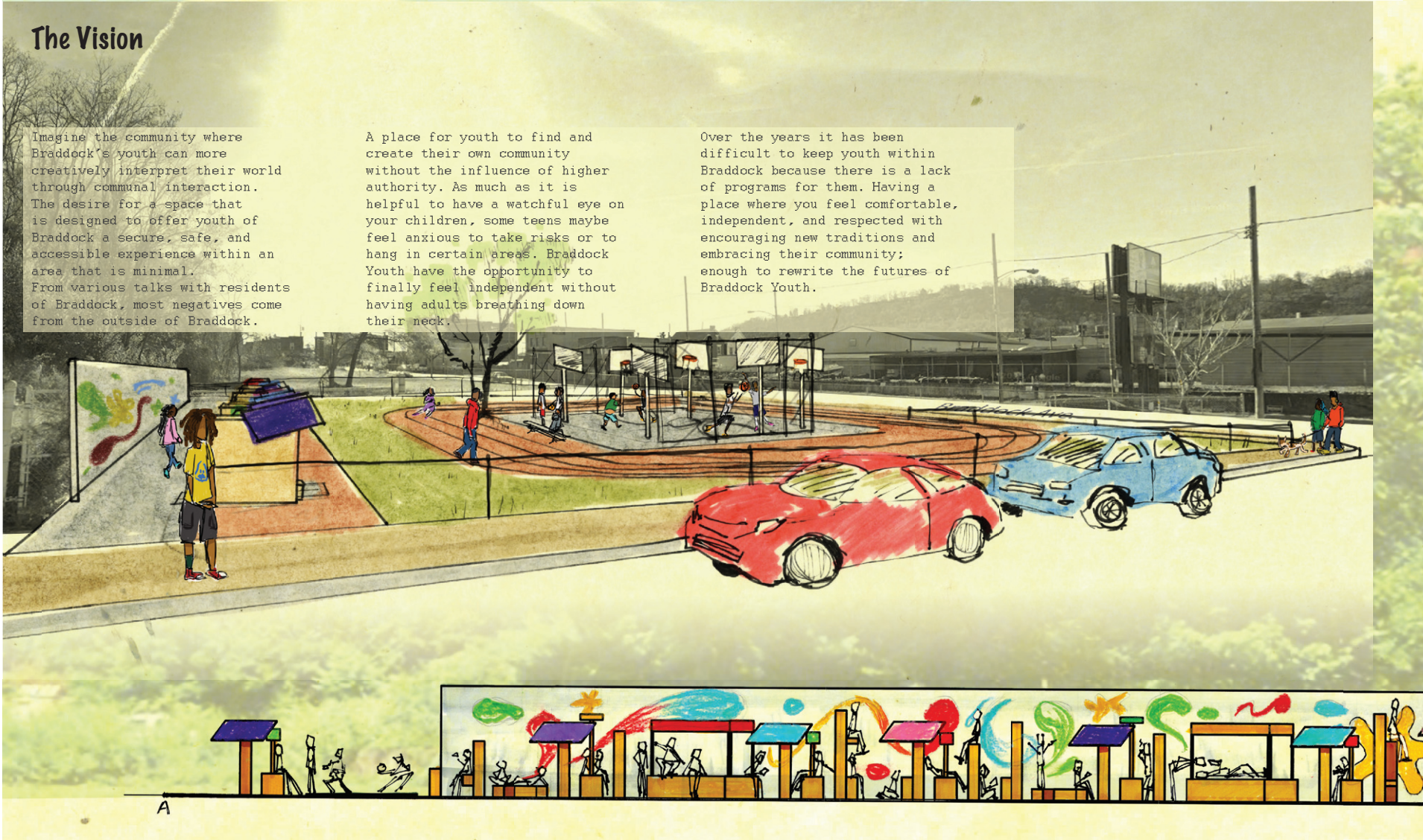
Human Perspective - Glass Pavilion



Human Perspective - Main Pathway

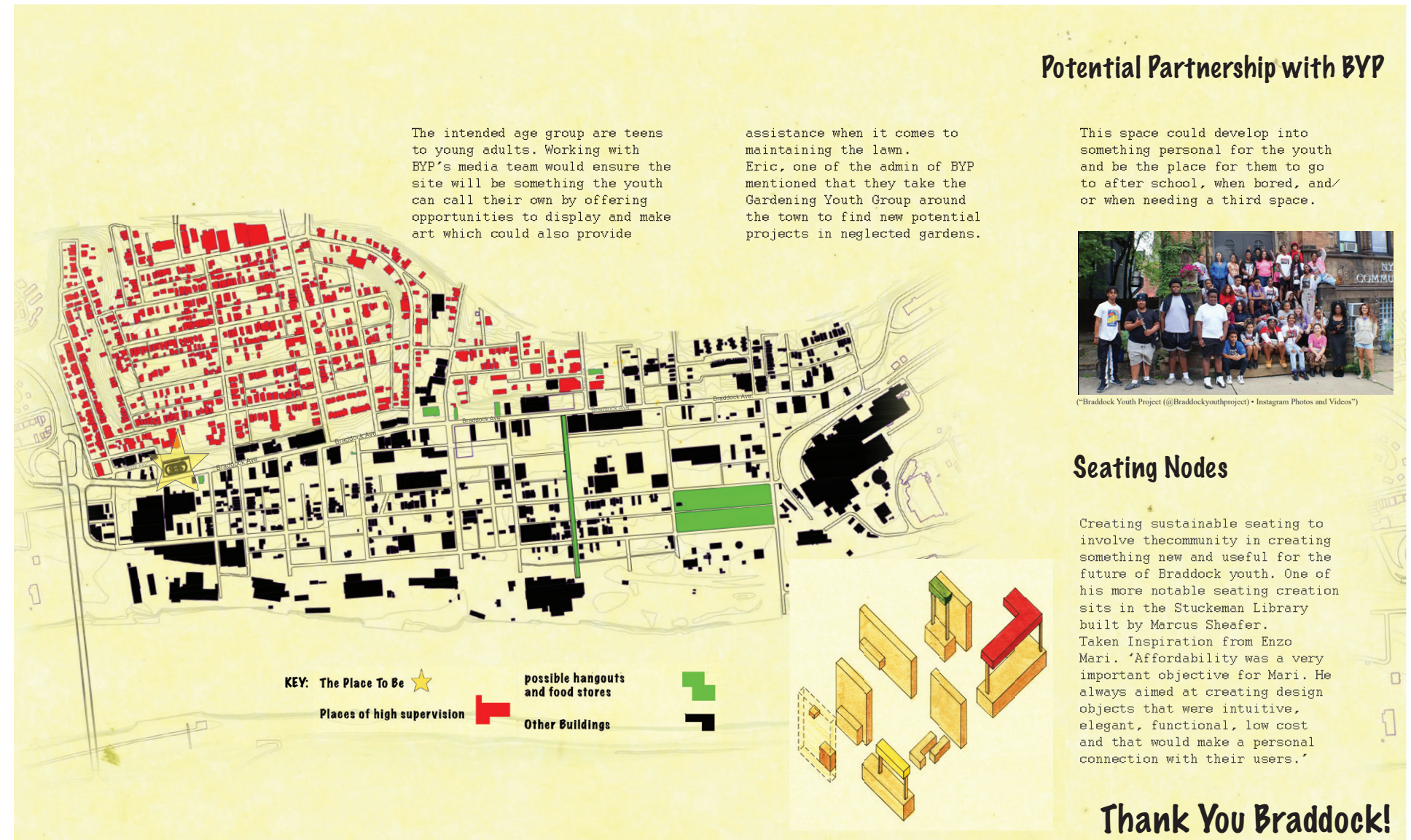
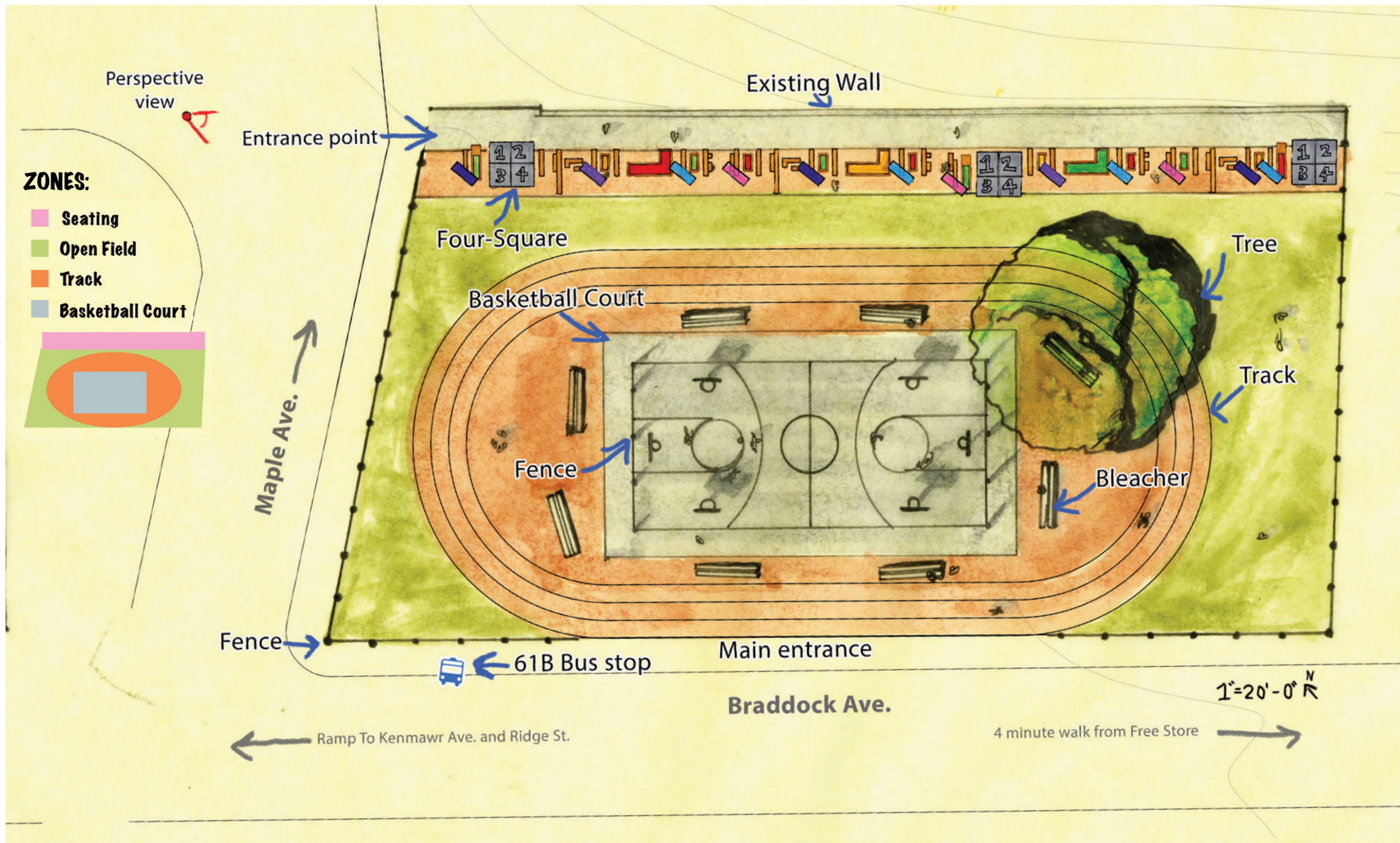


10 THE place to BE



conceptual design by Charell Walter





11 This is Braddock: Art, Agriculture, and Recreation

Envision a Braddock as a dynamic, safe, and enriching environment. Imagine that the youth can express their imagination and explore a beautiful community- outwardly proud as the people that occupy the space. Picture a Braddock whose pride shines brighter, an unforgettable moment, a place where everyone is free to explore, dream, and grow in a community that celebrates them.

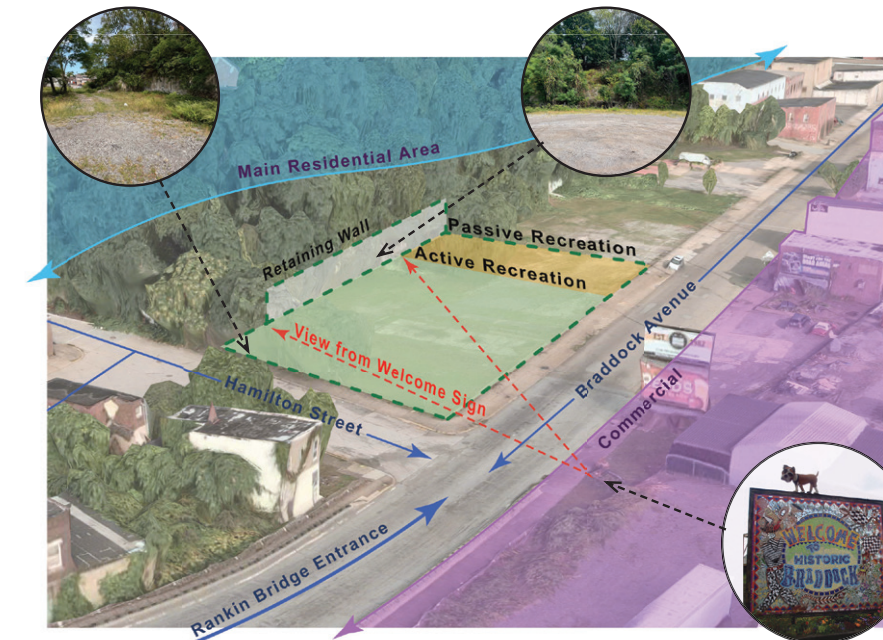


Braddock Youth Hanging Out at Zip Code Seating

The contemporary identity of Braddock is in the perfect position to provide grassroots revitalization efforts. The factors of art, sustainability, and youth engagement act as excellent conductors for a contemporary representation of Braddock to be understood. By leveraging these factors, Braddock can foster a dynamic, inclusive youth-centered community space that does not honor a history that no longer defines what Braddock is. Throughout meetings with community members, a constant sentiment has been expressed that the thing that Braddock needs the most is a place where the youth, regardless of age have the space to be themselves.

Ultimately, Braddock needs Braddock.


Braddock's future lies in the hands of the youth, making it essential to engage specifically 14-20-year-olds in shaping the identity and revitalization of the town. By involving and creating initiatives that prioritize art, sustainability, and community building, Braddock will not only have the ability to empower the youth but ensure its legacy evolves with future generations. Their active participation weaves a tapestry of creativity and connection, ensuring Braddock blossoms as a vibrant community, where art and agriculture drive and revitalize growth, unity, and resilience.




Site Context and Existing Conditions

"We need a flex space in the community. Close to their (youths) homes so theres less community movement." -Rausaun Brown of BYP


The Vision: Potential Community Partners



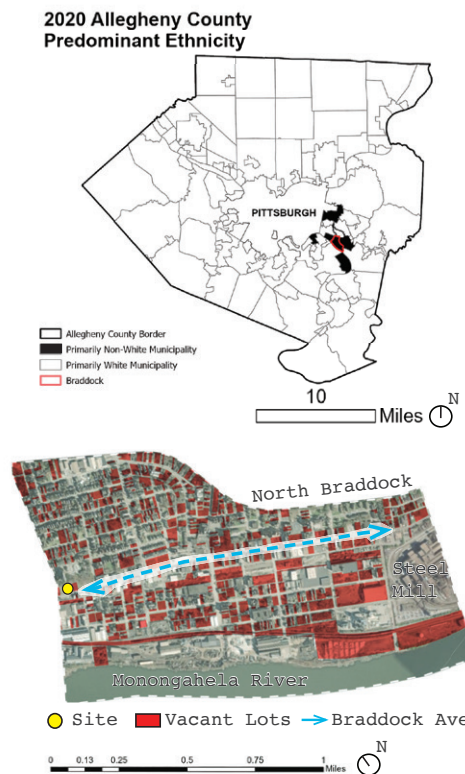
Braddock Youth Project
Non profit with youth aged 14-21 involved in media and gardening.



Braddock Farms
Non profit with a focus on urban agriculture restoration and education.



Paradigm Place
Food incubator with a focus on creation and cultivation of events.



Purpose and Programming



Food Security



Gathering



Art



Community Events

Social and Physical Braddock

In Allegheny County, only 7 of 130 municipalities are predominantly Black, highlighting the need to address systemic inequalities through initiatives that empower Braddock's youth with food security, education, and social organization. Vacant lots also hold potential for transformation into flexible community spaces that celebrate art, urban agriculture, and recreation. Tactical urbanism can quickly redefine these spaces as sources of pride rather than frustration.

"Reinventing is the only option" - Mande Williams, Braddock Carnegie Library Programmer

Site 1, located at the edge of Braddock's largest residential area, offers an opportunity for youth to reimagine the space in a way that embodies Braddock's resilience. The "Welcome to Braddock" sign that has a copy in Duquense will be juxtaposed by a bold gateway that proclaims, "THIS IS BRADDOCK."

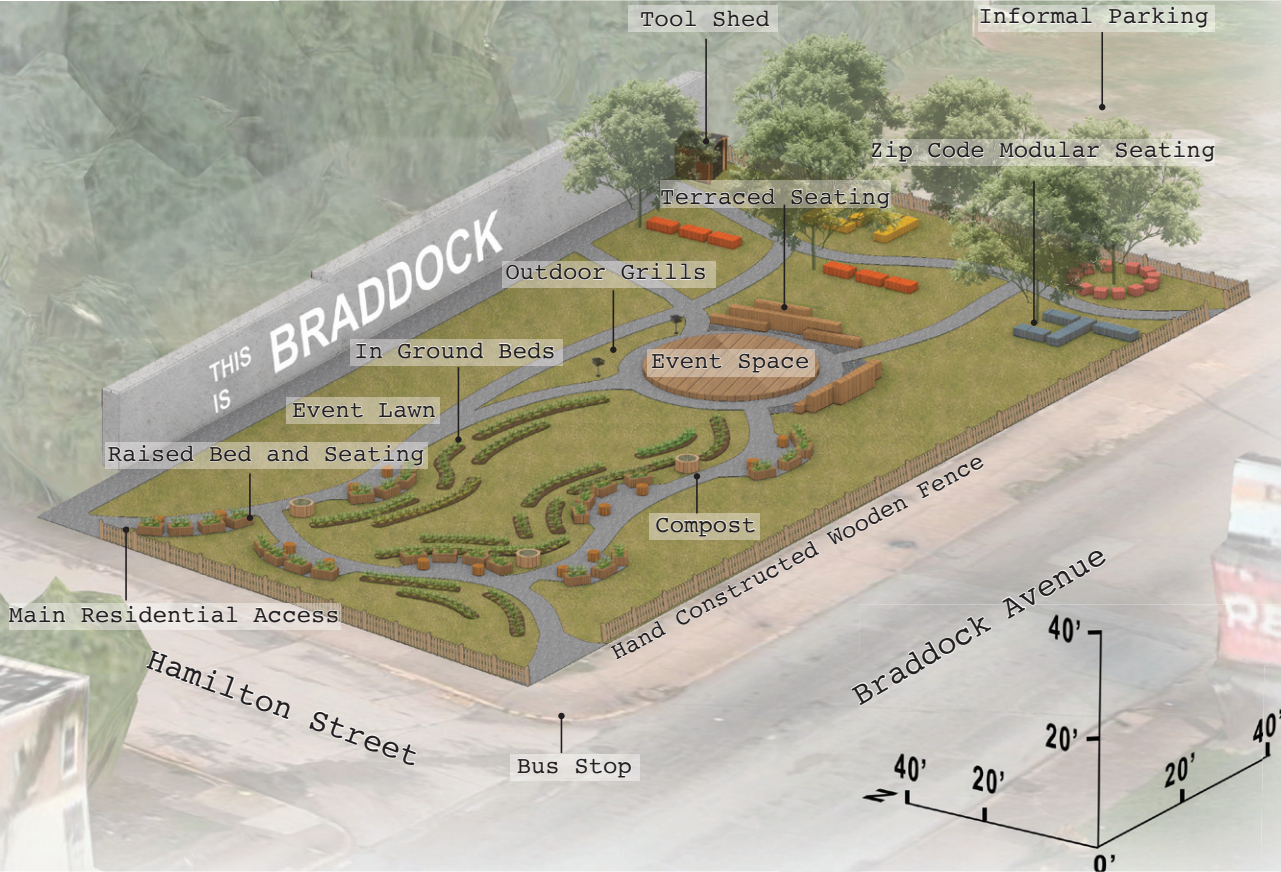
Braddocks voice must to be heard. Unyielding, proud, full of grit.

Potential Palette and Premise



Community  Art 
Colorful

Color and words courtesy of BYP.



Site Axonometric- Programming and Spatial Arrangement 1"=20'

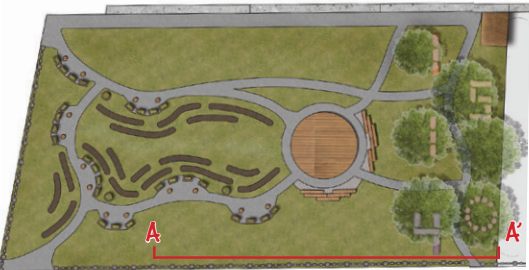
"An outdoor seating and event area would be the perfect thing for the youth. They don't have a large, outdoor, and safe gathering area." - Rausaun Brown of BYP



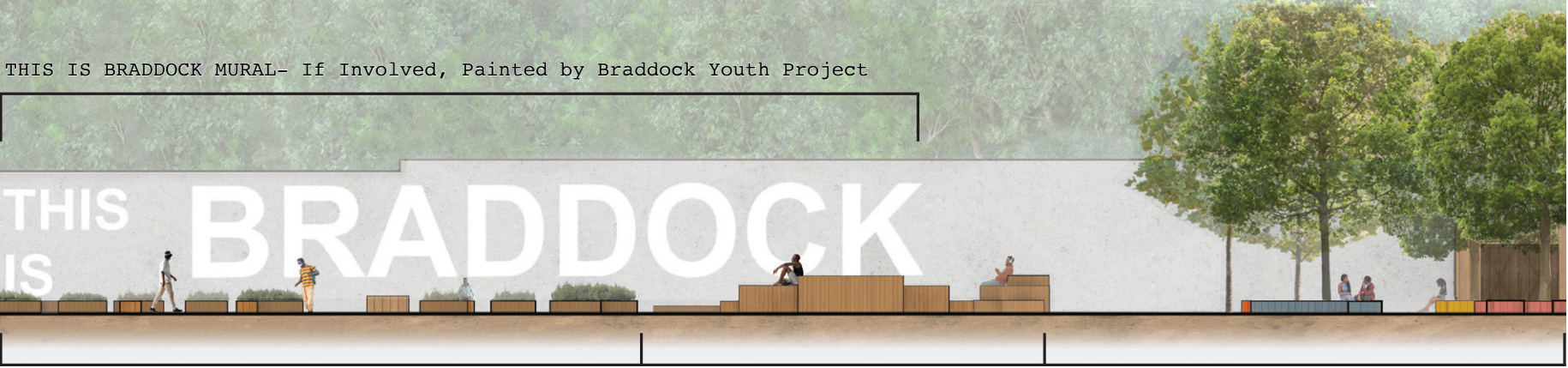
BYP Summer Market on Event Lawn



THIS IS BRADDOCK Agriculture in Action

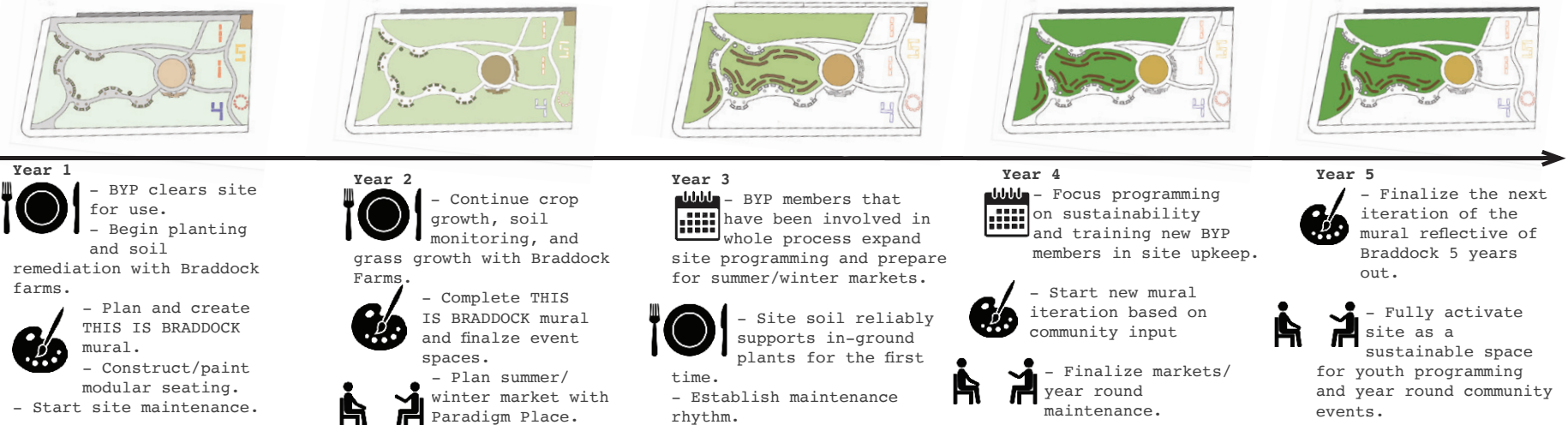


Key Plan 1"=50'



A-A': Garden to Seating 1"=10'

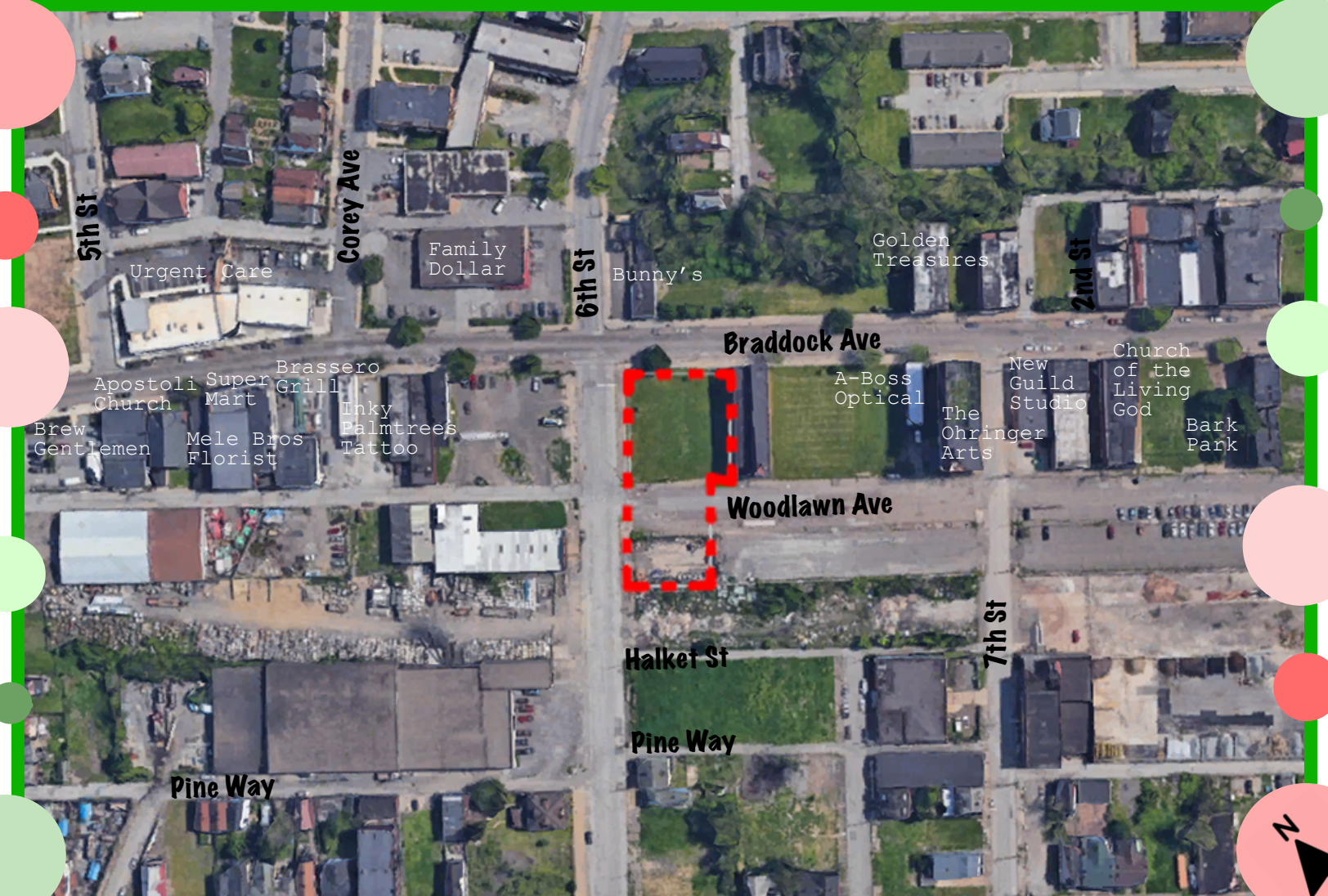
Five Year Timeline



SITE 2



At 6th and Braddock / Woodlawn



12 Growing Together: Enchanted Garden of Joy

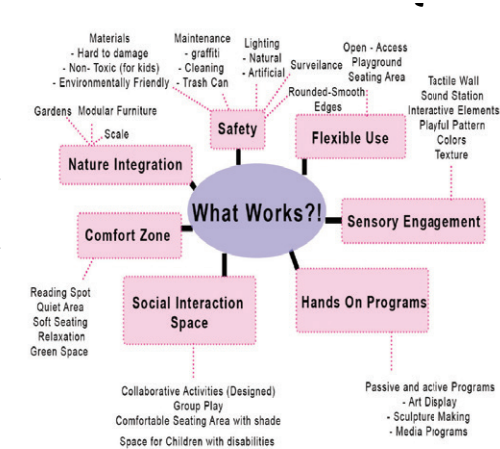
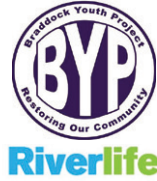
Vision Statement

The Braddock community aims to create a safe, joyful, and inclusive space for children aged 6-12, where they can play, learn, and connect. With features like a colorful climbing wall, seating areas for activities, and a pollinator garden, this design promotes physical activity, creativity, and environmental awareness. The zip code sculpture at the entry symbolizes community pride, while sustainable design practices ensure a green, eco-friendly space. Through engagement programs and volunteer opportunities, we strive to foster strong community bonds and provide a place where every child can grow and thrive.

Let's Make Something Amazing Happen That Will Last For Braddock kids Generation To Come

Partners

This project will involve key collaborations: the BYP Team will bring vibrant street coloring, Riverlife will lead the construction of the sculpture, pollinator garden, and installations, and the local library will offer programs to help children expand their knowledge and prepare for future success. Together, these partnerships will create a thriving, engaging space for the community.



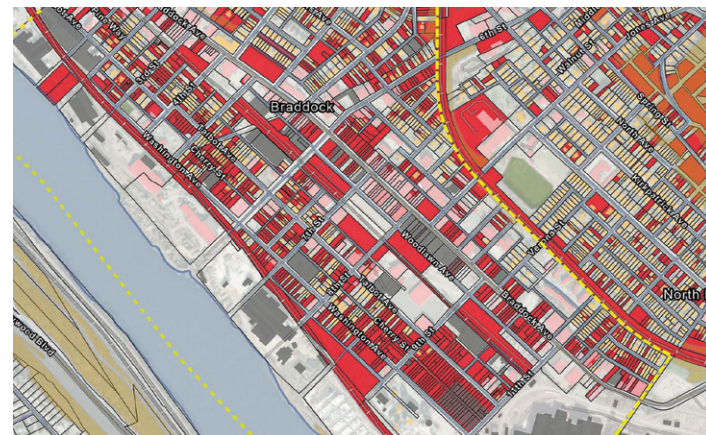
**The Relaxation Pavilion:
Where Connections Blossom**



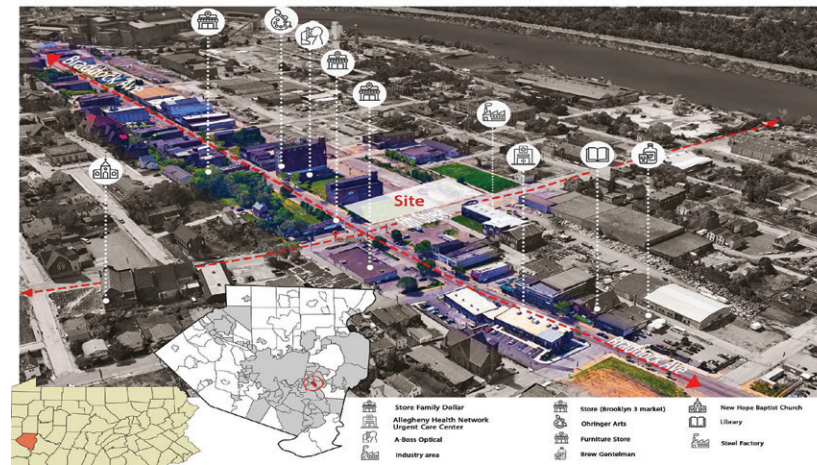
Circle of Joy: The Braddock Kids' Play Zone



Section Of Enchanted Garden of Joy with scale 1"=10'

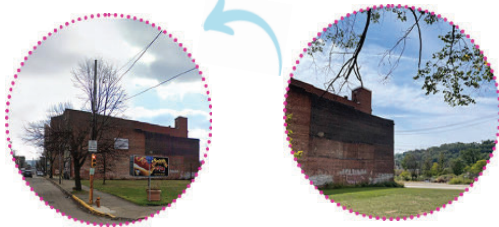


**Visualizing Opportunity:
GIS Map of Vacancy and Land Types At Braddock Near the**



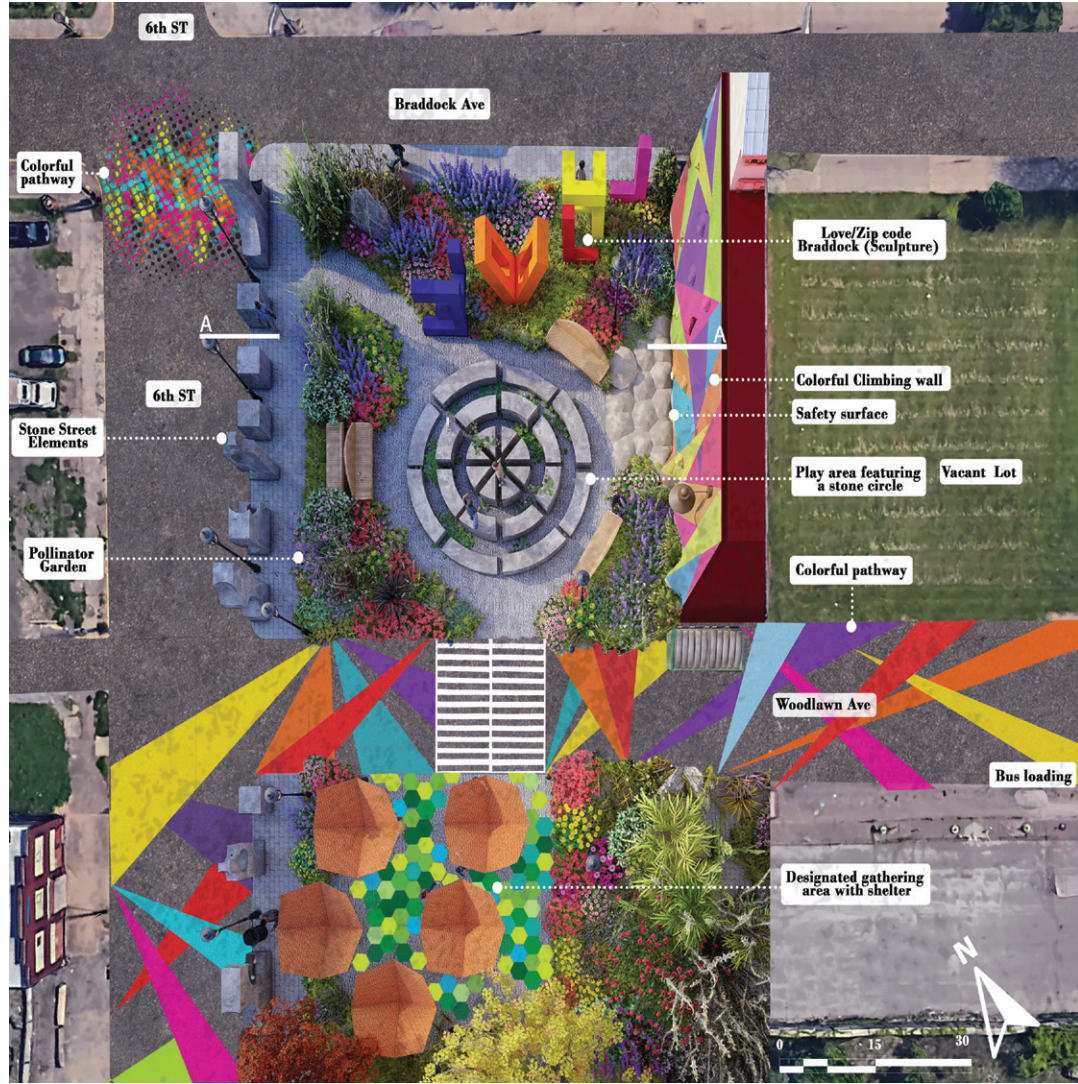
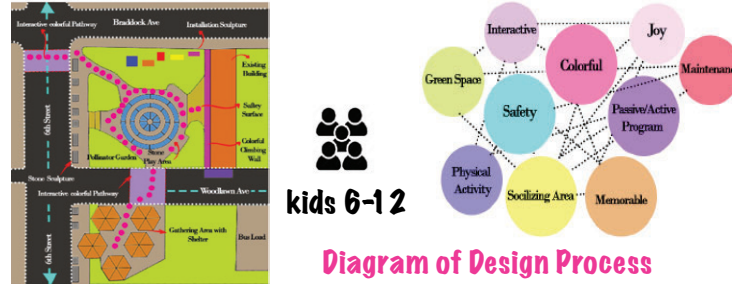
Site Analysis

Site two was chosen for its central location in Braddock, offering easy access to the bus station, free store, plaza, shops, and library, and benefiting from high foot traffic. This vibrant area enhances safety and community engagement. Its visibility and connectivity to riverside and northern Braddock make it an ideal choice. In contrast, site three, though closer to residential areas, may limit exploration and activity due to its proximity to busy roads and safety concerns. Site two best aligns with Braddock's vision for a vibrant, inclusive community.





Sculpting Memories The Braddock/Love Experience



Plan Of Enchanted Garden of Joy with scale 1"=30'



Bird's Eye View of the Enchanted Garden of Joy at Braddock

13 Blooming Braddock: Healing Through Art and Nature

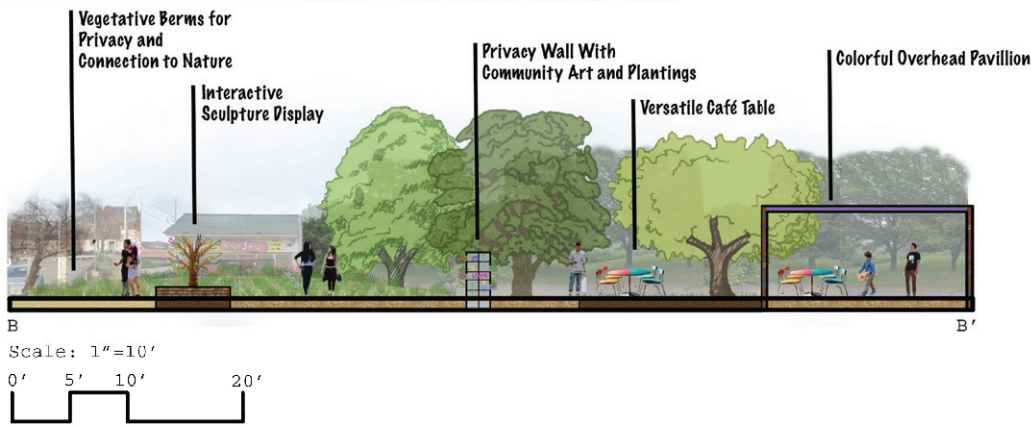
The Vision: Art Meets Resilience

“Blooming Braddock” addresses systemic challenges such as generational trauma, gun violence, and economic disinvestment by transforming an underutilized space into a vibrant environment that fosters healing and resilience in youth ages 13-20. Dynamic murals and rotating sculptural installations provide outlets for creative expression, reflecting Braddock’s artistic identity while offering a way to process built-up emotions. Swirling pathways, vegetative berms, and shaded seating areas create a tranquil setting that encourages mindfulness and connection, blending natural forms with artistic exploration to promote empowerment and community connection.

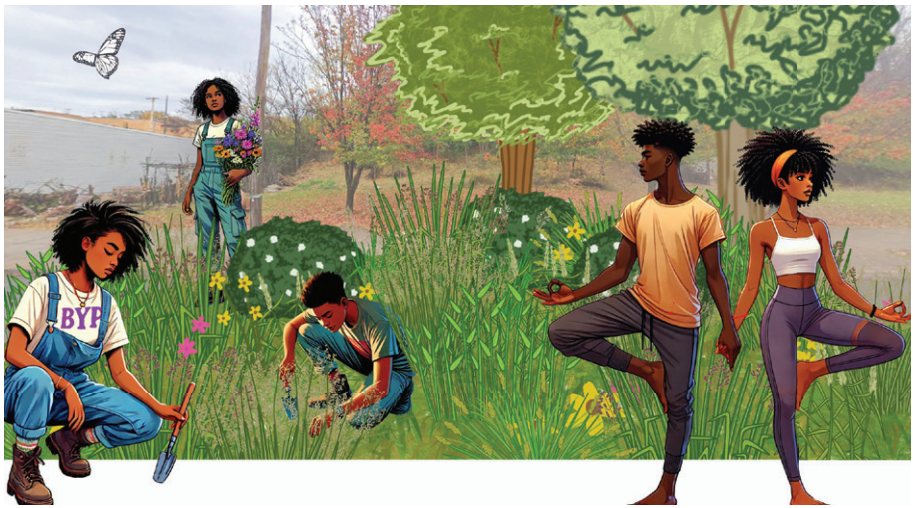


This vibrant overhead pavilion with colorful plexiglass invites you to draw, write, and let your imagination shine in every hue.

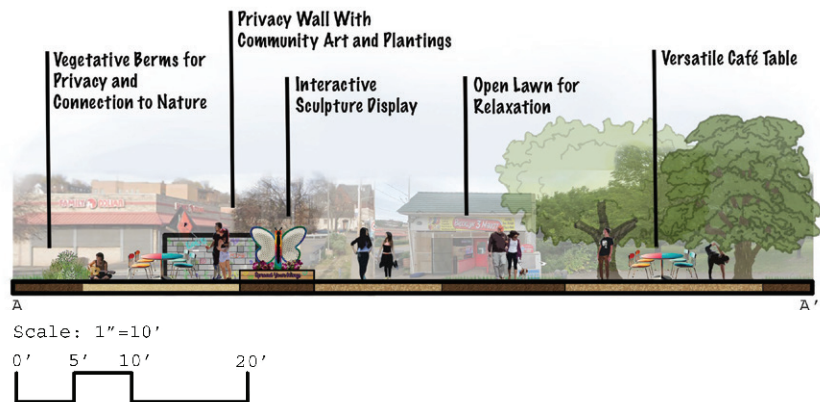
“...Aesthetics are so important when you’re dealing with trauma in your mind and blight and dirty spaces and clutter, and litter can really keep you stuck mentally and it can continue generationally...”
- Cathy Welsh, HOOP Alliance



conceptual design by Emma Manwiller



This lush vegetative berm offers a serene space for gardening and meditation, blending nature and tranquility in perfect harmony.

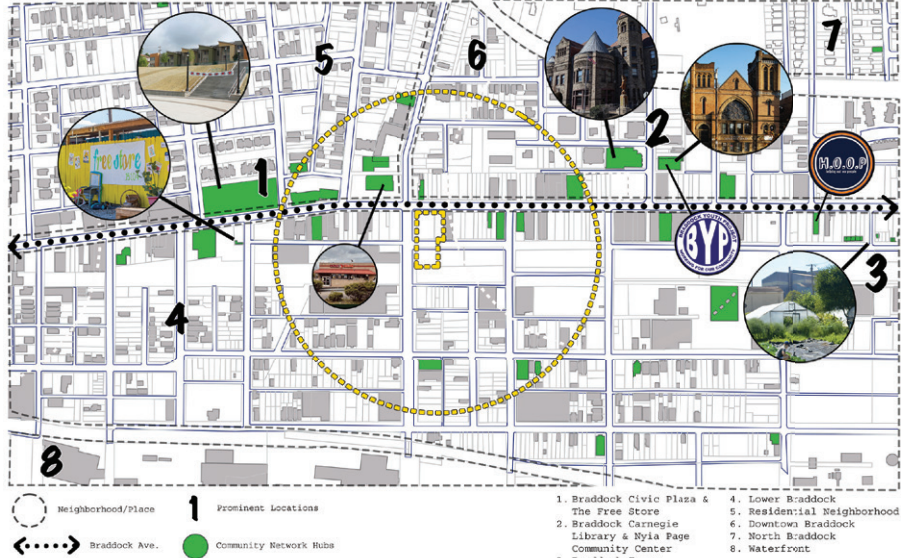


The Case for Healing Design for Braddock’s Youth

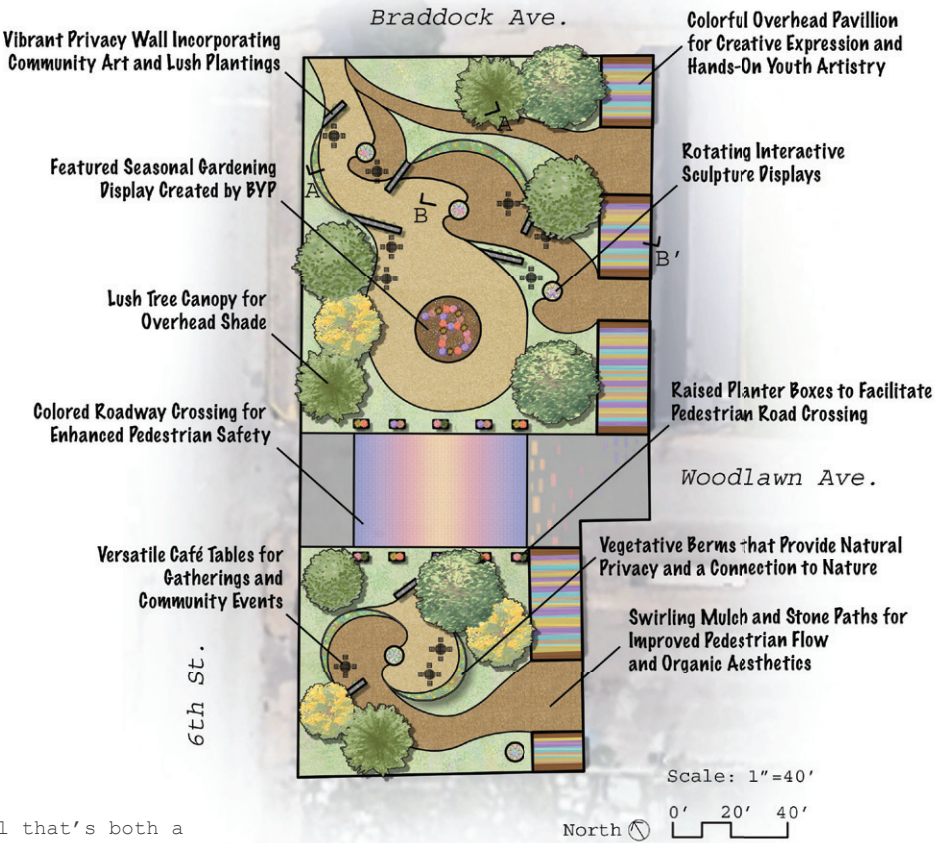
Braddock’s youth face significant mental health challenges, shaped by a history of systemic disinvestment and generational trauma. Conversations with local students and organizations, such as the Braddock Youth Project, reveal the emotional toll these systemic issues have taken. Many youth experience anxiety, depression, and even self-harm, often seeing these struggles as a normal part of life. This normalization of hardship reflects the community’s resilience but also highlights the critical need for spaces that help individuals process and heal from these ongoing challenges. The impact on mental health is particularly evident in local statistics. In Allegheny County, 25% of students reported self-harming, nearly double the national average. Interviews with Woodland Hills High School students confirm that this emotional burden is often compounded by the lack of safe spaces where they can express themselves. Racial minorities and females, groups that have been disproportionately impacted by

Braddock’s history of redlining and economic decline, experience even higher rates of depression and suicidal ideation. These findings demonstrate the need for environments that support healing, offer moments of rest, and help break the cycle of trauma. Generational trauma, passed down through years of hardship, further complicates these mental health issues. Organizations like the Helping Out Our People (HOOP) Alliance emphasize the importance of spaces that encourage mindfulness and reflection, offering youth opportunities to process emotions and feel connected with one another. Interactions with students and observations of Braddock’s landscape indicate a community need for spaces that feel safe, welcoming, and promote both active and passive healing. By incorporating these insights into the proposed design, the space can help address the mental health challenges youth face in Braddock - creating an environment that promotes healing, connection, and creative expression while celebrating the community’s identity.

Kid Civics // 2024 Penn State LARCH 315/817 Community Design Studio // Site 2



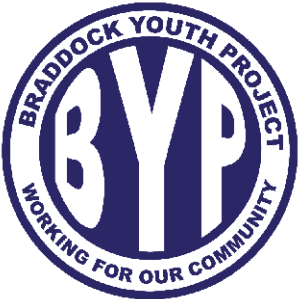
A privacy wall that's both a canvas for art and a garden, framed by stunning sculpture - where creativity and greenery meet!



	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Site Preparation Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Excavate for wood and plexiglass structures: two 2.5' holes for supports and 10" deep for hardscape.Remove 6" pavement for pavers in the alley.Dig 13 wide holes for 2" caliber trees.Stockpile excavated soil on-site for reuse.				
Design Implementation Phase		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Spread stockpiled soil into 2' high crescent berms and plant trees, perennials, and grasses with Braddock Youth Project's Gardening Team.Install shade cloths, hardscape, and rectangular wood and plexiglass structures.Build cinderblock walls and planter boxes with HOOP Alliance volunteers.			
Initial Community Engagement Phase			<ul style="list-style-type: none">Collaborate with the community to paint site elements and install plants:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Paint pavers, wayfinding symbols, and murals on walls and structures with the Braddock Youth Project Media Team.Plant flowers and grasses in wall-mounted pots with the Gardening Team.Work with the Braddock Youth Project and HOOP Alliance to install sculptures by Penn State students.Let the community arrange café seating and choose their preferred setup.		
Site Establishment Phase				<ul style="list-style-type: none">Remove shade cloths after Year 5 as tree canopies expand.Evolve art installations seasonally based on community interests.The Gardening Team will manage vegetation, including replanting to adjust the atmosphere and pruning shrubs annually to maintain size and reduce weediness.	

Engaging with Youth - BYP

The Braddock Youth Project empowers local youth through summer and after-school programs focused on community projects, professional job training, and positive change. For "Blooming Braddock," youth teams can paint colorful murals on the cinderblock privacy walls, transform the colorful overhead pavilion of plexiglass and wood into an interactive art space, and plant and maintain vegetative berms and seasonal plant displays. These activities provide hands-on experience in art, gardening, and maintenance while fostering creativity, ownership, and a strong sense of community pride.



Interacting with Community - HOOP

The Helping Out Our People (HOOP) Alliance, a coalition supporting families affected by gun violence, works to break the cycle of violence through grief support, youth initiatives, and community events. The design of "Blooming Braddock" aligns with HOOP's mission by offering tranquil paths for mindfulness walks and intimate spaces for grief support meetings. With vibrant, blooming vegetation, the space fosters healing and resilience, providing both active and passive opportunities for emotional recovery while supporting HOOP's efforts to create positive community change.



14 Braddock's Backyard

Design Intent

This project seeks to address the detrimental impact of vacant lots on Braddock's youth by creating a dynamic and engaging outdoor space that serves as a safe haven and a catalyst for positive development. Recognizing that vacant lots often contribute to blight, illegal dumping, and a sense of neglect, this design proposes a transformation that will directly benefit the Braddock Youth Program and the wider community.

This design is committed to creating a sustainable and resilient space that will benefit the Braddock community for years to come. By prioritizing the needs of the youth and addressing the challenges posed by vacant lots, this project aims to contribute to a brighter future for Braddock.

Vision Statement

To transform a vacant lot in Braddock into a vibrant, youth-centered outdoor space that fosters creativity, community engagement, and healthy living, serving as a model for the revitalization of underutilized urban spaces.

Vision Proccess

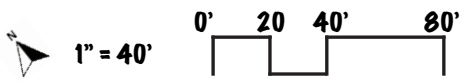
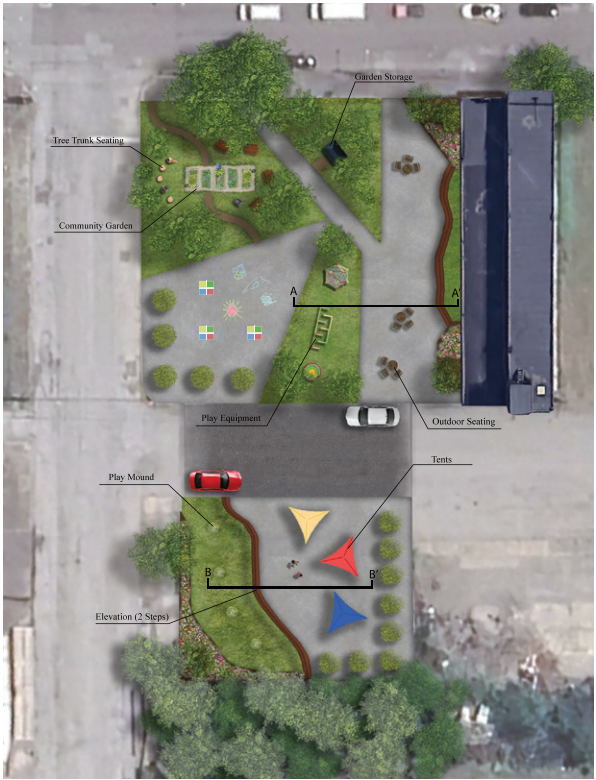
Braddock's Backyard seamlessly integrates passive and active spaces, offering a dynamic environment for all. Quiet zones within the community garden and plaza provide opportunities for reflection and relaxation, while the outdoor activity areas encourage play and social interaction. Elevated platforms, reaching 4 feet high, add a thrilling dimension for exploration and climbing, creating a unique landscape that caters to diverse needs and fosters a sense of adventure. This thoughtful combination of spaces ensures that Braddock's Backyard is a welcoming and engaging destination for the entire community.

Partner

The design will provide B.Y.P with outdoor spaces for their programs, such as a performance area, garden, or sports facilities.

- B.Y.P could contribute to the design construction process, ensuring it meets the needs and preferences of young people.
- B.Y.P could help with programming and activation of the space, bringing their existing youth network to the project.
- B.Y.P is directly focused on youth development in Braddock, offering programs in arts, education, and recreation. This aligns perfectly with the target age range.

Plan



Plan Context



Overgrown playground



Former mosaic park to boost children creativity now overgrown



'Best' playground no shade/benches to keep parents wanting to stay

The overall design combined all factors of the overgrown lots in Braddock, and what they used to be, and created one main hub. Every aspect of these lots are included, from playgrounds, to a mini outdoor park, to a community garden for everyone to enjoy. The site consists of many gathering spaces, an outdoor mural, and different man made landscape features for visitors to enjoy. The top half of the design has a passive activity focus, while also including some outdoor activity features, and the bottom half focuses on operating as a gathering space for B.Y.P. or the Braddock community to host events.

Improvement/Involvement



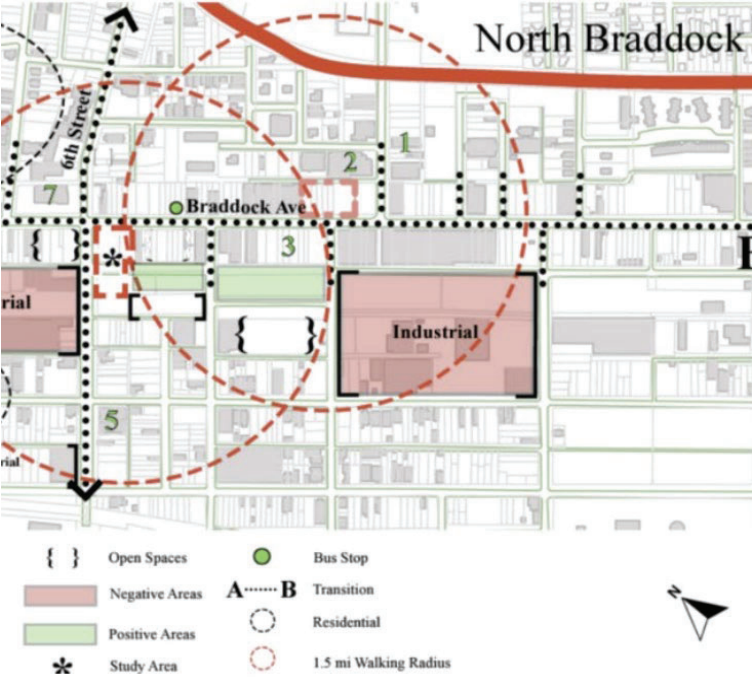
Outdoor Activity



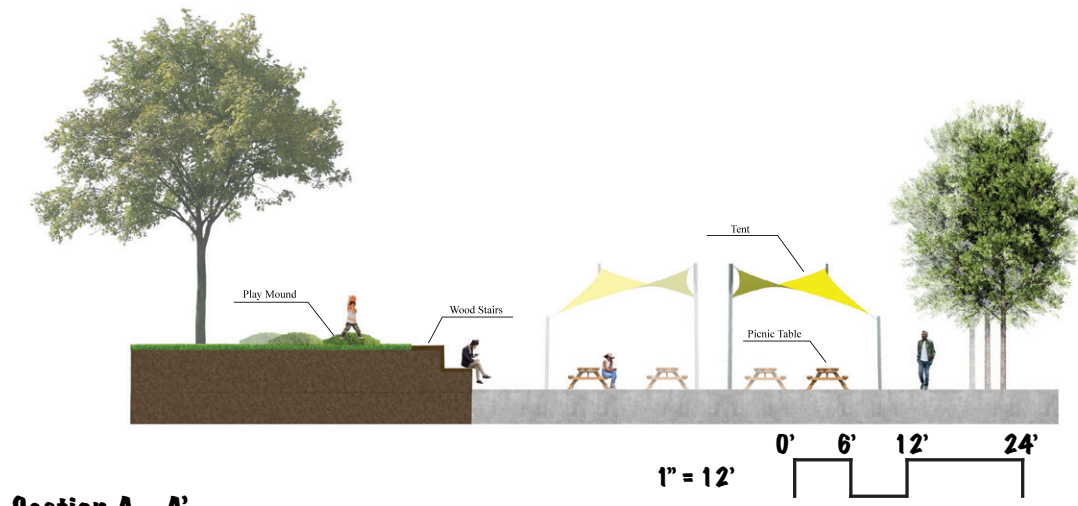
Gardening



Community Events



The Existing conditions map shows surrounding features of the Braddock area, both pros and cons. Site 2 is the center for the Community, being only two blocks from where the Braddock Youth Project. The site is also at an intersection between two meeting points, 6th Street and Braddock Ave, ultimately being accessible for all.



Section A - A'

To transform a vacant lot in Braddock into a vibrant, youth-centered outdoor space that fosters creativity, community engagement, and healthy living, serving as a model for the revitalization of underutilized urban spaces.



The grass mounds offer a place for visitors to sit and relax, and enjoy the comfort of the space



The tents are an alternative for a shade source, offering seating underneath for lunch and community events.



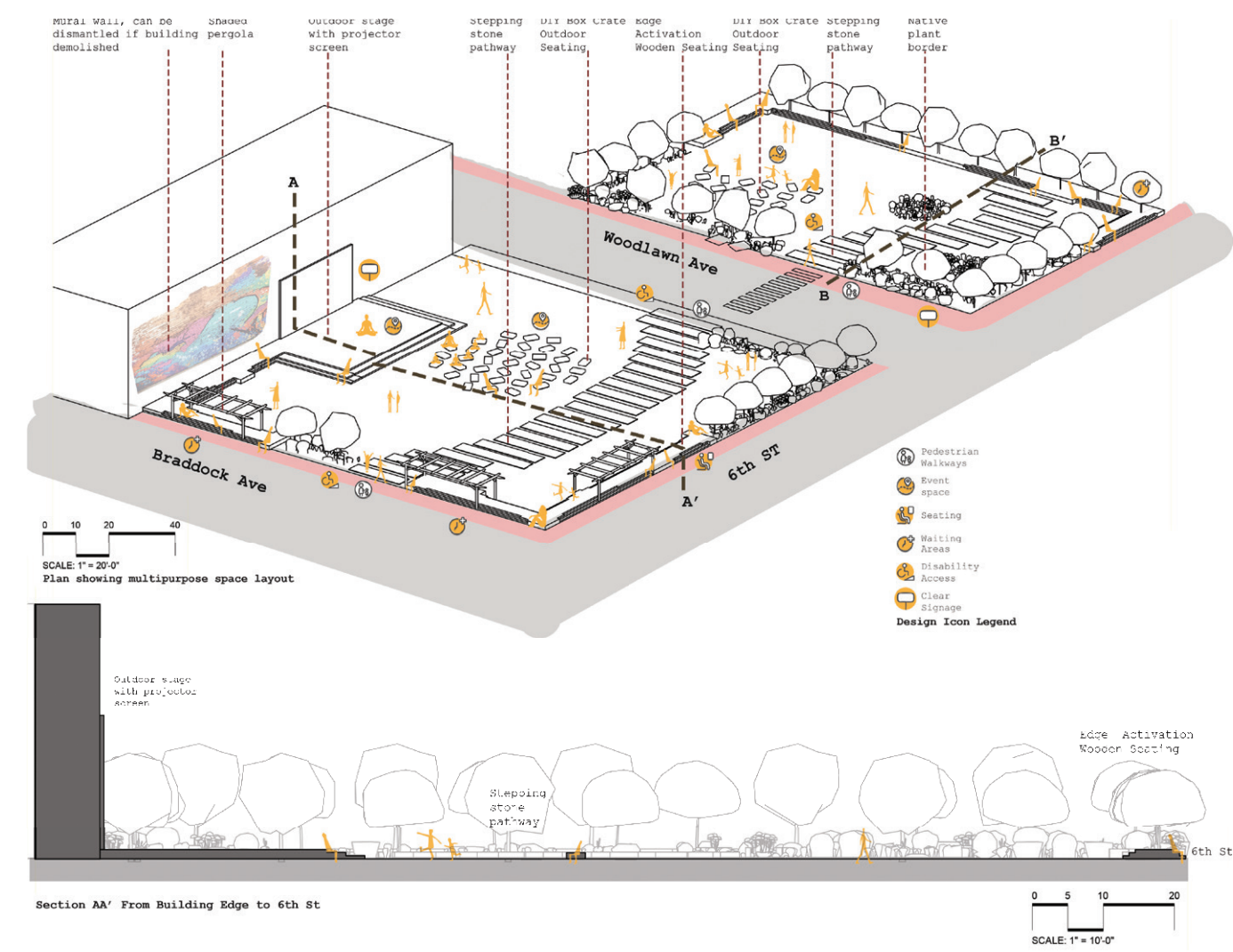
The community garden offers a space for recreation and relaxation. Community members and the B.Y.P gardening team can collaborate and have their own space to work on.



Visitors may sit down on the community plaza, or can walk up the elevation to the mural where community members can take memorable photos, or the B.Y.P Art Team can interact with the mural.

15 Braddock Catalyst Commons

Activating Public Space for Connection, Creativity, and Community Growth



Site Context Key Map
Vision Statement

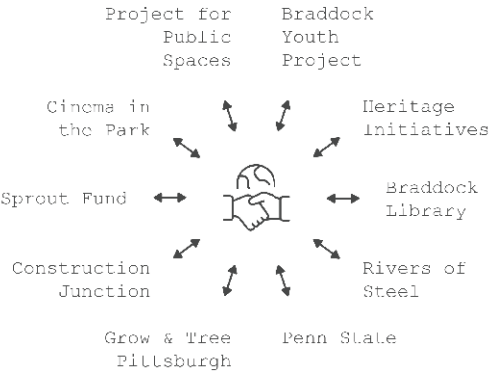
The project aims to transform a vacant public space into a vibrant, interactive environment that fosters emotional and social development, while providing teenagers with the opportunity to actively shape their surroundings. By engaging youth in the design process, this project empowers them to contribute to the creation of a community-driven landscape that reflects their aspirations, creativity, and sense of ownership.

The design will prioritize activation, focusing on increasing foot traffic and people-watching elements to address vacancy and abandonment through urban strategies that bring people together. This single, dynamic public space will encourage social interaction, creative expression, and community engagement, creating an environment where the Braddock community can gather, learn and connect.

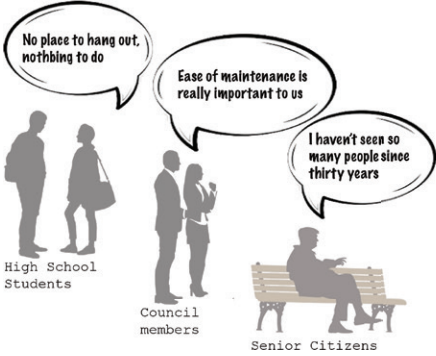
Emotional well-being will be central to the design, with areas for reflection, gathering, and connection that promote a sense of belonging. Features such as flexible seating, shaded areas, and spaces for group activities will support both individual and collective experiences. The space will be designed with sustainability in mind, using low-maintenance materials and native plantings to ensure longevity while minimizing upkeep.

Ultimately, the Braddock Catalyst Commons Project will revitalize a neglected area, transforming it into a place where social and emotional development is nurtured, community bonds are strengthened, and Braddock's future aspirations are realized.

Braddock Project Partnerships



Dynamic Community Space: Featuring a pop-up dance party and flash mob, the scene also captures people enjoying the public space, with volunteers actively building box-crate seating, planting trees and painting vibrant graffiti art to enhance the area's character





Community Space: Toward Woodlawn Avenue with Braddock Avenue behind and 6th Street on the right, featuring a vibrant block party with food trucks, vendors and a bring-your-own bar-becue atmosphere



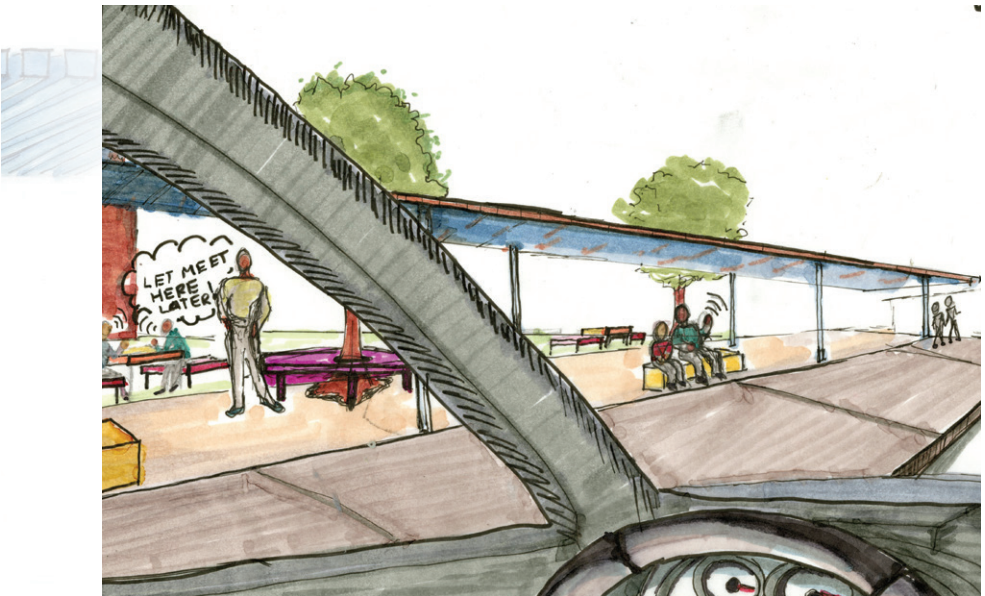
Community Gateway: Looking toward Braddock Avenue with the vibrant public space on the left and the intersection of Braddock and 6th Street ahead, this view captures a live music festival energizing the area and drawing in commuters via public transit

16 Braddock Connection Commons: A gathering place of pride + growth



Vision

The Braddock Connection Commons reimagines outdoor spaces as places that bring people together while supporting mental health and instilling pride in the community. Braddock's history is one of resilience that shines through the community members, but limited access to green spaces and gathering areas, especially for youth, has created challenges for growth. This project transforms Site 2 on Braddock Avenue into a vibrant hub, offering a safe, welcoming place where people can connect, reflect, and grow. The space features a bold blue steel pergola, shaded seating, and interactive areas that nurtures tradition, well being and community expression. Its location, central to Braddock's main street and transit lines, makes it accessible for all. More than just a gathering spot, it will be a symbol of Braddock's identity and strength. By focusing on community needs and celebrating its spirit, this project aims to build a brighter future where connection and pride fuel growth.



A Distinct Moment in Braddock

The bold blue steel pergola serves as a defining feature for Braddock, blending functionality and symbolism to create a meaningful public space. Positioned in a central, highly trafficked location, the pergola offers shade and shelter, making it a practical addition for residents and visitors alike. It doubles as a bus shelter, providing comfort for commuters, while also acting as a gathering space where individuals can pause, interact, or simply rest. Its scale and design inspire movement and connection, extending beyond infrastructure it uplifts Braddock's community and celebrates its history and spirit.



Why Site 2 ? "Anything is better than an empty lot" - BYP faculty member

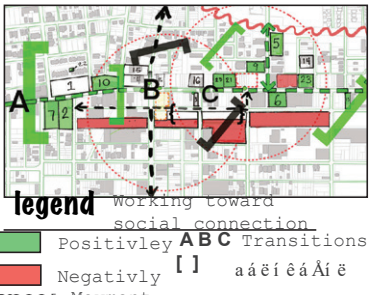
- Network of Positive Resilience
 - Braddock Avenue serves as a corridor of programs and activities that uplift community energy.
 - By activating Site 2 the gap will then be bridged. extending this network, enhancing social resilience through improved transportation, identity, and pride.

Creating a Core

- Setting the tone internally
- Establishes a central, distinct gathering spot that complements nearby initiatives and programs.
- Acts as a recognizable and inviting space where people can gather, pause, and engage.

For the Next Generations

- Provides a dedicated space for 16-20-year-olds (the age of influence) to independently interact, express themselves, and grow outside of existing programs.
- Encourages positive mental health by offering a place for individuals to pause and connect, sparking moments of joy throughout the day.



when you see that unique painting you will know exactly where you are.

THE COMMUNITIES VOICES

"Our community makes the places interesting" - BYP member

Elevating Braddock means amplifying the voices of the people who live its story daily. Braddock's roots are tied to its steel mill history, a legacy of resilience and hard work that shaped its identity. Alongside this industrial past, art and creativity have flourished as powerful tools for expression and transformation. Engaging the community is essential to ensuring that its future reflects the pride, values, and needs of its residents. By creating spaces for dialogue and collaboration, we honor Braddock's history while empowering its people to drive change, fostering a future that's authentic, vibrant, and deeply connected to its roots.



Features
"Need more spaces for kids" ... "our Braddock easthetic is colorful" - BVP members

Playful Seating
an opportunity to put culture on display creates unique interactions and allows the community to customize depnding on the oocation

Protection of Existing Tree
Provides natural shade and habitat
Draws attention to history and highlights native ecology

Lighting
Enhances nightlife experience
Improves safety

Simply Transformative

Legend
wall of Community Expression and Engagment
Pride
Existing Trees
Bus Stops

Year 1

- Prep and Maintnace in collaboration with partners and community
- A 4 year plan must be set.

Year 2

- Introduce the blue steel overhead pergola with the help of Edger Thomson Steel works

Year 3

- Introduce the playful seating to the
- Allow Braddock community to customize to represent their identity.

Year 4

- In collaboration with Heritage and local residents, create traditions in this space. Movie nights, art displays, Farmers Markets and more

Year 5

- This space will continue to be a multifaceted and exciting hub where the blue steel pride can spread people.

Heritage Community Initiatives

This organization works to empower underserved communities through social services, education, and community development. Its mission aligns perfectly with the goals of the Braddock Connection Commons, focusing on enhancing health, education, and social vitality. Their expertise can help reinforce and activate this site as a community hub where tradition can take root and thrive. As the space develops, the organization could create an event schedule that keeps the spirit of the Braddock Connection Commons alive.

Edger Thomson Steel Works

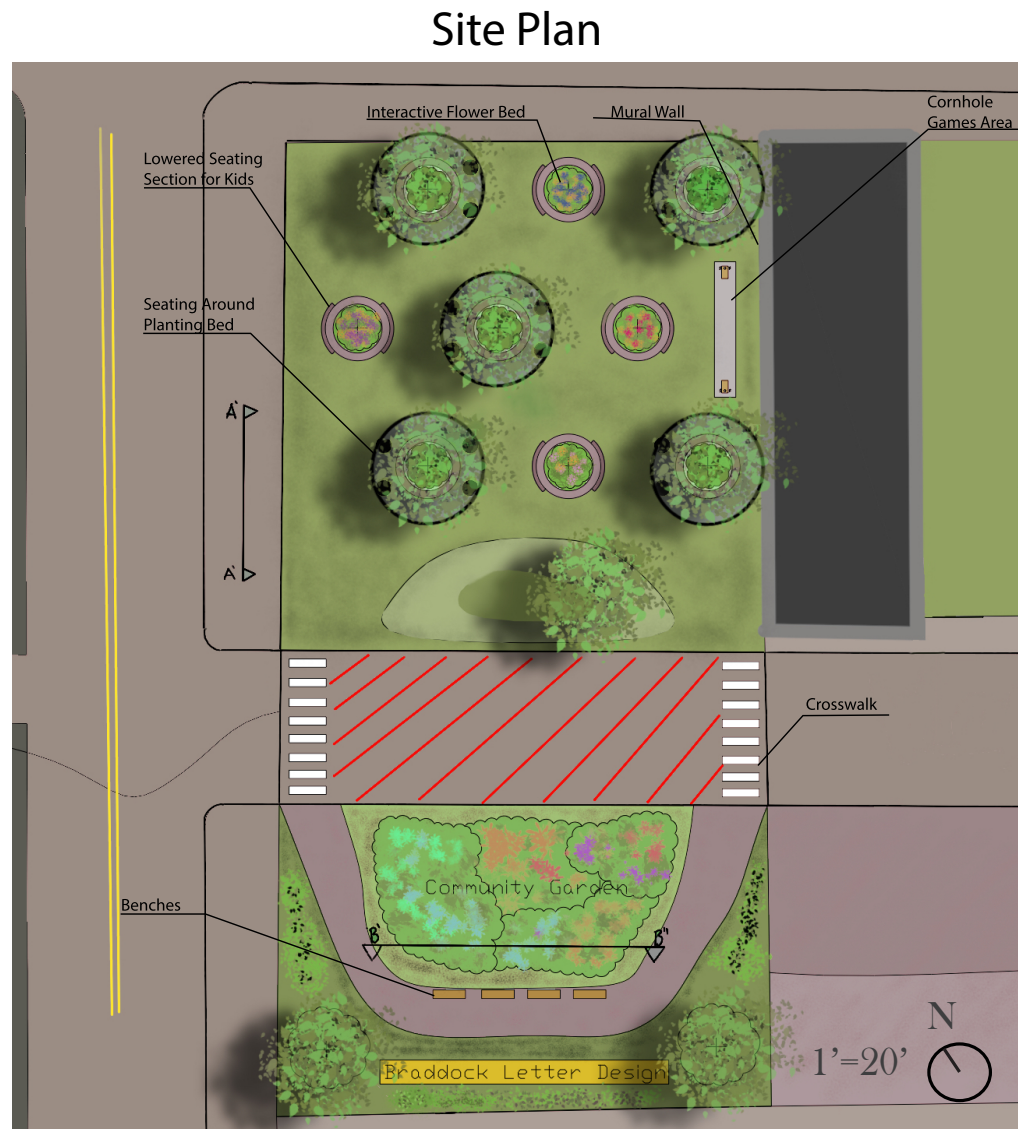
Partnering with Braddock's steel mill as a stakeholder ties the project to its industrial legacy while addressing modern community needs. The mill can provide sustainable steel for the blue pergola, symbolizing resilience and heritage. Through educational workshops, public art, and event sponsorships, the mill can help activate the Commons as a space for connection and pride. This collaboration reflects Braddock's past while investing in a sustainable, vibrant future.

17 Empowering Braddock's Future: A community haven for youth

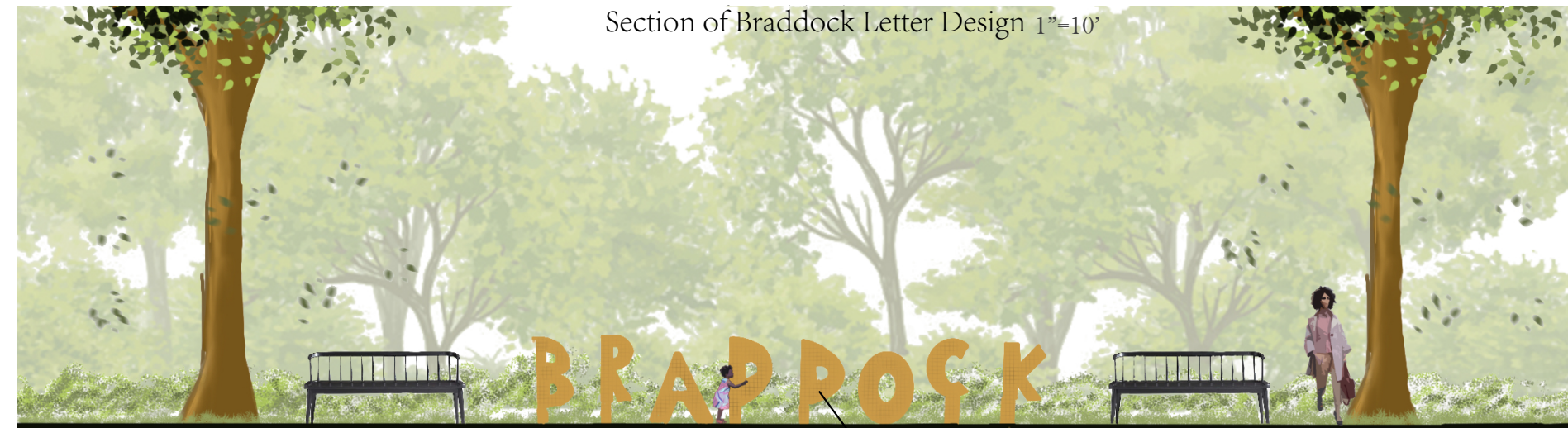
DESIGN INTENT
 This design creates a vibrant, safe, and inclusive space for Braddock's youth, addressing the urgent need for such havens. Prioritizing accessibility, it ensures convenient access through well-maintained bus stops, ample street parking, and clear pathways. The central location encourages diverse families to utilize the space, giving a sense of community. The site in Braddock boasts excellent accessibility for families, thanks to its convenient location near multiple bus stops. With over five stops in close proximity, visitors can easily reach the site via public transportation, eliminating the need for expensive car travel or lengthy walks. This abundance of public transportation options makes it simple for families of all income levels to enjoy the site and its offerings. The design itself promotes individual expression and community interaction with features like well-lit areas, accessible walkways, and varied seating configurations. By offering opportunities for learning, play, and connection, this initiative aims to support educational success, encourage creativity, and facilitate intergenerational relationships. Ultimately, it seeks to plant seeds of hope and resilience in Braddock, investing in the well-being of its youth and contributing to a brighter future for all.

PARTNER
 Partnering with the Braddock Carnegie Library creates a dynamic community hub. Imagine outdoor reading rooms, pop-up libraries, live music, and author talks, all bringing literacy, arts, and cultural vibrancy to the space. This collaboration enriches lives and strengthens Braddock's revitalization.

SYNTHESIS/ANALYSIS
 This design aims to create a vibrant and secure space for the youth of Braddock, addressing the critical need for safe and engaging environments within the community. Recognizing that accessibility is key, the design prioritizes safe transportation options, including well-maintained bus stops with convenient access to the site and ample street parking for those who prefer to drive. This ensures that all children, regardless of their background or location, can easily reach this haven designed specifically for them. By providing opportunities for learning, play, and connection, this initiative seeks to plant seeds of hope and resilience in Braddock, investing in the well-being of its youth and contributing to a brighter future for the entire community.



conceptual design by Alex Warren

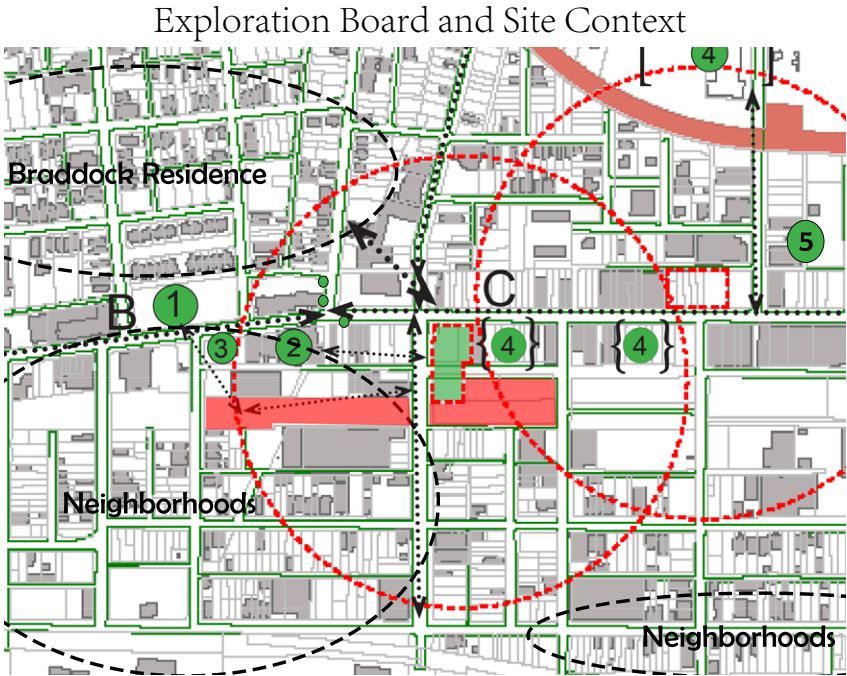


Section View: Seating Area, Mural wall, and interactive mound 1"=10'

Perspectives of showing Plantbed Seating, interactive mural and playful area

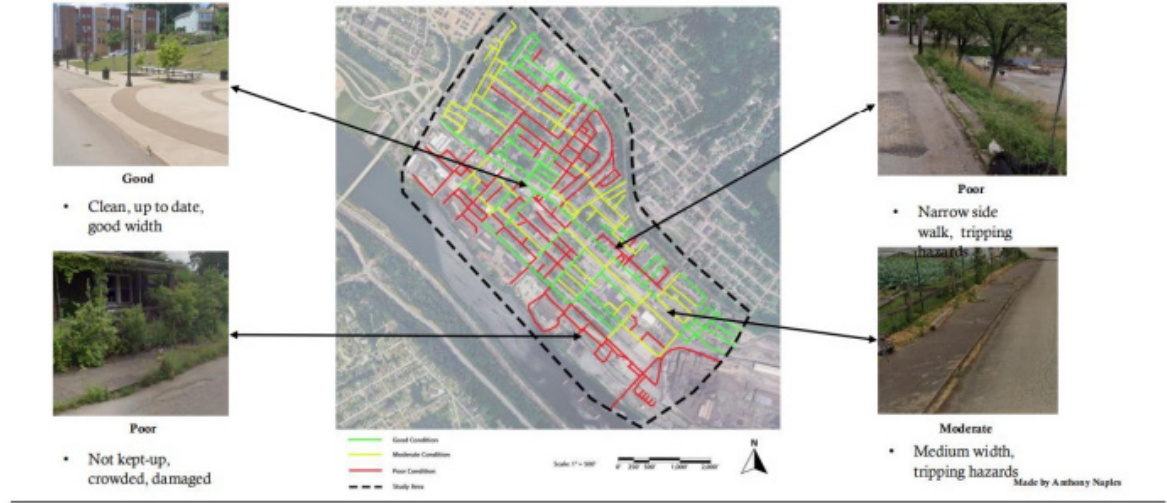


Perspectives of showing Form and Function



Nestled in the heart of Braddock, the site enjoys a highly accessible location surrounded by amenities that cater to the local community. Its proximity to numerous bus stops ensures convenient access for residents of both Braddock and North Braddock, promoting inclusivity and ease of travel. Furthermore, the presence of several nearby convenience stores adds to the site's appeal, offering everyday necessities within a short distance. This central location, combined with excellent public transportation links and local amenities, makes the site an ideal gathering place for the community and a convenient destination for visitors.

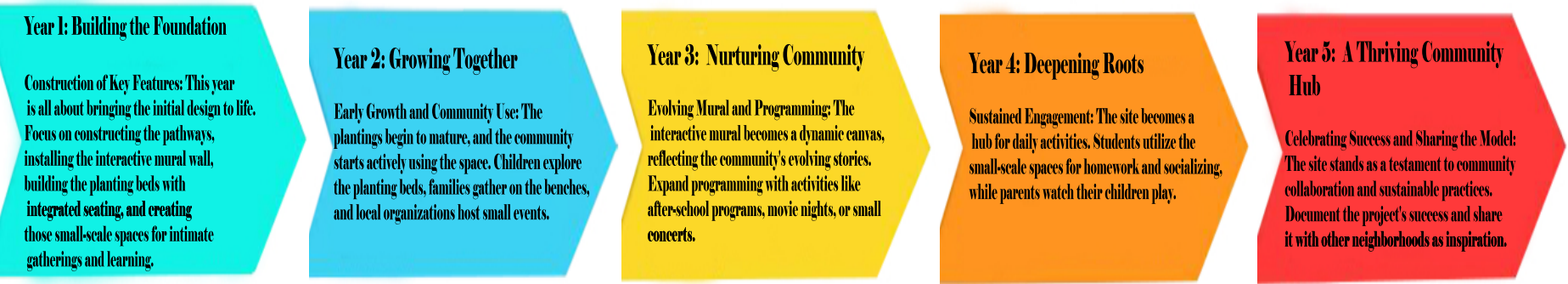
WALKABILITY



Description of Walkability Chart

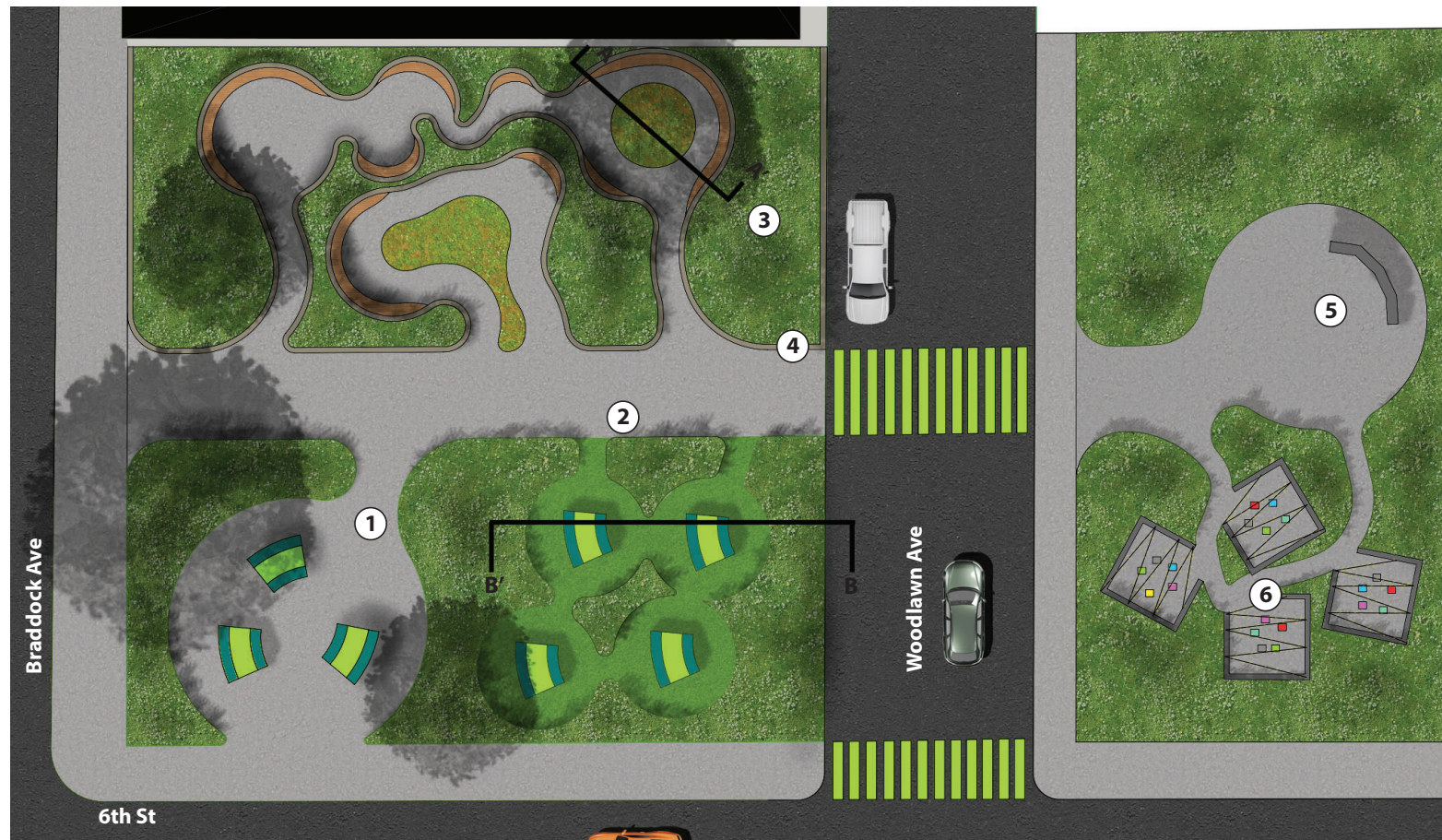
A walkability chart of the area clearly illustrates the site's exceptional accessibility. Its central location within Braddock, coupled with a network of well-maintained and accessible sidewalks, ensures that residents can easily reach the site on foot. This pedestrian-friendly infrastructure promotes a healthy lifestyle and reduces reliance on vehicles, fostering a sense of community and encouraging interaction among neighbors. The walkability chart highlights the site as a central hub, easily reachable from all directions, further solidifying its position as a convenient and welcoming destination for all.

5 Year Timeline Plan and Section of Design Aspects



18

Braddock Youth Meadow: Reclaiming Urban Spaces



Site Plan View

Scale: 1" = 20'
0' 10' 20' 40'

Concept

The design responds to Braddock's context through strategic spatial planning. The main picnic area is located at the high-traffic intersection of Braddock Ave and 6th Street. Individual picnic spaces are nestled within tall meadow grass, creating private, framed areas. Planter beds with benches are positioned near a large building, offering a sense of prospect and refuge. Two distinct areas across Woodlawn Ave complete the path, with irregularly placed spaces surrounded by grass. The Industrial Heart Sculpture serves as the final destination, with a strategically placed mirror reflecting the site and its broader Braddock context.

"I wish to see a gathering space for youth where they can explore their interests" - Rasaun Brown

Vision Statement

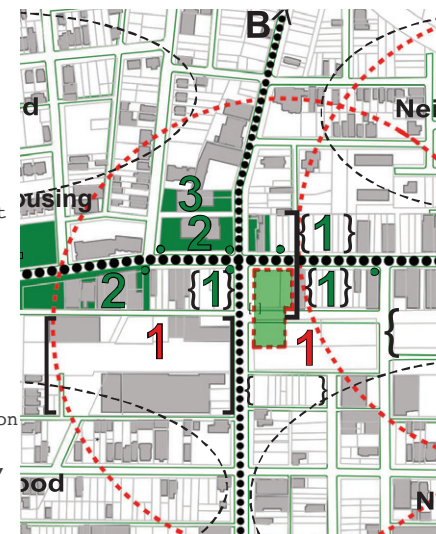
The vision is to transform Braddock's underutilized vacant lots into a vibrant garden gathering space where teenagers can authentically connect and express themselves. By carefully designing an environment that balances active social zones with quiet reflective areas, the project aims to provide local youth with a place they can truly call their own within the heart of their community. Through thoughtful garden design that prioritizes accessibility, safety, and creative expression, this space will empower teenagers to develop personally while fostering deeper connections with the broader Braddock community.

Existing Conditions

Braddock is a resilient community with untapped potential. Despite challenges, the town's strength emerges through its tight-knit community, local resources like the Carnegie Library, community parks, youth initiatives, and public art. However, Braddock struggles with the common U.S. issue of lacking "3rd places" - informal social spaces outside home and work where people, especially teens, can gather. The community faces infrastructural challenges, including public space maintenance and development concerns. Yet these obstacles also present opportunities for positive transformation. By improving street safety, expanding youth programs, and creatively utilizing vacant lots, Braddock can enhance its existing community spaces and social fabric. Local organizations provide essential services for youth, though transportation and facility limitations can hinder access. The goal is to create welcoming, inclusive spaces that foster community connection without feeling overly monitored or restrictive.



Vincent Lin



Vacancies

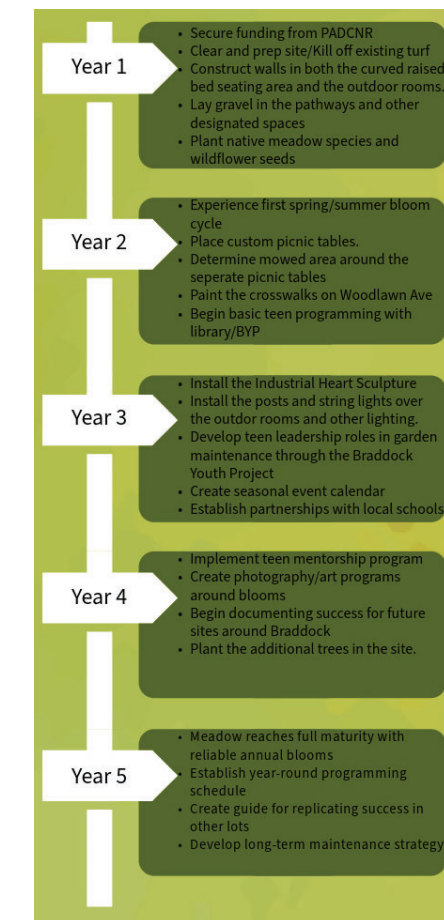
Vacant lots in Braddock present a complex dynamic of both challenges and possibilities for the community. These spaces, often unmaintained, create safety concerns through illegal dumping, overgrown vegetation, and poor lighting, which can make residents feel unsafe, diminish property values, and become eyesores. However, these same vacant parcels hold significant potential for positive transformation. Braddock has a unique situation where these vacant lots are right in the center of town. Their availability and central location offers opportunities for community-driven development like youth gardens or public gathering spaces that could enhance neighborhood connectivity, ecology, and provide safe spaces for teenagers.

Existing Gardens

While Braddock has community gardens like Braddock Farms and Sol Patch Garden, these spaces primarily focus on food production and urban agriculture. Though important for food security, they don't address the distinct need for dedicated youth spaces. A contemplative garden designed for teenagers would offer a unique environment for leisure, socialization, and quiet reflection - a space where teens can simply exist without the pressures of productivity.

"Kids need a place where they can simply be kids" - Ms. Rachelle

Timeline



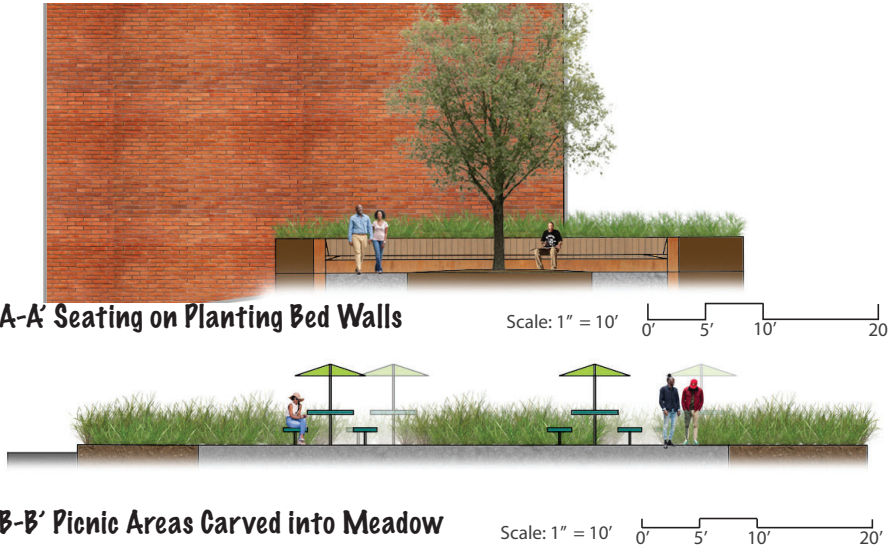
Partners

Braddock Youth Project:
A partnership with Braddock Youth Project would amplify the garden's role as a youth empowerment space. BYP's experience with community projects could help develop youth-led maintenance programs and creative activities that keep the space vibrant and relevant to local teenagers' needs.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources:
This partnership would strengthen the garden's environmental impact through expert guidance and resources. The department's involvement could help secure state funding and connect Braddock's youth to larger environmental initiatives across Pennsylvania, positioning local efforts within a broader conservation movement.

Braddock Carnegie Library:
A partnership between the Braddock Carnegie Library and the teen garden would create a powerful combination of education and sanctuary. The garden would extend the library's trusted presence, providing teenagers a dedicated space for self-reflection and social connection that symbolizes youth ownership in Braddock.

Woodland Hills High School:
Woodland Hills High School's involvement could transform the garden into an extended classroom where students earn service credits and gain hands-on experience in environmental science. The partnership would create a direct link between academic learning and community engagement, potentially inspiring future environmental careers.



1. Gathering in the Large Picnic Space



2. Eating at the Secluded Picnic Tables



3. Hanging Out in the Raised Beds



5. Mirror Heart Sculpture Reflections



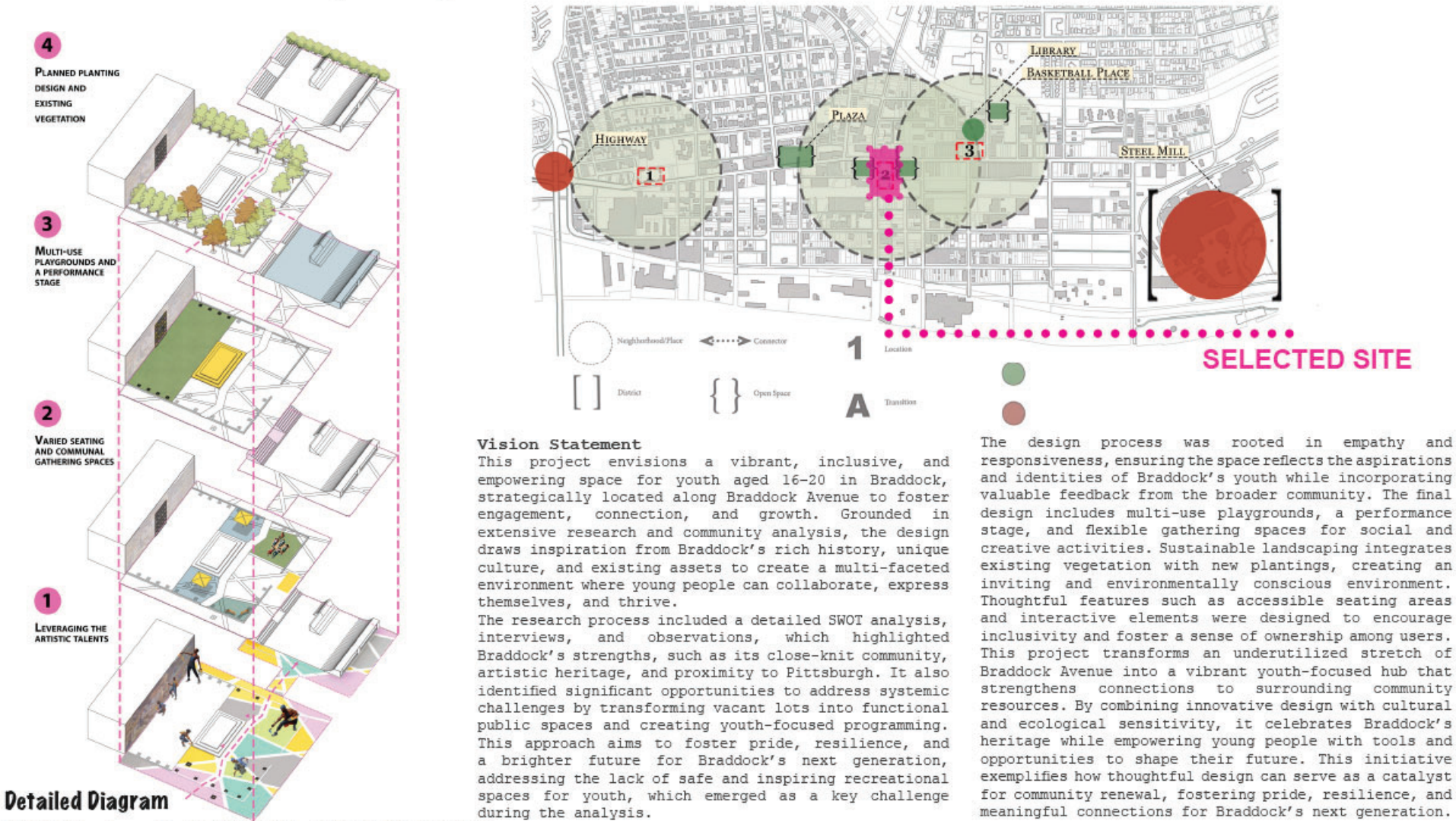
4. Walking Down the Main Gravel Path



6. Talking in the Outdoor Rooms



19 Braddock Youth Catalyst: Empowering Connections



conceptual design by Marjan Karimi



Project timeline

At-a-glance

**BRADDOCK
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION
(BCDC)**

- Community Meeting
- Permits and Approvals
- Foundational Work

YEAR 1

Planning, Permits, and
Initial Development

**BRADDOCK
YOUTH
PROJECT (BYP)**

- Complete Multi-Purpose Stage
- Open Youth Gathering Place
- Gather Community Feedback

YEAR 2

Constructing and Activating
First Installations

**THE FREE
STORE
BRADDOCK**

- Start Construction of
Climbing Wall and Skating
Playground

YEAR 3

Expanding Activities and
Building Physical Elements

**BRADDOCK
SENIOR
CENTER**

- Complete Climbing Wall
and Skating Playground
- Launch Intergenerational
Programming

YEAR 4

Finishing Construction
and Fostering Engagement

**GREATER VALLEY
COMMUNITY
SERVICES (GVCS)**

- Open Elderly Gathering Area
- Make Final Adjustments Based
on Feedback
- Establish Long-Term
Maintenance and Programming
Plan

YEAR 5

Final Adjustments and
Long-Term Programming



Picnic Area

Skating Ground

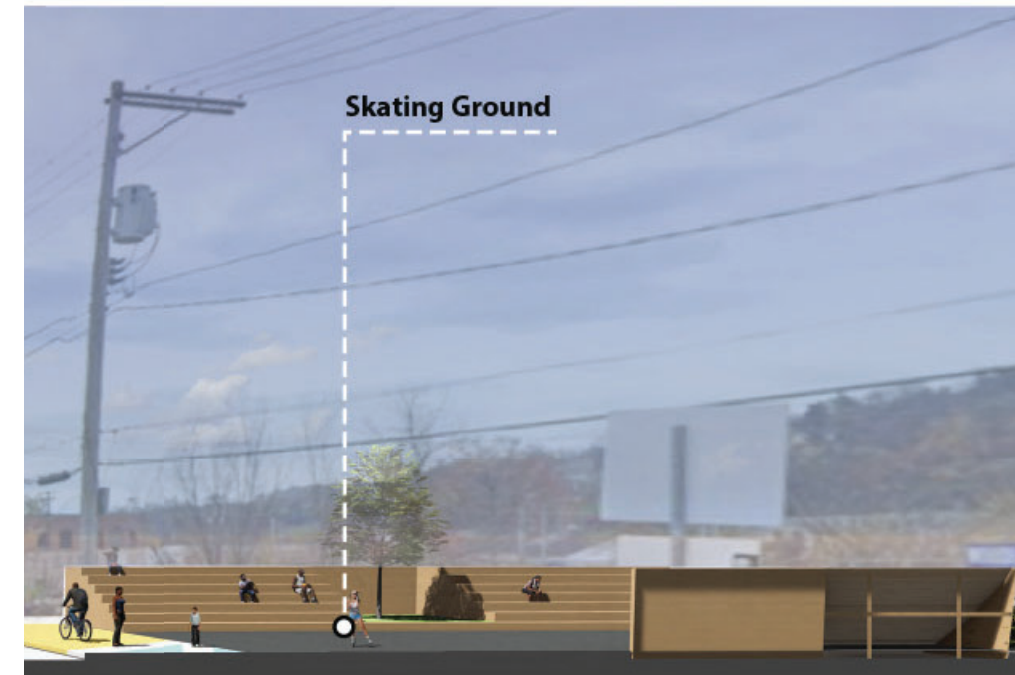
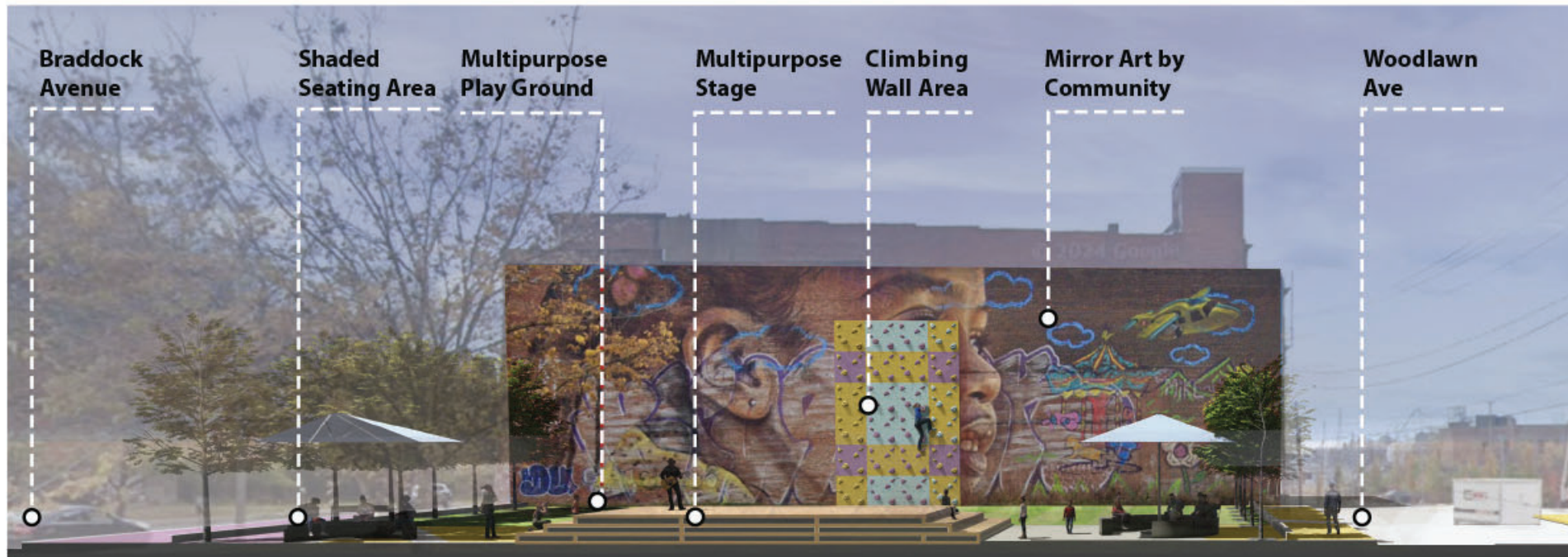


Multipurpose Playing Ground

Climbing Wall



Isometric View



Illustrative Section

Scale: 1" = 10'-0"



Multipurpose Stage

Seating Station

20 BYP Garden Studio: Planting ideas, filming stories, painting dreams

Color Outside the Lines: A Creative Release Throughout the Site



A Place to Pause: Teens Creating Their Own Space



“Kids need safety spots and need places to play” – Braddock Council Member

Vision Statement

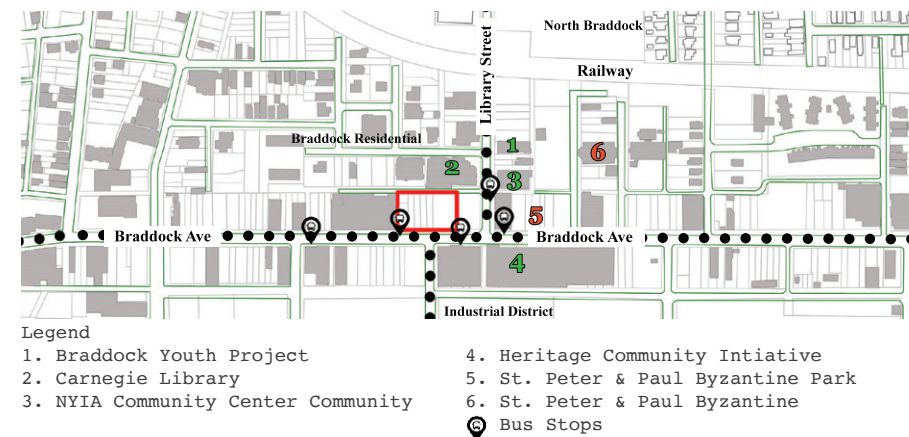
Braddock is a place defined by its character and resilience, thriving on strong relationships forged through hardship. However, systemic challenges, such as a lack of accessible gathering spaces and external stressors profoundly affects its youth ages 14–20 by creating a feeling of isolation, thus negatively impacting their mental health. This combined with mass disinvestment has left teens without an outdoor space of their own. By transforming the previously uninviting lot in front of the Carnegie Library with the partnership of the Braddock Youth Project, this initiative aims to create a welcoming area for gardening, mural development, video production, rest, and social interaction; offering both relief and opportunity for growth.

Woodland Hills Highschool Students

“Not much to do in Braddock” – Woodland Hills High student

“Nothing in Braddock its gray and dull” – Woodland Hills High student

Site Context



Conversations with students revealed a common theme of significant stressors in their lives, both in and outside of school. While it is impossible to place oneself in what they are experiencing, insights can be gained from the conversations had with the students. Many expressed that staying indoors, despite the boredom, felt safer than venturing outside. This highlights a broader issue: Braddock’s teens face challenges that are difficult to manage, compounded by living environments they find stressful, which negatively impacts their mental health. The absence of dedicated, supportive spaces reinforces these stressors, leaving them in a state of discomfort.

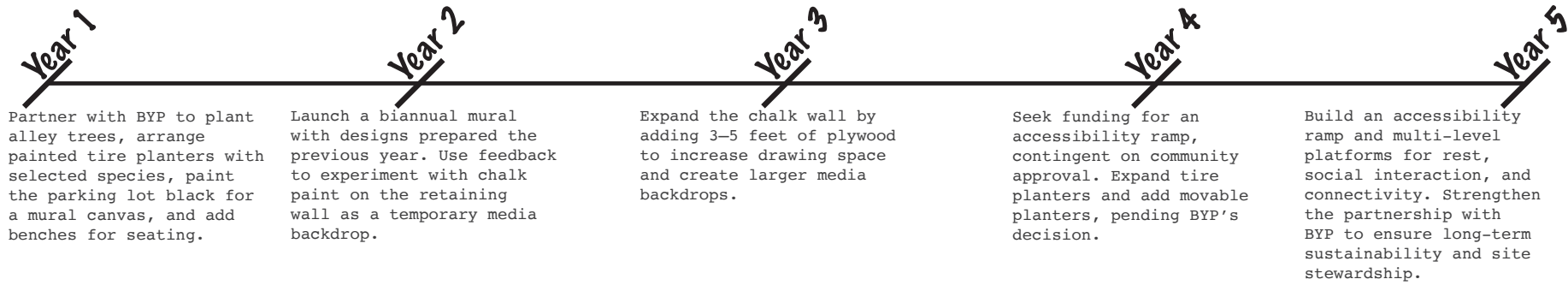
stress relief and socialization. Additionally, the site’s proximity to North Braddock provides an opportunity to bridge the physical divide created by the railroad, instilling inclusivity within the site for all to enjoy. Pertaining to the cultivation of social/emotional development of teens, supporting adaptive learning through outside space, and relieving stress, this space is in an optimal location to have the local organizations integrated into the site. The Braddock Youth Project gives the youth activities to participate in through their various programs such as their garden and media groups. Their goals of engaging with the youth to give a positive influence while providing a social network for

“Braddock is diverse and falling apart. Houses burn down, authority doesn’t fix it so people do drugs there.” – Woodland Hills High Student

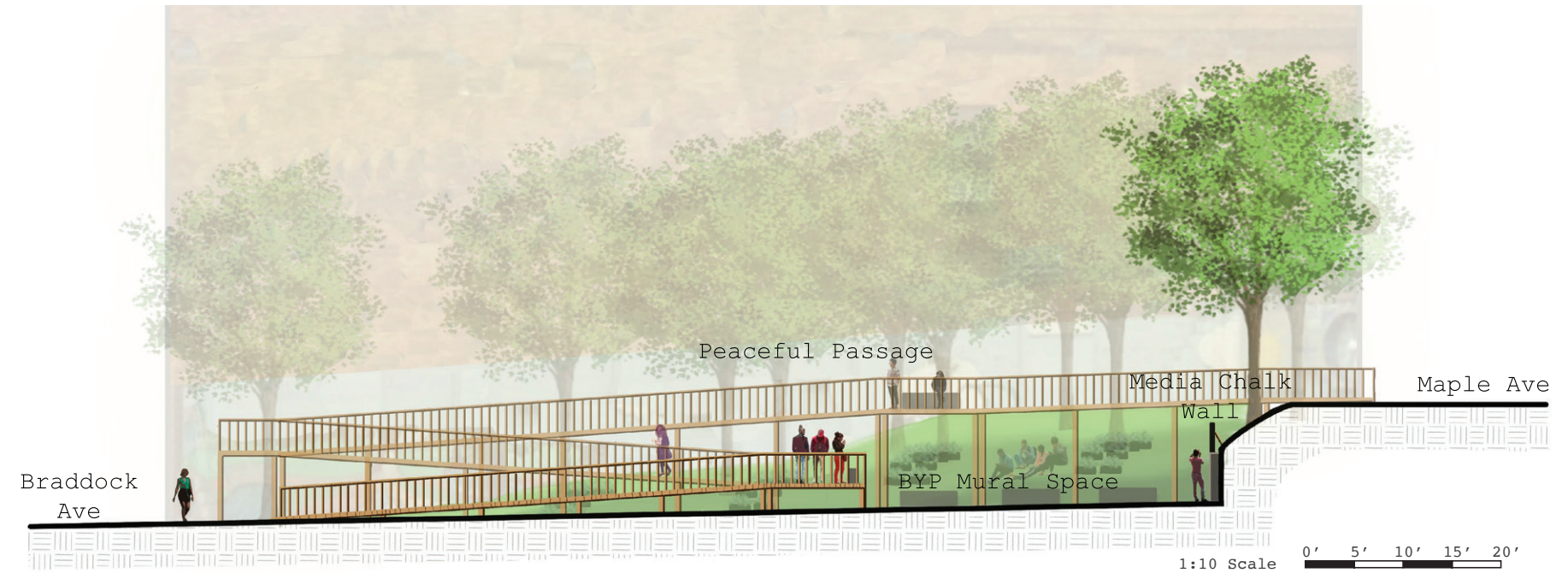
The location of this design plays a pivotal role to its success. It is situated in front of the Carnegie Library and adjacent to the Braddock Youth Project, Nyia Paige Community Center, and Heritage Community Initiatives. This area is comprised of a district of civic and community engagement organizations. These organizations aim to enrich and guide the youth. Conveniently located on Braddock Ave, a key corridor with five nearby bus stops, it is easily accessible to the community. Open spaces similar to St. Peter & Paul Byzantine Church Park along Braddock Ave are in disrepair or inaccessible, limiting teens’ opportunities for

them aligns with the intentions of the design. In order to bring the youth together in and respond to the mass disinvestment in systemic poverty, the BYP will be a vital asset as a strategic partner in addressing these challenges within Braddock by using the aforementioned programs that will create a place for the public to take pride in.

Timeline



Switchback Ramp for Connection and Community: Section A-A’



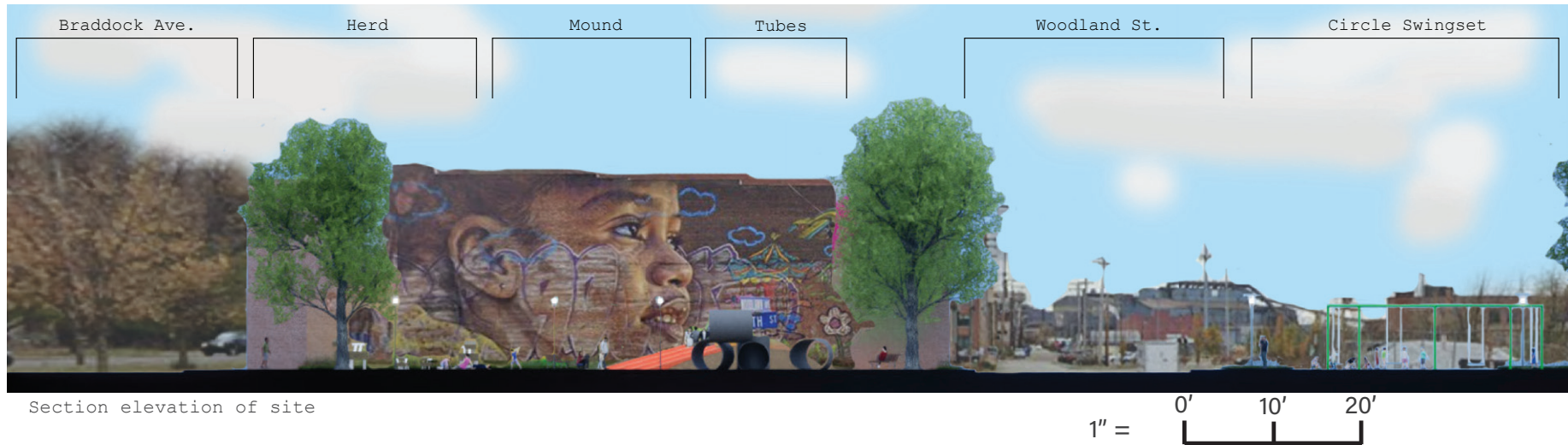
Reset and Recovery: A View Into the Experience



21 Braddock Central

VISION STATEMENT:

To create a central park for children aged 6-9 that focuses on enrichment of young children through interpretive play and colorful design. By using the symbol of a circle, children will be reminded of their community and achieve a brighter outlook on life.



conceptual design by Timothy Beers



CURRENT CONDITIONS:

As of now, there are many conditions influencing the design of this site. The biggest influence is the centrality of the lot. Since it is the middle of town there are two main streets that run along the site, Braddock Ave and Sixth St. These roads break Braddock into four corners that all serve different purposes. Neighborhoods and industrial zones in the North and South end respectively, light industry to the West, and an arts district to the East.

Each of these zones allocate space close to the main

arterials, Braddock and Sixth, creating a "main street" feel that the site sits a part of. for this reason, this site needs to be used as an exhibit of the heart of Braddock. Communities already spend their time in these areas doing everyday chores like work and grocery shopping. There are parks in the area, but they are rarely used. an open lot with an abstract steel sculpture as the centerpiece is mainly used for events rather than recreation or leisure time. There is also an outdoor gym with instructions on how to use the equipment. Murals are used to encourage the use of these parklets.

1



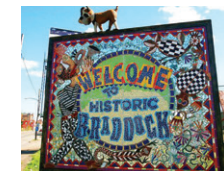
The Carnegie Library hosts after-school and summer learning activities.

2



A steel firework-like sculpture complimented by the "Love is the Law" mural.

3

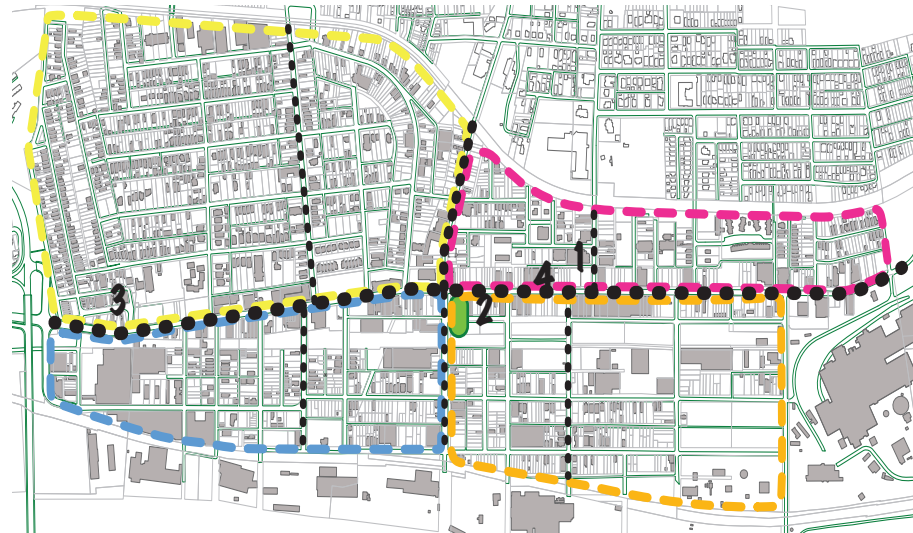


At the north entrance to Braddock, a beautiful welcome sign greets visitors and locals.

4



An outdoor gym along Braddock Ave. serves as a meeting place for young people.



STRATEGIC PARTNERS :

There are a few groups that would make wonderful partners to this design. As this site is at the heart of Braddock, it will continue to serve as a common ground for community events. Holiday events like trunk-or-treat, Christmas celebrations, and the 4th of July would be great to host here. The Heritage group, Braddock Youth Project and Carnegie Library have hosted events like this in the past in the surrounding area. An adjacent plaza playground would be an ideal complement to these events as it would accommodate children running around as well as event staff and organizers. Other events like the 4th of July or a New Year’s Eve celebration will be hosted by the volunteer fire department. The Braddock Youth Project can assist in the construction of the site. Simple design elements like mounded earth and pits both lined with tires do not require heavy equipment, making it a simple way for young people to help. The gardening group would be able to plant a variety of native grasses and perennials which ideally require limited maintenance. The art group would be able to help local artist in the installation

of a mural on the adjacent building and help with choosing a color palette. These local artists will also have an opportunity to submit different play sculpture ideas to include closest to Braddock Avenue. The Local government will be able to supply concrete tubes as they are currently doing infrastructure upgrades.



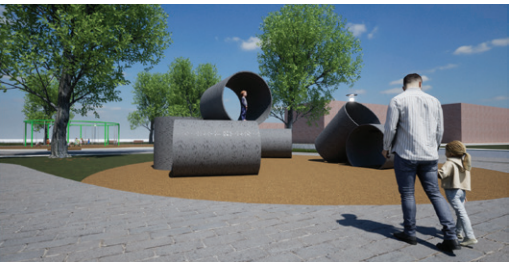
Herd

As the community interacts with their environment, they act as megafauna that directly impact their world. A herd of climbable, interpretive wooden beasts- big and small- serves as a reminder of how a small interaction can create lasting effects.



Mound

Raising up children and promoting a brighter future is at the heart of this design. A simple, yet effective way to achieve this is with a mound of earth. A slide gives children a reason to get to the top (so they can slide down).



Tubes

Some children have more developed motor skills than others, which is why a more interpretive play area is necessary to this design. children can climb, crawl, hide, and jump off of large pipes that are placed in different orientations.



Circle Swingset

Alluding back to the central design element, circles, children need to feel part of some circle. A circular swingset will accomodate this need. they may look out and observe the world around them, or they may be more introspective and swing inward toward the other people part of the circle.

Year 1

- Community engagement events to generate ideas and excitement
- Community surveys to determine desired textures, lighting, features, materials

Year 2

- Hold exhibitions on Herd designs
- Gather materials for path and Mound
- Prefabricate swing set and benches

Year 3

- Move earth for mound
- Install pathways
- Place benches
- Install Circle Swingset
- Install Herd
- Begin organizing events

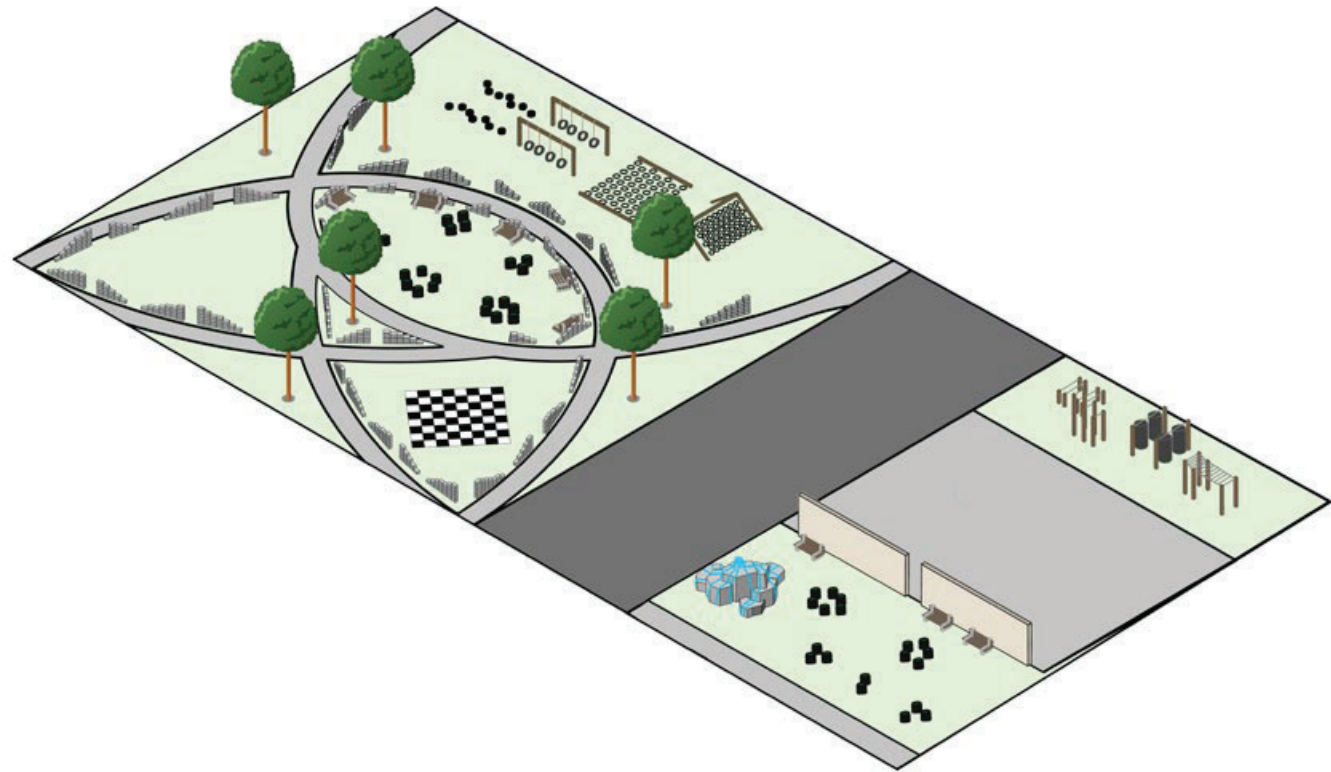
Year 4

- Ribbon cutting
- Hold "test events" to find best uses for different community events
- Community surveys to determine what needs change, determine other events to promote site, and expansions

Year 5

- Repaint play elements
- Make proposed changes

22 Disguised Treasure



Vision Statement:

Braddock is a resilient community comprised of people who deserve a place to collaborate, learn, and enjoy. Using resources already within the community can build something accessible for all and provide sustainability and accessibility. With the limited resources in Braddock, something beautiful can be built



Current Conditions:

In Braddock, many different aspects of the community help them define their identity. Positive resources such as the Braddock Youth Program and Heritage Community Initiatives are current establishments that provide great resources for the children in Braddock. There are also churches and food banks that are positive establishments for the community. Many different aspects of the community are balanced between negatives and positives. Still, the two negatives that didn't seem to be balanced out by something positive were dumping and the noise pollution in Braddock. With the need for a place for children and teens of all ages to have something to do, an opportunity arose also to balance out the negative sources in Braddock. Through looking at the stress factors that people in Braddock go through, creating an accessible and inclusive space was the key to helping people in Braddock reduce stress while at the same time placing a gathering space for the community programs in Braddock. There was also a need in Braddock and Allegheny county

as a whole with dumping which can also be turned into something positive to be used within the site being designed. With all of the data collected from the conditions in Braddock, a space that is sustainable, accessible, inclusive, interactive, and a home for community programs and Braddock as a whole.

Partners:

Partnering with the BYP and Heritage Community Initiative programs would be highly advantageous due to the valuable school programs they provide for children in Braddock. These partnerships align perfectly with the vision of this project, which is rooted in community-driven growth and empowerment. By engaging local organizations and their programs, this initiative can create opportunities for Braddock residents to actively participate in building a space that reflects their collective effort and pride. Designed to be built by the people of Braddock and for the people of Braddock, this project aims to foster a deep sense of ownership and appreciation for what the community has created—a legacy they can cherish for generations.

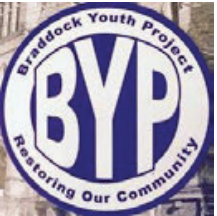


The Edgar Thomson plant is known to be a great oppourtunity for jobs in Braddock and has the potential to create management positions

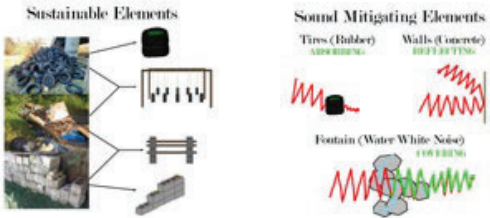


Dumping is a negatively impacting source in Braddock that can be turned into something

Community Programs:



Potential Elements:



Calisthenics Area:

This space is included to add a space for people to workout outside in a different way. Included are boxing bags for people to train for boxing, or just a place to get out some anger.

Mindful Area:

This space is designed to block the noise coming from the Edgar Thomson Plant while also mitigating the noise coming from the road adjacent to this area with the white noise provided from the rock fountain. This space would function well for someone to find some quiet and peace to either just get away or even read a book.

Wall Ball:

Not only does the wall ball area serve as a barrier from sound from the steel plant, it also serves as a place for people to play sports such as pickleball, tennis, lacrosse, and just regular wall ball which is always a fun childhood activity.

Gathering Space:

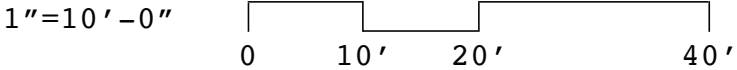
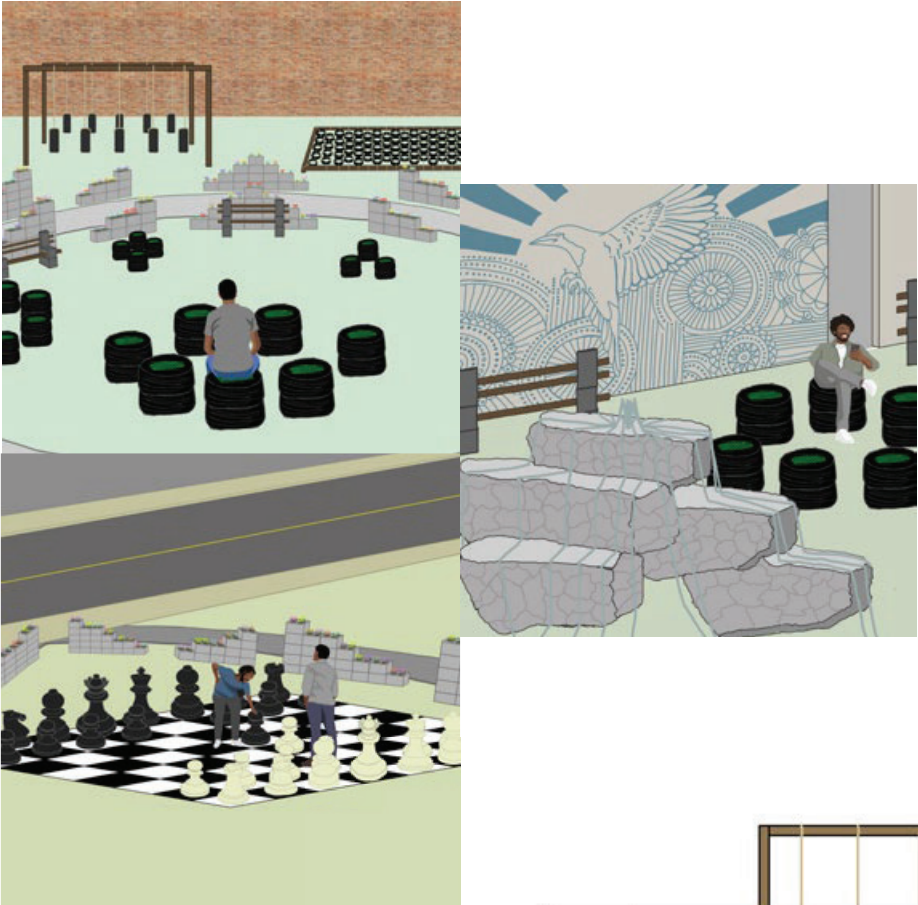
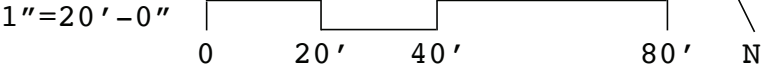
The gathering space serves as a host for community programs to have everyone together to announce events and projects that are happening. It can serve as a lecture space or even just a place to relax. It is placed in the center of the site to draw attention to people in the space.

Obstacle Course:

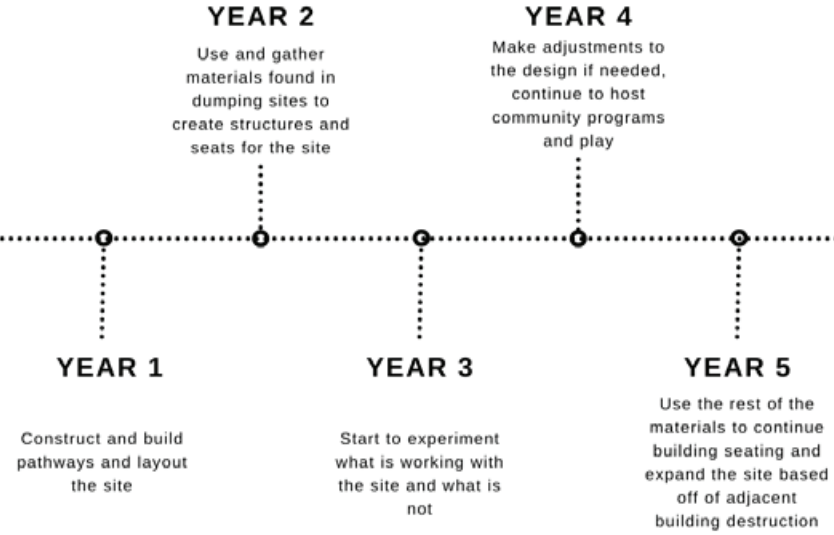
The obstacle course adds some competition for children and teens to race against each other in a 'parkour' challenge. Not only does this promote friendships, but also a great source of exercise for the people in Braddock while keeping it sustainable.

Giant Chess:

Giant chess is a great way to get teenagers and all cognitvely interacting with the landscape. With all of the physically interacting spaces in the site, it felt necessary to add challenge yet something simple for people to interact with.

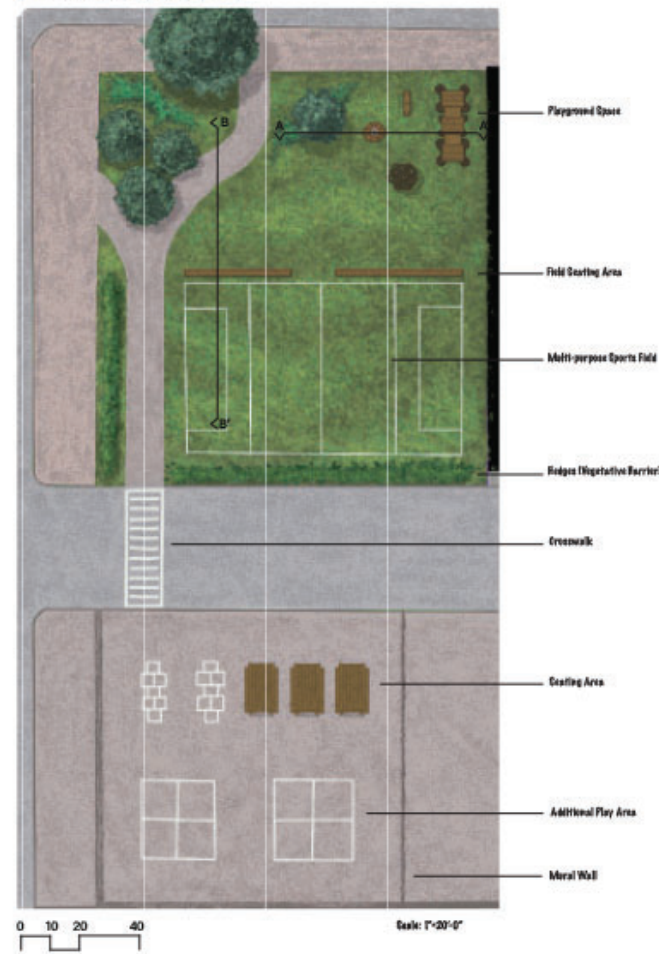


Timeline Diagram

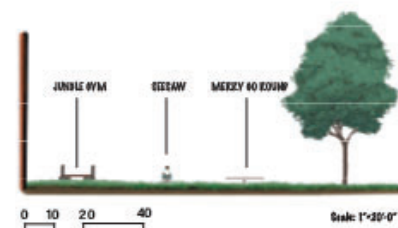


23 Sixth Street Park

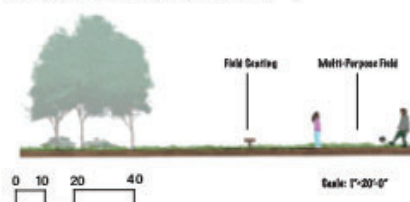
Illustrative Plan



Section Elevation A-A'



Section Elevation B-B'



Vision Statement

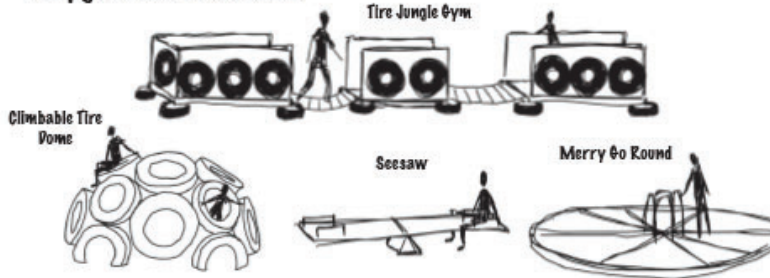
In order to secure a brighter future for Braddock, it is imperative that designers tackle the issues that are plaguing the borough's youth. Braddock children have limited educational and social opportunities, and they are exposed to hazards like dangerous vacant lots and higher crime rates due to the borough's infrastructural decline over the past few decades. Furthermore, this steady decline has left the borough with a low number of designated gathering spaces and not many well lit areas, which cultivates illegal acts and puts the safety of the borough's children in jeopardy. Braddock's residents are held together by their strong sense of community despite these hardships, so creating a place for people to unite in would ensure that Braddock's community grows up to foster positivity and hope for future generations.

The variety of complex issues that currently affect Braddock threatens the future of the borough's children. In order to guarantee that the youth of Braddock grow up in an environment that is conducive to positive change and a sense of community it is imperative that we must turn to design for answers. This site unites the children of Braddock through both fun and potentially educational experiences, as well as the process of making fond memories in a place that is not only located near the heart of the borough, but in a place that is safe.

Site Context



Playground Sketches



Site Analysis

The proposed site for this park space, located on the corner of 6th Street and Braddock Avenue, possesses a number of different features that allow it to remain safe and highly accessible. Because it is located at a major intersection, it neighbors numerous residential areas, and it is close to important resources to Braddock residents (like bus stops and the library), it is highly convenient to access and experience the site. Furthermore, its visibility and proximity to popular places makes it a safe space for children because it discourages crime from occurring both on site and in nearby areas.

The catalyst that I am proposing would address a number of these issues through its design by giving the youth of Braddock, namely children ages 1 to 15, a safe place to play, learn, and make positive memories in, and the location of the proposed site facilitates these activities due its popular location and intrinsically safe features.

Playground Details

The play space located along Braddock avenue aims to give younger children, likely ages 1-10, a space to play and interact with one another. The majority of the playground equipment will be constructed using the discarded tires currently found on the Woodlawn Avenue half of the site, helping to combat both the borough's issues with illegal dumping as well as unnecessary costs.

Project Partners

The Braddock Carnegie Library

The Braddock Carnegie Library provides residents with numerous resources and it hosts a variety of clubs and organizations for children and young adults alike, including both educational and recreational activities. Because of this, the library has garnered a reputation for bringing the borough’s community together and it serves as a beacon of unity that provides refuge from the area’s hardships

These enrichment activities give the children of the community a place to express their creativity, and the programs would benefit from having a space to host activities outside. Furthermore, the community members that spoke to our class during our visit expressed a desire to hold more activities in outdoor spaces, and the Braddock Carnegie library could facilitate this.

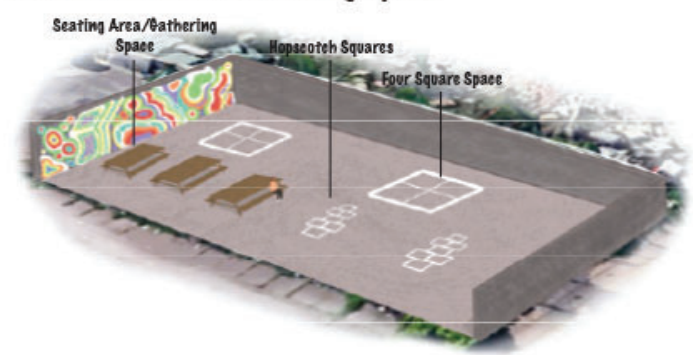
The Braddock Youth Project:

The Braddock Youth Project is a youth work skills training program that seeks to foster skills that will aid youth in advancing toward positive life outcomes, and they do this by providing meaningful and sustainable community development projects that are generated and maintained by the youth. These projects harness the energy and creativity of the youth to promote positive change in their community. All of the members that I spoke to on November 4th expressed an interest in not just using but maintaining the space because it would provide the organization with an area to hold outdoor activities. Additionally, the proposed Multi-purpose Field generated excitement in the members I spoke to due to the fact that the borough doesn’t currently have access to that sort of space, indicating that they are open and willing to oversee such an installment.

Sixth Street Perspective



Mural Wall and Gathering Space



Project Timeline

YEAR

1

Site is cleaned, and existing tires and materials are constructed into the playground’s features. Vegetation along Woodlawn Avenue and Sixth Street are installed. Walkways are paved. The Multi-Purpose sports field, hopscotch area, four square space, and the crosswalk are painted. The mural wall is built, but not painted.

YEAR

2

Maintenance to sports field and playground equipment is conducted by the Braddock Youth Project, as is the construction of the seesaw and merry go round. Community members are invited to paint a portion of the mural wall. Picnic benches are added to the gathering space.

YEAR

3

Maintenance is conducted by the Braddock Youth Project. Community members are invited to paint a portion of the mural wall. Feedback from the community is noted, and if the site is used frequently phase Four of installation will begin.

YEAR

4

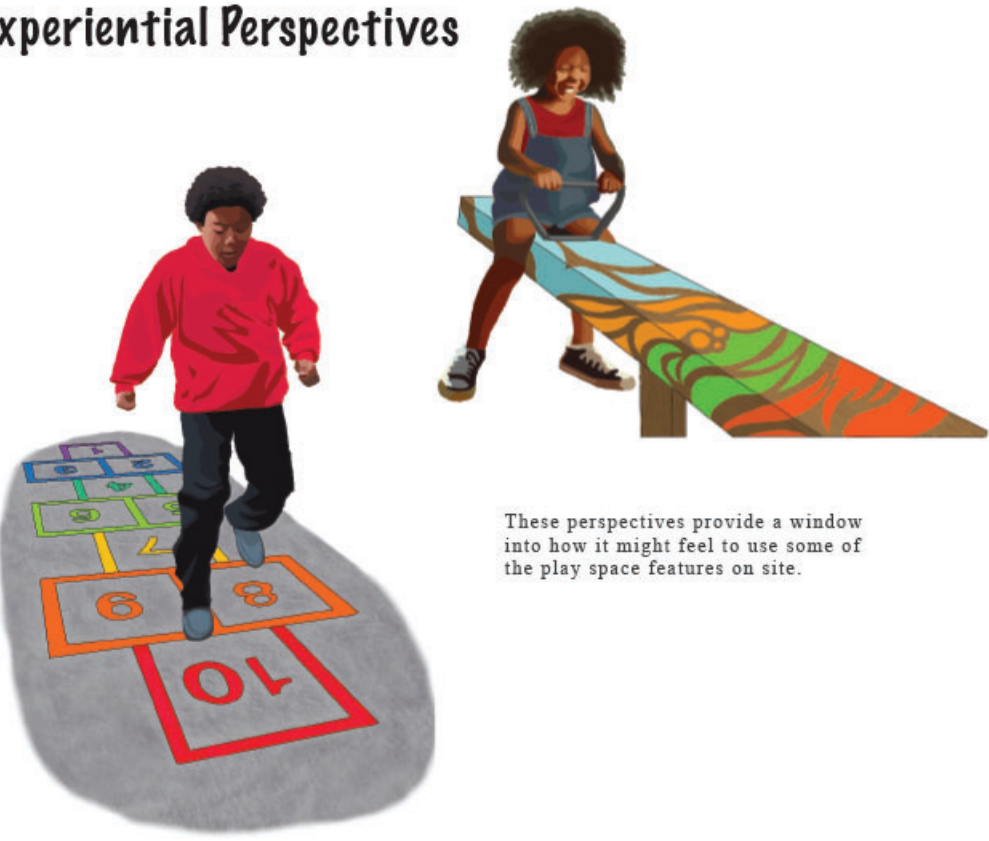
Maintenance is conducted by the Braddock Youth Project. Benches are added along paved paths and field seating is installed. Mural wall painting is continued by community members.

YEAR

5

Maintenance is conducted by the Braddock Youth Project. Mural wall painting is completed by community members.

Experiential Perspectives



These perspectives provide a window into how it might feel to use some of the play space features on site.



Relaxing in the Meadow

Vision Statement

Braddock's history is deeply tied with the steel industry. As a byproduct of this, there is a constant humming noise originating from the steel mill as well as a disruptive cacophony of truck traffic running through the avenues and streets daily. The goal of this project is to find a way to provide a space that reduces the effects of noise pollution that has impacted on the mental and physical health of Braddock residents. The main goal of this project is to reduce oncoming noise toward the site as well as providing positive sounds

that aid in the masking of the noise pollution. Along with this "quiet" garden scape, the project will provide auditory sensory activities for children and adults of all ages to enjoy and experiment/engage with.

**"[I] would love to see something that ignites the senses"
- Jodie, Heritage Community Initiative**



Kids Creating Music

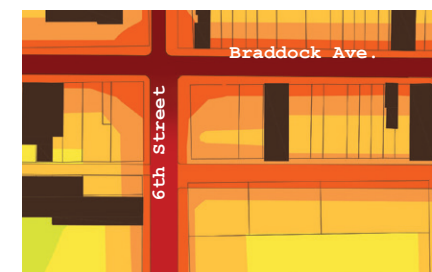
Existing Conditions Maps

Auditory Analysis

Braddock as a district is severely lacking quiet outdoor spaces or ones free from disruptive noise. Many of the residents have reported that street traffic due to steel mill related traffic are a disturbance to outdoor spaces and prevent proper interactions with one another and with the outdoors. The analysis concluded that the most "disruptive" area was along Braddock Avenue due to its higher traffic levels. In addition, the major bus stop in proximity to the site provides easy access to the site, but creates more traffic as a result.



- Connector {} - Open Space
1 - Location A - Transition
[] - District ● - Good/Bad



Edgar Thomson Steel Works Mill



Truck Traffic with Oversized Load

Project Partners



The Penn State Extension is a program that provides accurate scientific information to people, businesses, communities, and more. The Master Gardener group of Pittsburgh has a program reserved for spotted lanternfly research and outreach. Research in spotted lanternfly prevention deep dives into management strategies, common plant hosts, treatment based on severity, etc. Due to the severity of the spotted lanternfly infestation in Braddock, the Master Gardener program would be a great potential partner to aid in the preservation and longevity of the site proposal.



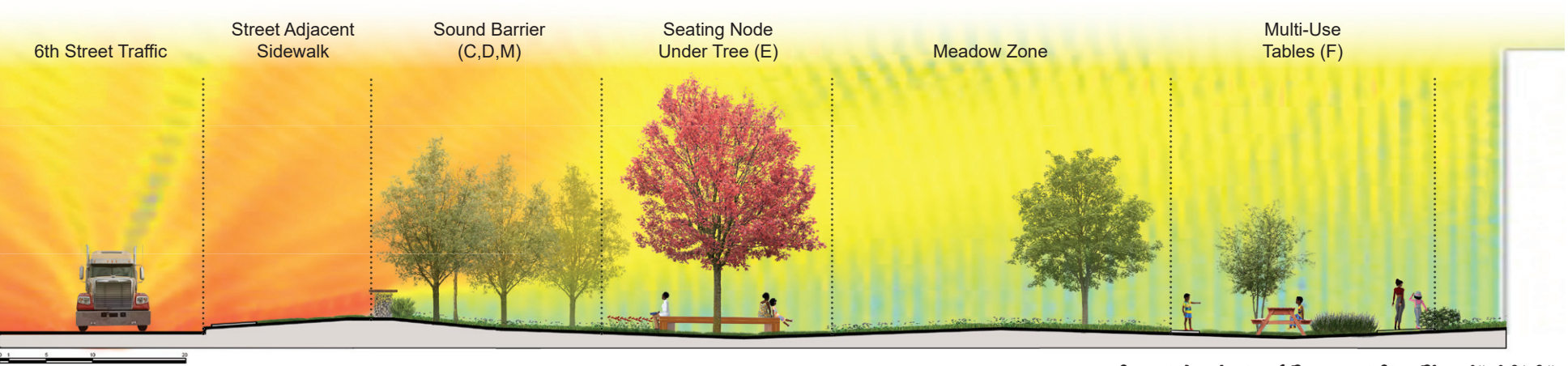
A more localized group that would be a valuable partnership is the Braddock Youth Project's Gardening Team. Members and leaders of the gardening team are already versed in the process of implementing and caring for various types of plants across multiple sites. A notable establishment that they have managed is the Flower Farm on Washington Avenue. The horticultural knowledge and dedication of the members of BYP in combination with the Penn State Master Gardener program can establish a long-lasting native planting ecology and promote biodiversity amidst the heart of Braddock. In return, they are able to utilize the space for programming and various different events.



Melody Meadows Plan 1"=20'-0"

- Legend**

 - A - Section Cut
 - B - Eco-Lawn (smooth green coloring)
 - C - Meadow mix (throughout site)
 - D - Native planting to mask noise
 - E - Seating under tree canopy
 - F - Multi-use picnic style tables
- G - Small seating node
 - H - Perspective view 1
 - I - Crosswalk painting
 - J - Musical instrument area
 - K - Perspective view 2
 - L - Audience seating
 - M - Gabion wall



Planting Species

For the native plantings in space, the site will focus on attracting birds. The pleasant sounds of songbirds chirping add an additional auditory experience to the space that aids in the masking of negative noise.

The plants chosen are native to North America/the state of Pennsylvania. Though they require a higher level of maintenance in the beginning phases of establishment, as time progresses the level of care for these plants drop dramatically. Because of their nativity they can survive and thrive largely on their own. All of the suggested plants for the space have benefits for various bird species and, in combination, can provide food for them year-round.

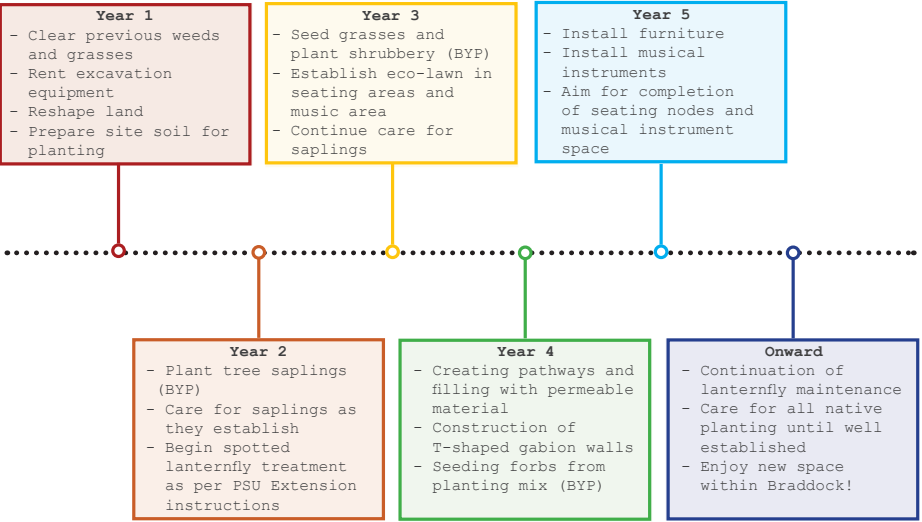
The forb species are from American Meadows' Backyard Birding Wildflower Mix. This allows for easy seeding of various different flowering species without having to buy multiple individual species. In addition to this, the lawn areas will be eco-lawns that promote more biodiversity than standard lawns.

SPECIES	COMMON NAME
Native Planting Suggestions to Attract Birds	
Trees	
Amelanchier laevis	Allegheny serviceberry
Quercus rubra	Red Oak
Ilex verticillata	Winterberry holly
Fagus grandifolia	American beech
Cercis canadensis	Eastern Redbud
Pinus strobus	White Pine
Cornus florida	Flowering Dogwood
Shrubs	
Lindera benzoin	Northern Spicebush
Callicarpa americana	American Beautyberry
Viburnum trilobum	American Cranberrybush
Sambucus canadensis	American Elderberry
Graminoids	
Muhlenbergia capillaris	Gulf Muhly
Deschampsia cespitosa	Tufted Hairgrass
Juncus effusus	Common Rush
Scirpus cyperinus	Woolgrass
Andropogon gerardii	Big Bluestem
American Meadows Backyard Birding Wildflower Seed Mix	
Aster novae-angliae	New England Aster
Calendula officinalis	Pot Marigold
Chamaecrista fasciculata	Partridge Pea
Chrysanthemum maximum	Shasta Daisy
Coreopsis lanceolata	Lance-leaf Coreopsis
Coreopsis tinctoria	Plains Coreopsis
Cosmos sulphureus	Sulphur Cosmos
Dalea purpurea	Purple Prairie Clover
Dianthus barbatus	Sweet William
Echinacea purpurea	Purple Coneflower
Eschscholzia californica	California Poppy
Gaillardia pulchella	Indian Blanket
Liatris spicata	Blazing Star
Linum perenne lewisii	Blue Flax
Phlox drummondii	Drummond Phlox
Ratibida columnifera	Yellow Prairie Coneflower
Rudbeckia hirta	Black Eyed Susan
Zinnia elegans	Zinnia

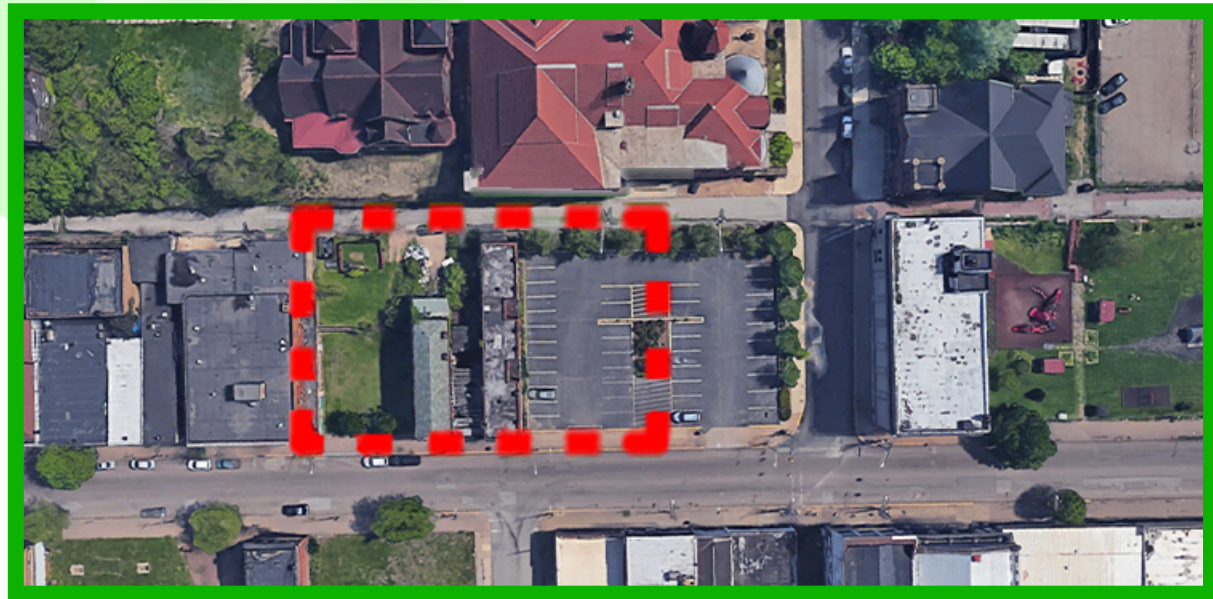
Sound Analysis of Proposed Site Plan 1"=10'-0"

Diagram of proposed elevation changes, wall installation, and tree plantings that aid in the blocking of truck traffic related noise.

Timeline



SITE 3



At Library Street and Braddock



25 Creative Splash Zone

Creative SPLASH



Vison Statement

The vision is to transform a vacant space in Braddock into a vibrant outdoor hub that unites the community through public art, including murals and sculptures co-created with local artists and youth, while fostering creativity, education, and connection. This inclusive environment, featuring flexible spaces for learning, play, and community-driven programs, will support children aged 3-12 by offering a space to explore, grow, and enhance their development, well-being, and sense of belonging.

Design Analysis

Braddock faces interconnected challenges, including vacant lots, disengaged youth, neglected public spaces, and deteriorating mental health among its younger population. This project aims to address these issues by transforming a vacant space into a vibrant, multipurpose outdoor area that supports youth programs, fosters participation, and promotes creativity and education. With the

majority of Braddock’s residents being children, there is a clear need for a space that encourages socializing and community involvement through art. This space will serve as a hub for youth programs, offering opportunities to learn, explore, and grow.

Art helps youth express themselves, process emotions, and build creativity, which is essential for their mental health and growth. Public art, including murals and sculptures co-created with local artists and youth, will use art as a tool to create a safe, expressive environment that celebrates Braddock’s culture and resilience.

“I want to create a community where artists can just be artists and it’s helping the [Braddock] community.”

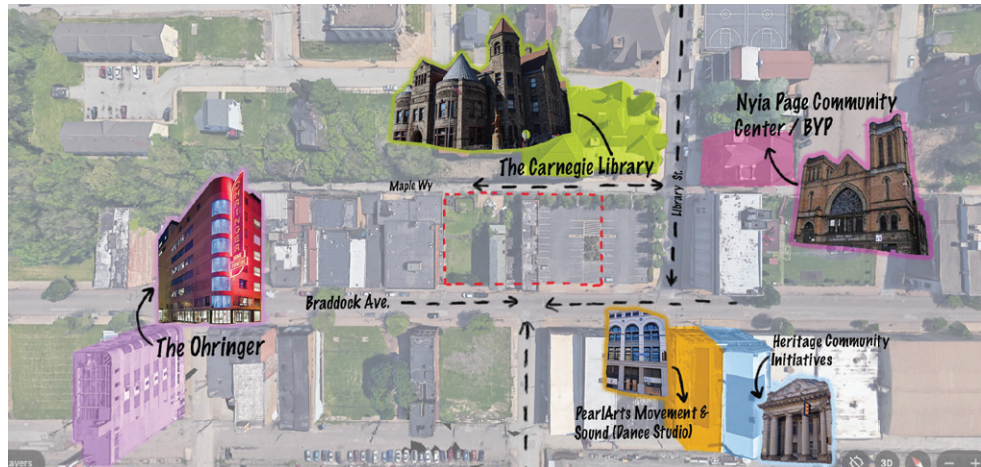
**- Tokey Mitchell
(The Ohringer Resident)**

Flexible spaces for outdoor classes, art installations, and community events will adapt to various activities and seasons, strengthening community bonds and inspiring passion. By celebrating Braddock’s cultural diversity and uniting longtime residents with newcomers, this project will cultivate a vibrant, inclusive creative culture, empowering the next generation to shape a brighter future.



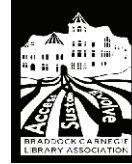
The Proposed design comprises 4 distinct yet interconnected zones.

Context Map



Local artists, children, and adults will have opportunities to collaborate on the mural, fostering interactive learning, mentorship, and supporting key critical development. This initiative not only promotes creativity but also encourages community involvement, nurturing the growth and imagination of Braddock’s youth through the BYP mentoring program and volunteer mentorship from local organizations.

Partners



“I would love to have like a shed with theme boxes that they can really pull out and do blocks outside if they want to, or have a teddy bear picnic or have art outside.... we need more just being able to do different activities outside other than just climbing on the climber which they love.”

- Jodi Davenport

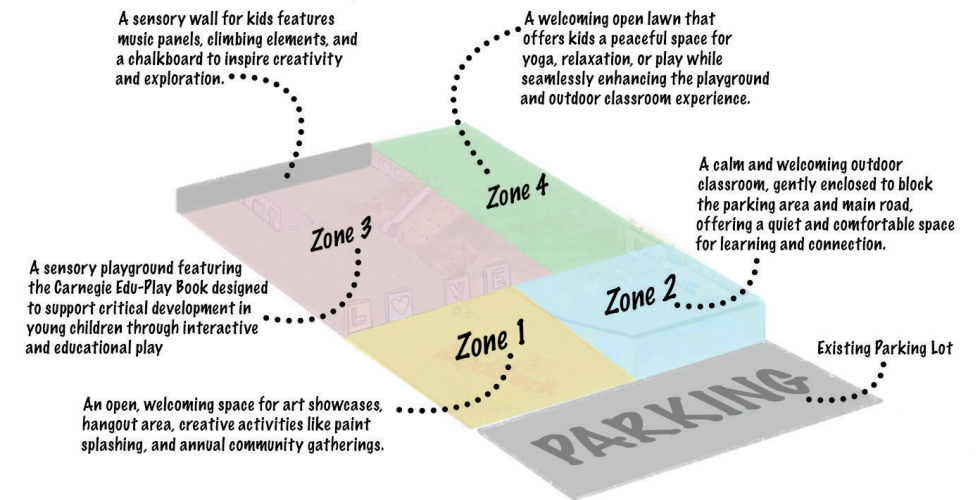
The site location next to the Carnegie Library offers a chance to expand its youth programs outdoors, hosting activities such as outdoor classrooms and annual events. Partnering with local artists and the Ohringer on mural projects will add color and energy to the space, creating a playful environment that reflects Braddock and brings people together.

The goal is to support the development of children (ages 3-12) through the Braddock Youth Project (BYP) by creating a dynamic outdoor space where kids can explore, imagine, and learn. The BYP Mentoring Team, a group of teens dedicated to helping younger children, collaborates with the HOST Program, assisting with classroom activities and building strong relationships. The team also hosts events like BYP’s Halloween party and “Chalk the Dock,” fostering community connections.



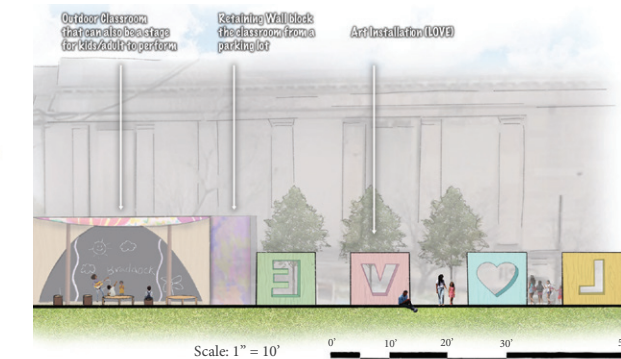
A word cloud, based on youth interviews in Braddock, highlights responses to the question: “What are three things that make you happy or relaxed in your daily life?”

Design Concept Diagram/Strategies



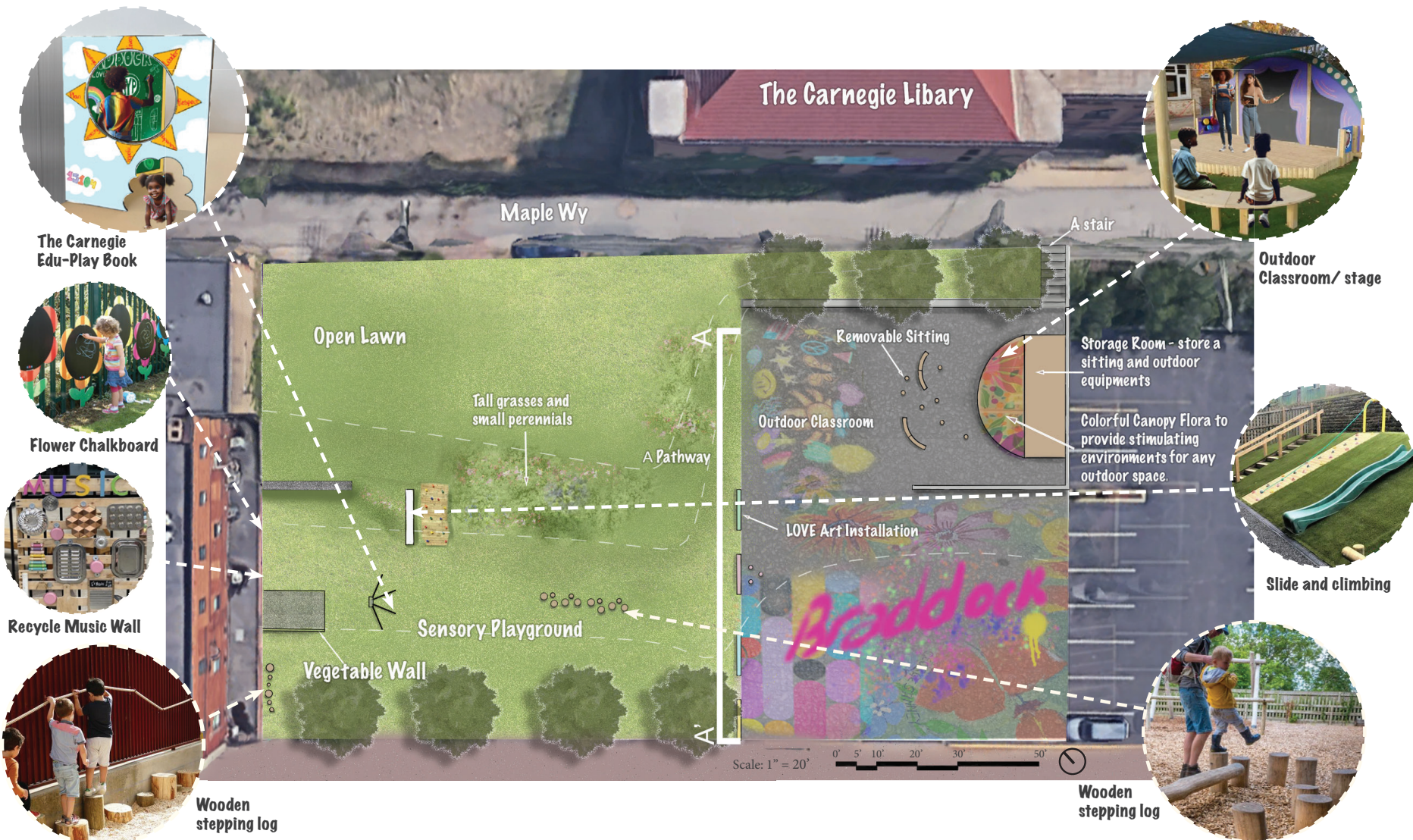
Design strategies focus on working with what’s already there to create an engaging and cohesive space. By utilizing the existing landform as a natural playspace and repurposing the existing wall as a sensory playground, the design minimizes complexity and encourages community members to actively participate in its development and use.

Section A-A’



BYP INSTAGRAM PAGE

BYP offering a numerous opportunities related to art included graphic design, photography, and various other media-related projects that reflect their own representation of the Braddock community.



The playground features a sensory wall and a vegetable wall, offering interactive elements for kids to explore and engage with.



The Carnegie Edu-Play Book

The interactive book installation invites kids to crawl through small tunnels, explore photo booths, draw on chalkboards, and engage with tactile maps and murals. It fosters creativity and critical development in youth while promoting Braddock's



A vibrant community space where children and people in the community can play, create art, and connect, surrounded by colorful murals and a playful "LOVE" installation that foster joy and togetherness.

5 Years Timeline



1. Site Cleaning and Preparation
2. Community Workshop with BYP, The Carnegie Library, and local artists
3. Design Review and Finalization
4. Material Sourcing (recycling and low-cost).



1. Landscape Preparation
2. Start building a multipurpose area partnership with BYP and local artists.
3. Tree planting for Shade
4. Community Feedback Session
5. Start building outdoor classroom (Visit Dip Craft store for color fabric glass).



1. Prepare and clean the landscape.
2. Complete the multipurpose area with ground artwork that local artists and BYP can refresh annually.
3. Install a cost-effective plywood art piece, involving local artists and community members to add unique, personal touches.
4. Finish overall construction.



1. Clean the landscape.
2. Collaborate with the library to develop an outdoor classroom.
3. Create a program calendar with workshops, art exhibitions, and outdoor performances in partnership with BYP and community initiatives.
4. Partner with artists to maintain and refresh installations.

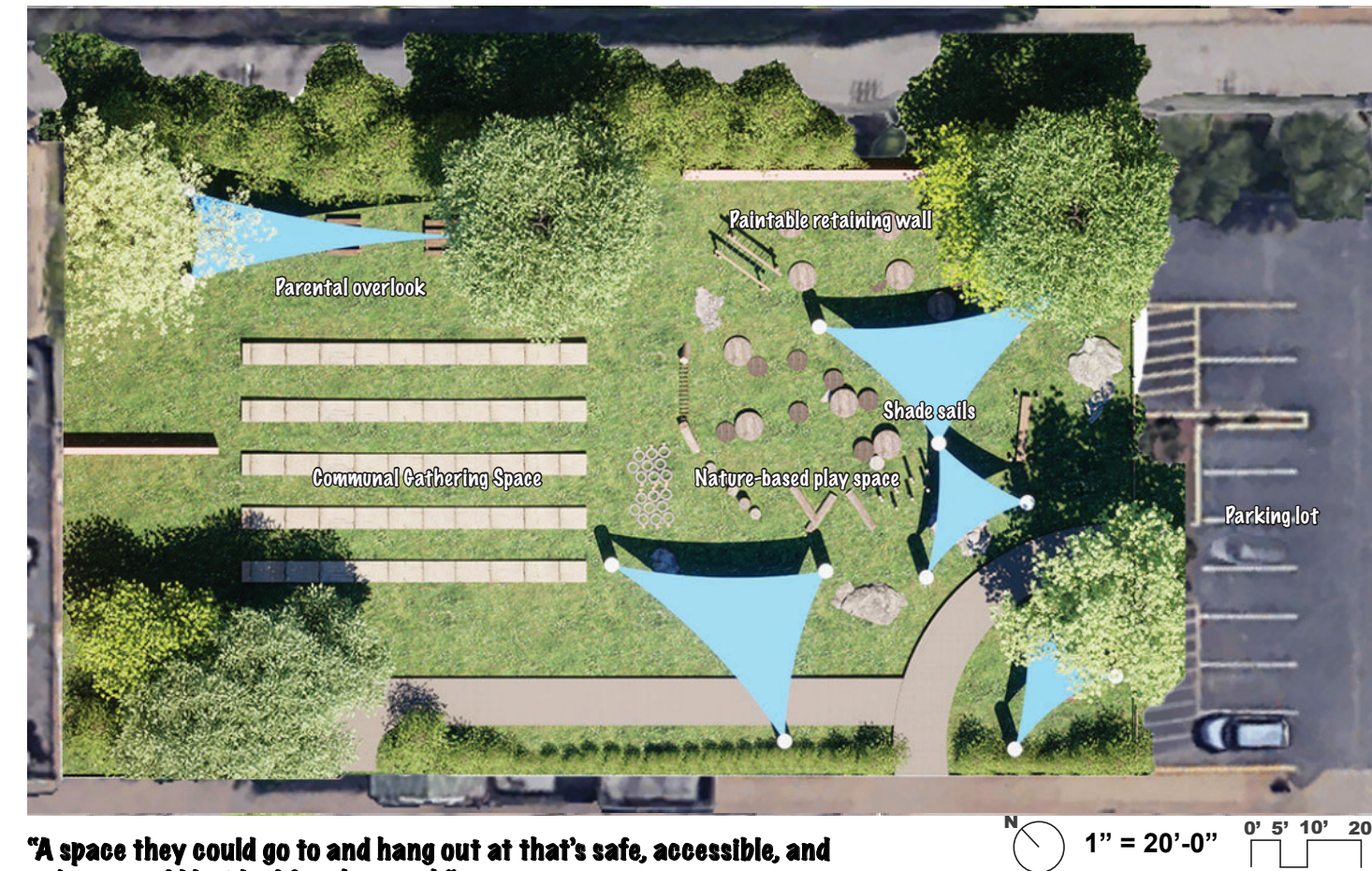


1. Assess and Update.
2. Form a Maintenance Team: Collaborate with BYP and community members (U.S post office, etc.) to develop a volunteering program.
3. Plan for Sustainability: Source eco-friendly materials for updates and repairs.
4. Celebrate Community Achievements: Host an event to recognize community contributions and inspire continued involvement.

26 Braddock's Nature-Play Space



Illustrative Plan View



"A space they could go to and hang out at that's safe, accessible, and upkeep would be ideal for the youth."
- Jodi Davenport (Heritage Learning Center)

Vision Statement

A site within Braddock that encourages an interactive experience and sensory exploration. With the help of youth programs, creating a sense of belonging, community, and inclusivity among the youth population is prominent. The Braddock youth should be immersed and connected to one another, creating strength. While this age group (5-11 years old) is in the critical developmental stages of life, it is important that emotional and social development of this age group is supported throughout the community.

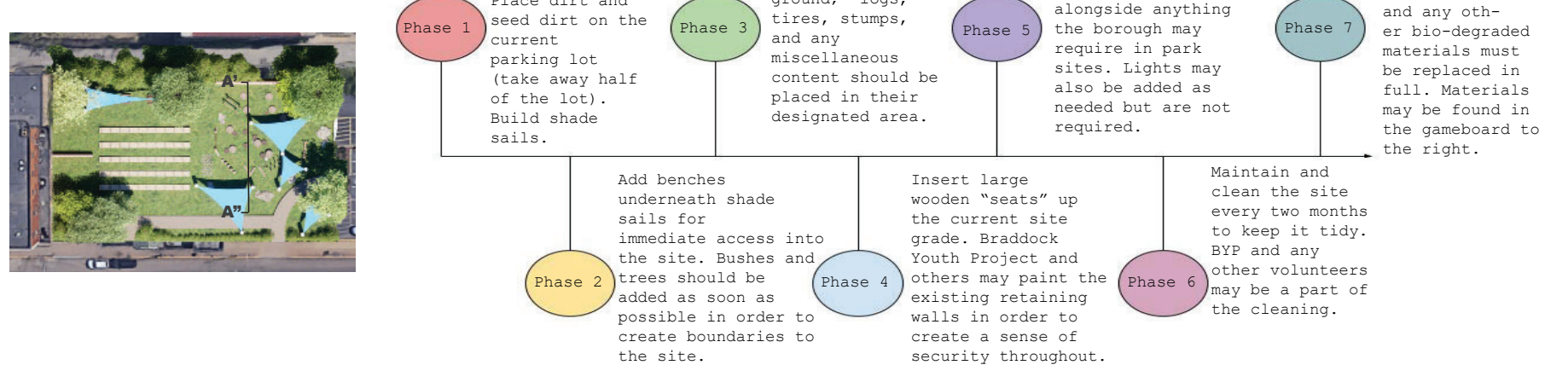
Purpose Throughout Design

- Benches on higher side of grade for parental /older sibling "overlook"
- Usage of recycled or unused materials such as wood, tires, and steel throughout site
- Seating on lower graded part of site for ADA access
- "Forum" based seating along grade for group gathering/socializing
- Shade sails and scattered trees for dappled shade
- Shorter shrubs along street to account for the "eyes on the street," children should be overseen while at play

Nature Playground Section View



Phase-Based Timeline



Existing Conditions



In the image above, the buildings in the direct site location are currently not there and have been taken down in a recent year. The Heritage Community Initiative Center, Nyia Page Center, and Carnegie Library are all in the direct area, having significant importance to the chosen site. Excess scrap wood and tires that are not currently in use are featured on map above for site usage.

Analysis

Students of any age that have struggled with mental health may find art and playful experiences to benefit themselves. Within the critical development stage of life, mental health is essential to success.

Probable Partners
The Carnegie Library



Librarians work closely with the 5-11 year olds. With the site being right out back of the library, librarians have easy access and viewing of children at play.

The Heritage Learning Center



HOST program for K-8, after school program for children in the 5-11 year age group studied. The learning center would now have another area for the 5-11 year age group to go to and play/interact with one another.

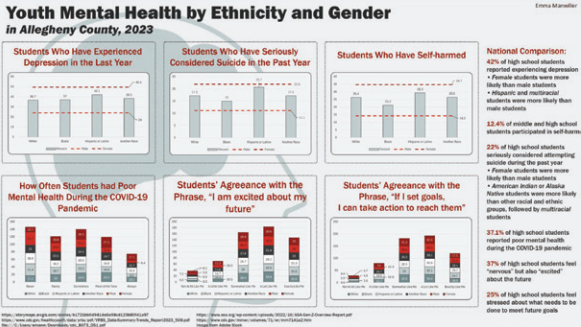


Braddock Youth Project

Although the BYP is predominantly older individuals, 14-20, that age group looks after their younger siblings frequently. With the Nyia Page center being near, those 14-20 year olds will be relatively close if needing to get siblings.

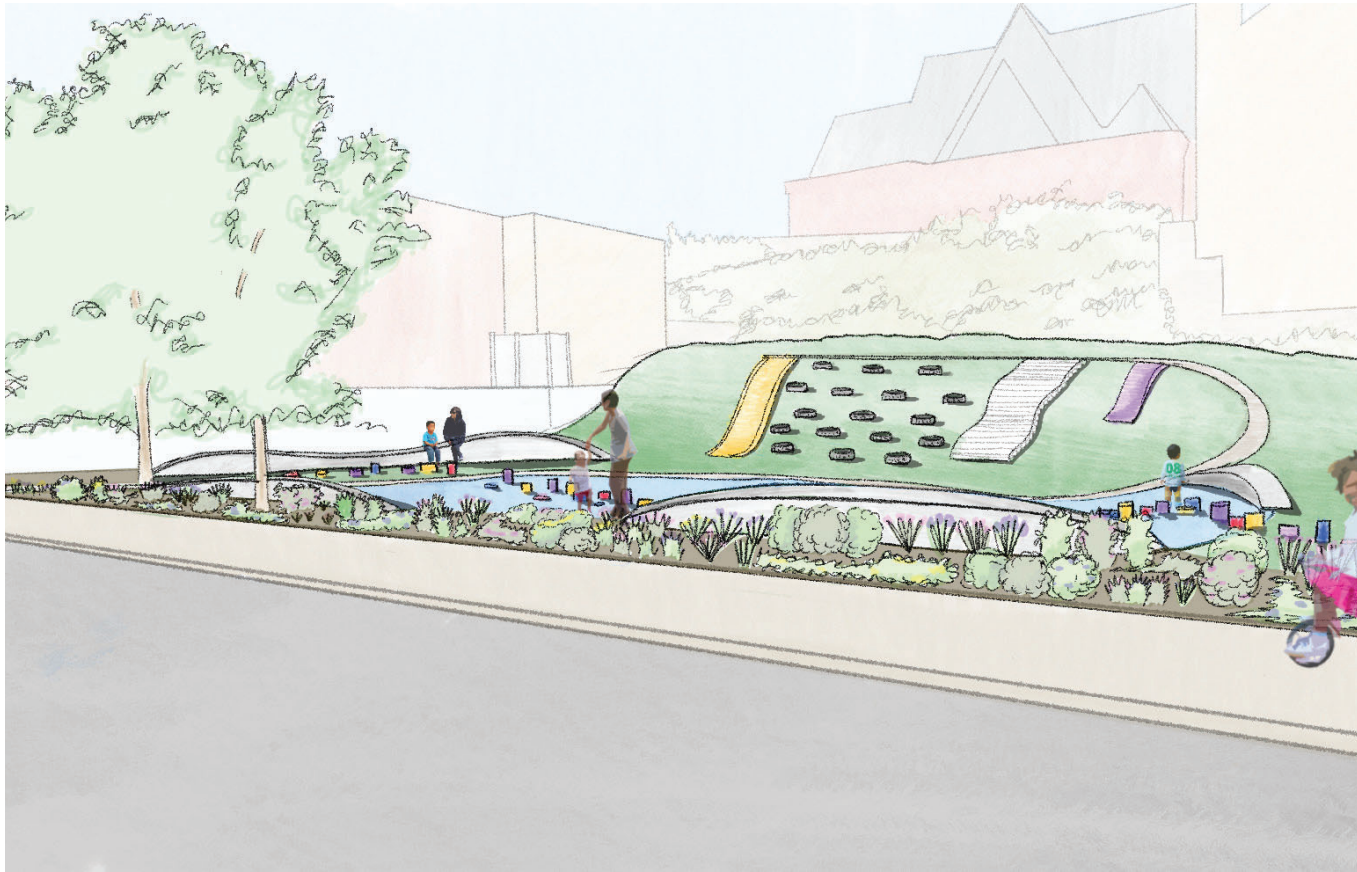
*Funding for play space may be from money raised by each of the three partners.

"Having specific places for them to be and gather, well lit, clean, safe (debris and hazards), dream, friendships and have memories!"
- Cathy Welsh (Helping Out Other People, HOOP)



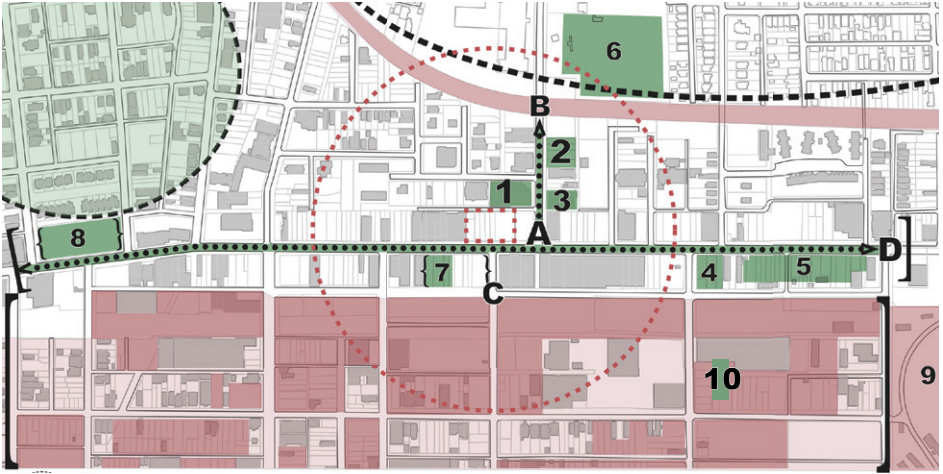
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Bold Beginnings Playscape



The Vision
To create a vibrant, safe, and accessible play space in Braddock that fosters community connection, supports youth development, and transforms underutilized areas into a lasting resource for children and families. By integrating durable, low-maintenance design with existing community programs, the space will serve as a beacon of hope and recreation, encouraging positive activity and enhancing the quality of life for the children in Braddock.

Site Analysis



- Location Key
1. Braddock Carnegie Library
 2. Basketball courts
 3. Nyia Page Center
 4. The Hollander Project
 5. Braddock Farms
 6. Sports field
 7. Braddock Bark Park
 8. Braddock Civic Plaza
 9. US Steel Edgar Thomson Works
 10. Heritage (HOST)



Collaborate with HOST to serve as a resource for regularly bringing children to visit the site.

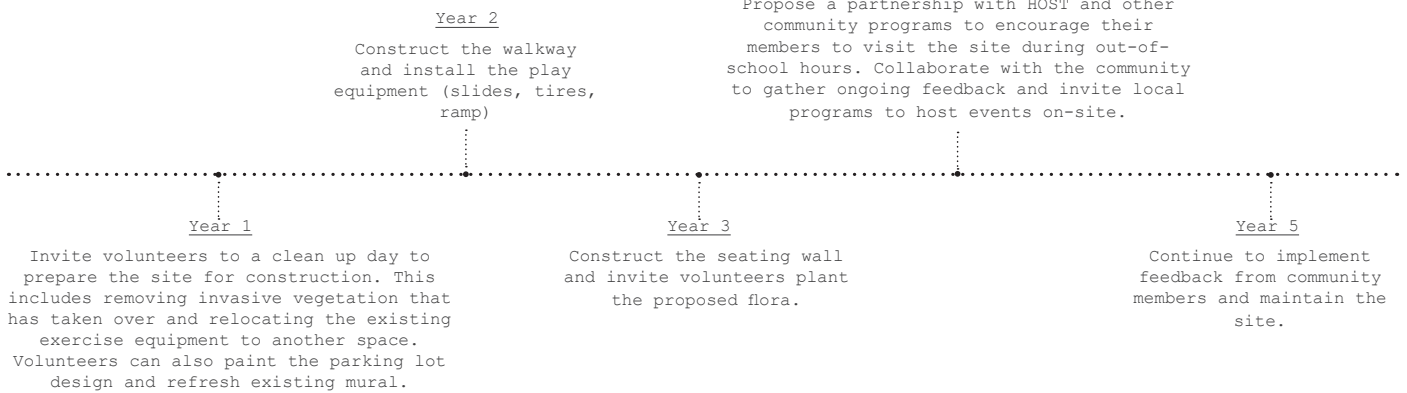


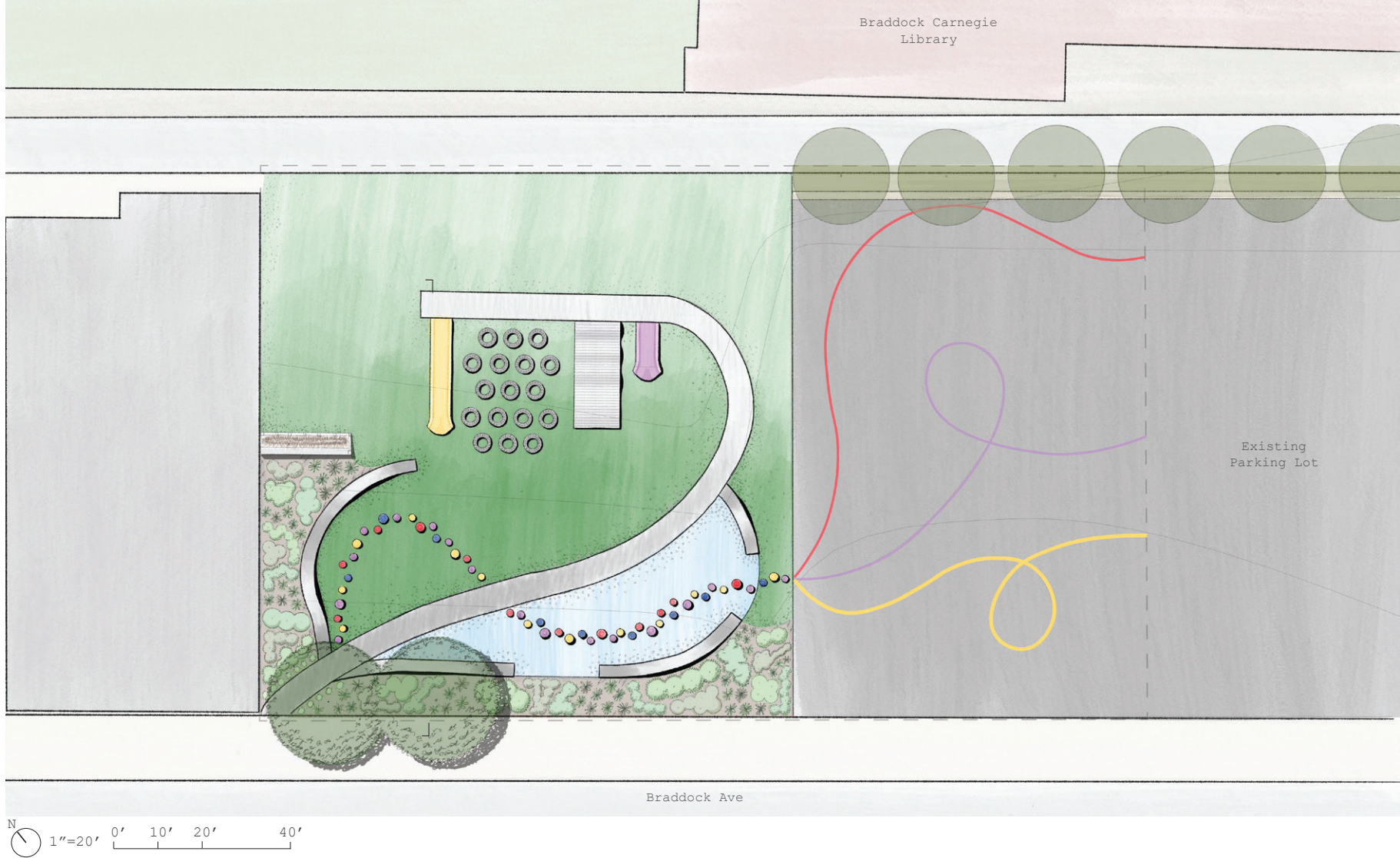
Partner with the BYP to repaint the parking lot, refresh the existing mural, and host community events.



Partner with the library to serve as a destination for visitors during their events.

Project Timeline





Braddock's Bold Beginnings Playscape focuses on addressing the lack of safe spaces for young children to gather and play in Braddock. Contributing factors to this issue include a cycle of violence re-emerging in the community, an abundance of vacant lots, and limited upkeep of public spaces. With 1 in 10 residents experiencing crime, safety is a pressing concern for many in the area. This site was selected due to its strategic location near well-trafficked areas along Braddock Avenue, such as the Carnegie Library, the Hollander Project, and the Library Street Basketball Courts. These landmarks generate higher foot traffic, fostering

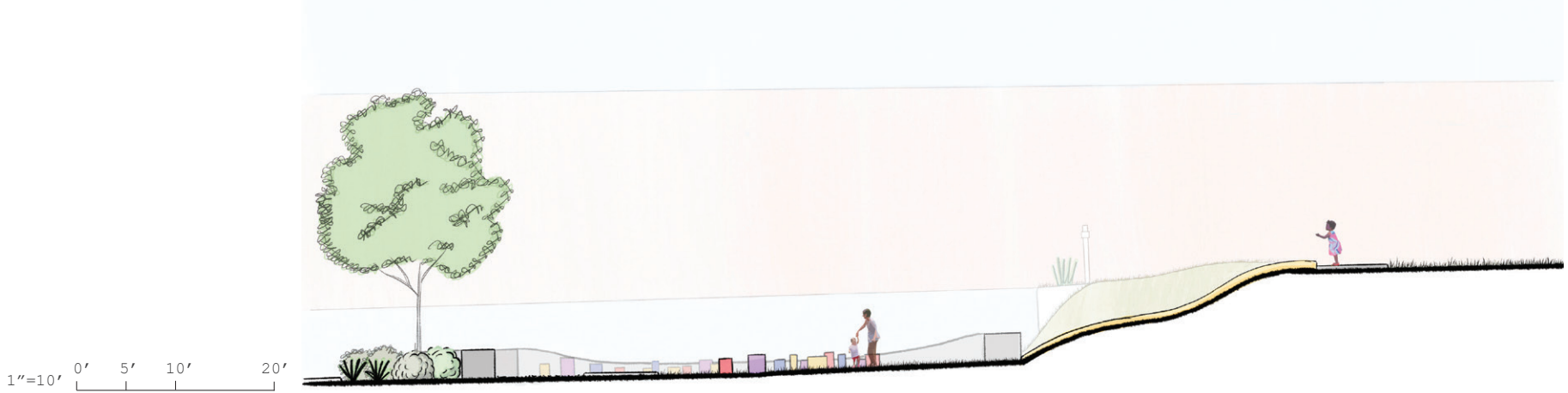
a safer environment by increasing visibility and activity in the area. Many of Braddock's youth already frequent this section for recreation and leisure, making it an ideal location to provide a convenient and secure space for children. This area stands in stark contrast to the southern parts of the city, where abandoned lots and vacant buildings create an uninviting and unsafe environment. The lack of maintenance in Braddock's public spaces and vacant lots further highlights the community's need for durable, low-maintenance solutions. During a site visit, a local resident expressed frustration with the overgrowth and disrepair in the area, stating they

wanted to see "anything besides what we have now". To address this, the design prioritizes hardscaping and utilizes the existing topography and surfaces to minimize the need for frequent upkeep. Additional planting will be limited and selected for low-maintenance requirements, with upkeep supported by proposed partnerships with organizations like the Braddock Youth Project (BYP). To further support the target demographic of young children, the design integrates with existing infrastructure and programs such as Heritage Community Initiative, Greater Valley Community Services, and BYP. The site is envisioned as a resource for these groups to use for events and

activities, creating a vibrant and accessible space for the community's youngest members.

Notable Design Elements

- * The existing asphalt parking lot will be preserved and transformed with painted designs to accommodate events or scheduled visits from local programs like HOST and BYP.
- * Slides, ramps, and tires are thoughtfully integrated into the existing topography, creating a dynamic and functional play area.
- * A continuous path of cylindrical features transitioning into the painted asphalt symbolizes the journey and growth of childhood in a playful, abstract way.

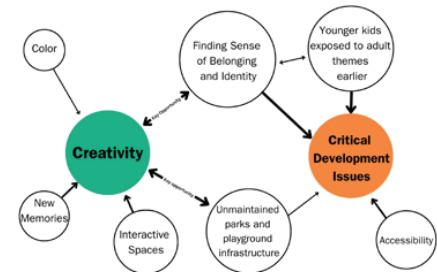


28 Art on Hills: Making magical memories through art

The Vision For Braddock

The vision for this project is to provide interactive spaces in the community and shape existing places into ones that can create new memories. This proposal will address the issues of how there is a lack of outdoor spaces in where youth can explore their creativity. It will provide an area where kids can engage with art by painting the parking spots or displaying their work for the community to see. It will build upon the existing programs that are provided by the the Braaddock Youth Project, Heritage Foundation and the Carnegie Library.

Why ‘Making Magical Memories Through Art’ ?



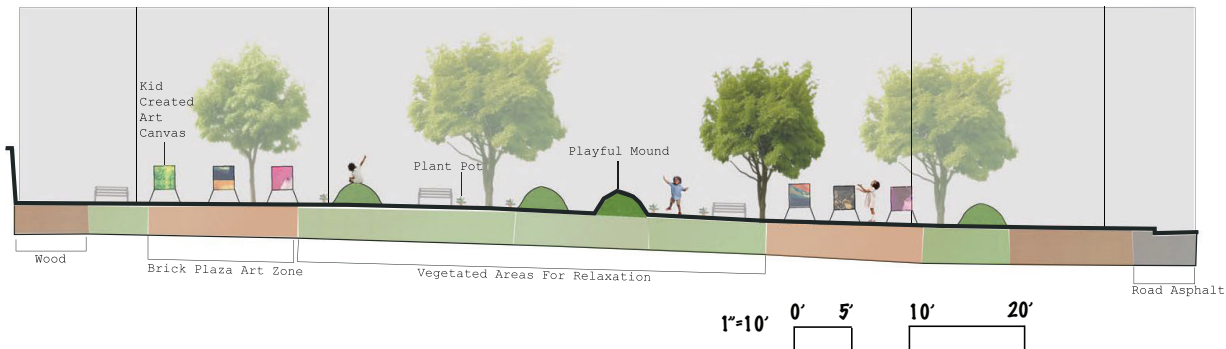
“Kids need a **place** where they can **simply be kids**” - Ms. Rachelle

The target age group for this project is 6-11 because these are the prime coloring years for kids, which allows for the exploration of creativity through art displays made by them or the coloring of the parking spots.

Site Plan: This plan shows the relationships between the art zones, mounds, and parking lot



Section of Art Zones and Mounds



conceptual design by Derek Pei

Potential Partnership with the Carnegie Library

How this partnership with the library would enhance the design proposal is that they would provide the necessary supplies for the youth that would go to the site. Their mission is to “provide reliable access to resources that engage compassionate and creative neighbors.”

These resources would be supplies like paint, chalk, brushes and etc.The library provide structured programs for kids of all ages ranging from preschoolers to young adults. Why this is important is because they could provide these art supplies for everyone to go down to the site and paint.

Playful Mound



Kid Made Art Canvas

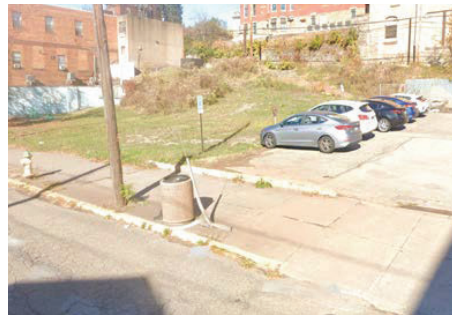


Painting the Lot



Street Context Photo

Two key notes are that the existing trees will be removed for the implementation of the design, and the exercise equipment shall be moved to a different location in Braddock



Perspective of Art Displays and Parking Lot



Importance of Building Adjacency to Site

Site three forms relationships with important locations like the Carnegie Library or the Nyia Page Center. What these relationships are is that they would make the space more vibrant; this is in part to the programs that are held at these locations. Kids from these programs could go to the site, and interact with the activites that would be provided there.

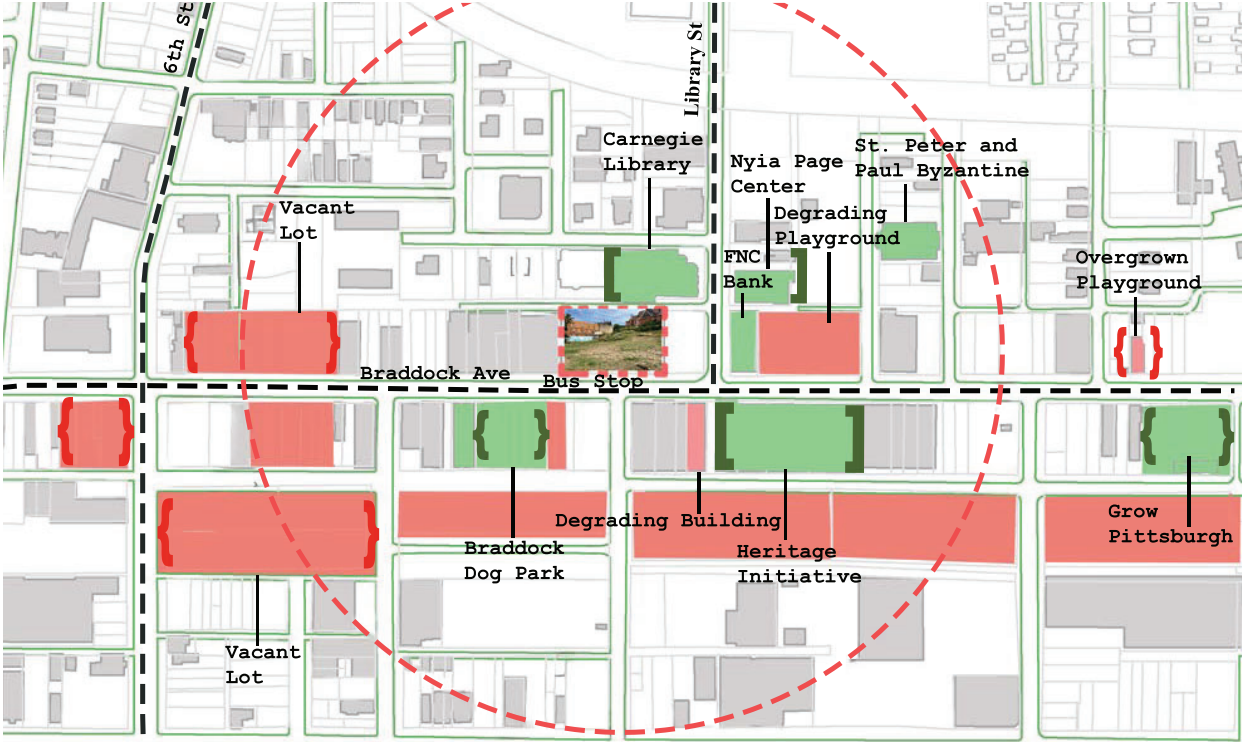
Another important adjacency is the bus stop because it is located at a critical point in the site. It is at the bottom of the main circulation path would bring people to and from Maple Way.

“I desire to see different projects that cultivate creativity within children” - Jodi Davenport

“Many kids love something that have a creative or silly twist to it” - Vicky Vargo

“There were many kids who just wanted to draw” - Vicky Vargo

Existing Conditions and Important Locations Map



Children make up over 25% of Braddock's population.

Maker Mondays:

- Only for youth and their parents
- Fab Lab equipment
- 3D printing, lasercutting, painting, sewing
- Help with creative projects

Anime Club:

- Grades 5-12
- Meets Wednesdays 3:30-5pm
- Drop-in club

After School Crafts & STEAM:

- Kids, tweens, teens
- Meets Tuesdays 4-6pm
- Drop-in program

Analysis

After the visit to Braddock, a key factor that was noticed is the lack of disinvestment in interactive spaces for youth. These existing areas were overgrown with vegetation or they are degrading like the playground next to the FNC bank. Furthermore, almost twenty-five percent of the population is children and there are no outdoor gathering spaces in where they could freely express their imagination.

After hearing from the guest speakers, one of the key messages is that they all desired to see a place where kids could draw and explore their creativity.

This project addresses this desire because it would provide a space where kids could engage in different activities like painting the parking spots, playing with the mounds or displaying their art in the various display areas throughout the site.

Photos of Overgrown Playgrounds

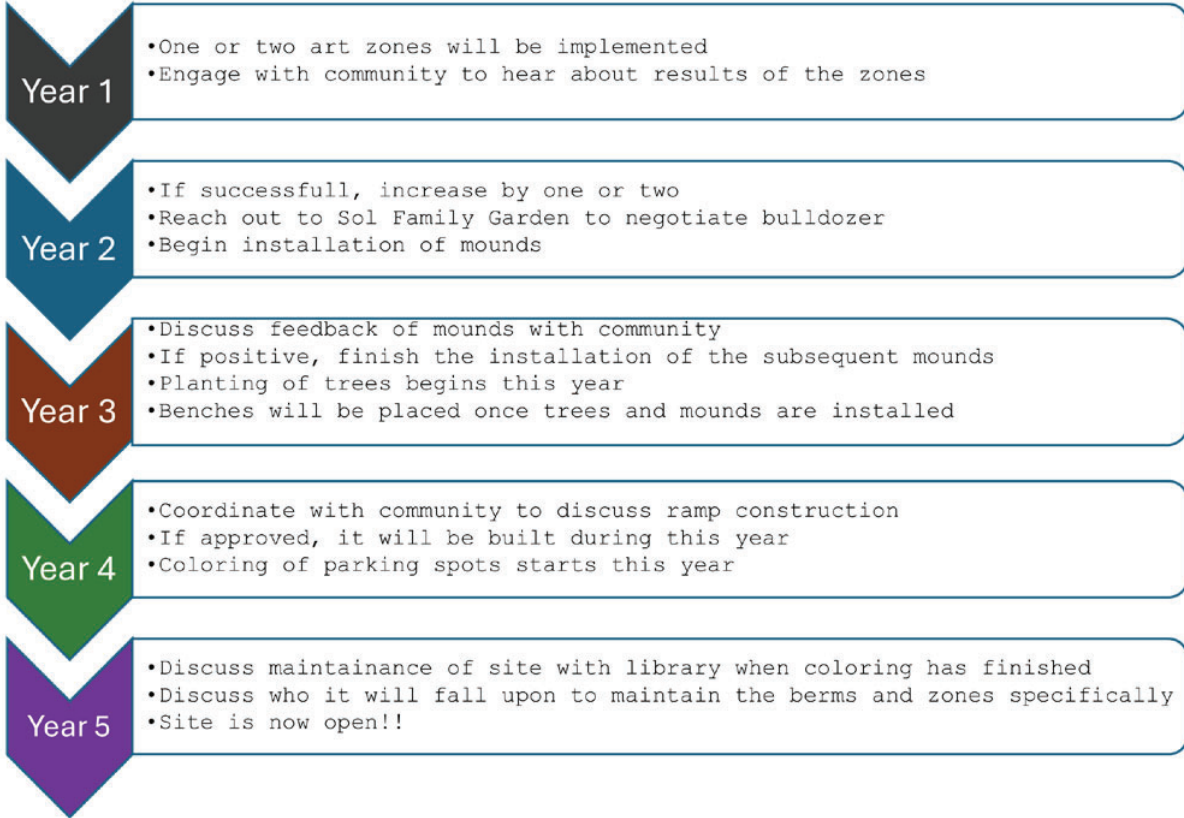


Verona Street Park



Washington Street Community Playground

Timeline



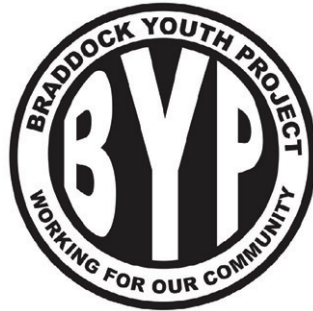
29 Braddock Beautiful Park

The Braddock Beautiful Park design focuses on creating a vibrant, welcoming community hub catering to children aged 6-11, while drawing them to engage in local programs such as the Braddock Youth Project (BYP) and the Carnegie Library. The Braddock community has faced numerous challenges throughout the years. Despite these challenges, the Braddock community is deeply rooted in resilience through their local programs. Programming through the BYP, Carnegie Library, the Free Store, and Hollander Project provides the community with essential resources as well as social hubs, that are vital for community connections necessary for resilience.

The goal of Braddock Beautiful Park is to promote peer connections, creativity, and educational growth while celebrating the community’s unique identity. The design incorporates interactive, playful elements to foster a functional yet inspiring environment. A central pathway encourages social interaction and guides children to local resources, such as after-school programs and the library. The park also highlights art and creativity, offering spaces for children to engage in community art projects and murals. With seating and open areas, the park supports community events like block parties and art exhibitions, helping to build intergenerational bonds for the communities youth.

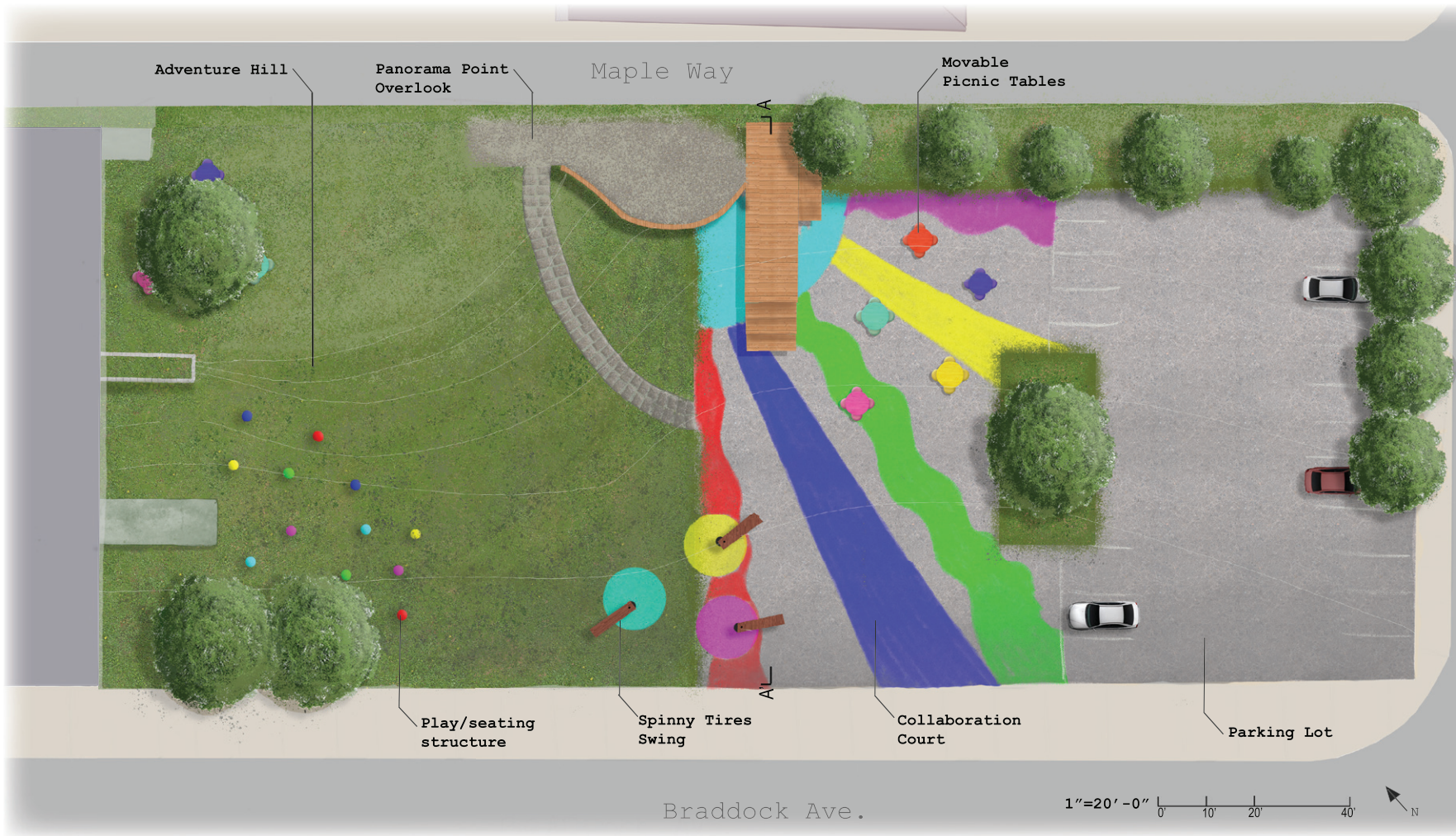
“Allow children to realize their creativity and dreams.”
- Vicki Vargo (Carnegie Library)

Community Inspiration



Spinny Tires and play structure with seating, lookouts, and chimes

Illustrative plan of Braddock Beautiful Park



Analysis emphasizes Braddock Avenue as a key connector both physically and socially. It links important community spaces like the library, The Free Store, and The Hollander Project, all of which serve as hubs for interaction and personal growth. Youth programs at the BYP and the Library offer numerous activities making them central to youth engagement. The third site's location near essential community resources enhances accessibility and collaboration opportunities, encouraging social and creative connections among youth. However, the lack of playgrounds and recreational spaces poses a challenge. Without sufficient facilities for physical play, the potential for social development, physical activity, and community engagement is limited. This could hinder the creation of a

vibrant space where youth can freely collaborate and grow. Proper play spaces could further enhance the potential of Braddock Beautiful Park as a community hub, offering more opportunities for creative and social growth for the youth.

By focusing on the youthful spirit of children, Braddock Beautiful Park aims to provide a positive, nurturing environment that allows kids to be kids. While also providing a local hub where children can create lasting relationships between the other youth and their community resources, strengthening the fabric of Braddock and inspiring them to engage, grow, and build lasting relationships with each other and their community.

Play Space Analysis



Center Street Playground, overall upkept area with little to no repairs needed. Numerous play oportunities.



3rd Street playground, fallen into disrepair and play structure is widely overgrown.



Panorama Point climbing wall, path from Braddock Ave to Maple Way



Play Spaces Context Map

“A space where they (kids) can gather and build friendships and memories.”
- Cathy Welsh (HOOPS)

Community Partners

Community partners for the Braddock Beautiful Park design are the Braddock Youth Project (BYP) and the Carnegie Library. One of the goals of the park is to connect youth to the local programming target towards their age range. With both the BYP and the library being in close proximity to the site, and their strong ties to the community, they make the perfect partners for planning and facilitation of building and events. The BYP can assist with planning, building, and promoting the space, allowing youth to actively participate in the design process, such as painting play structures. The media team at BYP can help promote the site through social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook. The Carnegie Library, which offers after-school programs for older children, would use the space for group activities and community events. They can also help promote the plaza through social media and flyers, ensuring community engagement. The proximity of these partners makes them ideal collaborators, as they directly serve the local community who will benefit from and use the space.

Year 1

- Hold community dicussion meetings evaluating additional requests for activities within the park.
- Work with BYP partners to gather building materials. Coordinate with library regarding rentals.

Year 3

- BYP students will plan decoration of the site, including the painting of play structures and the asphalt.
- Host a second community day focused on youth. Allowing children to be creative within the park, as well as fostering a sense of pride in the space.

Year 5

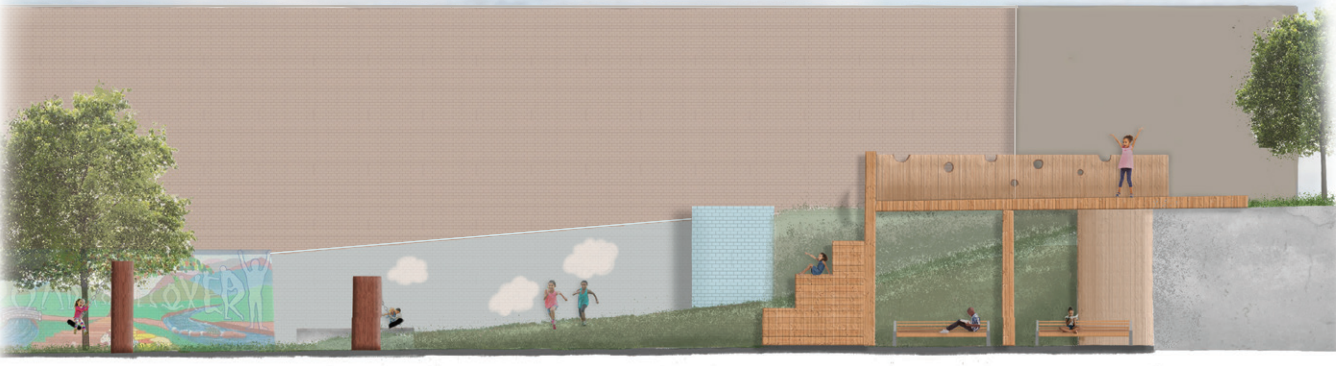
- Communicate with Carnegie Library staff to facilitate community events within the park to promote the area as a hub.
- Create new events to further foster a sense of community within the Braddock youth in a fun and inviting space.

Year 2

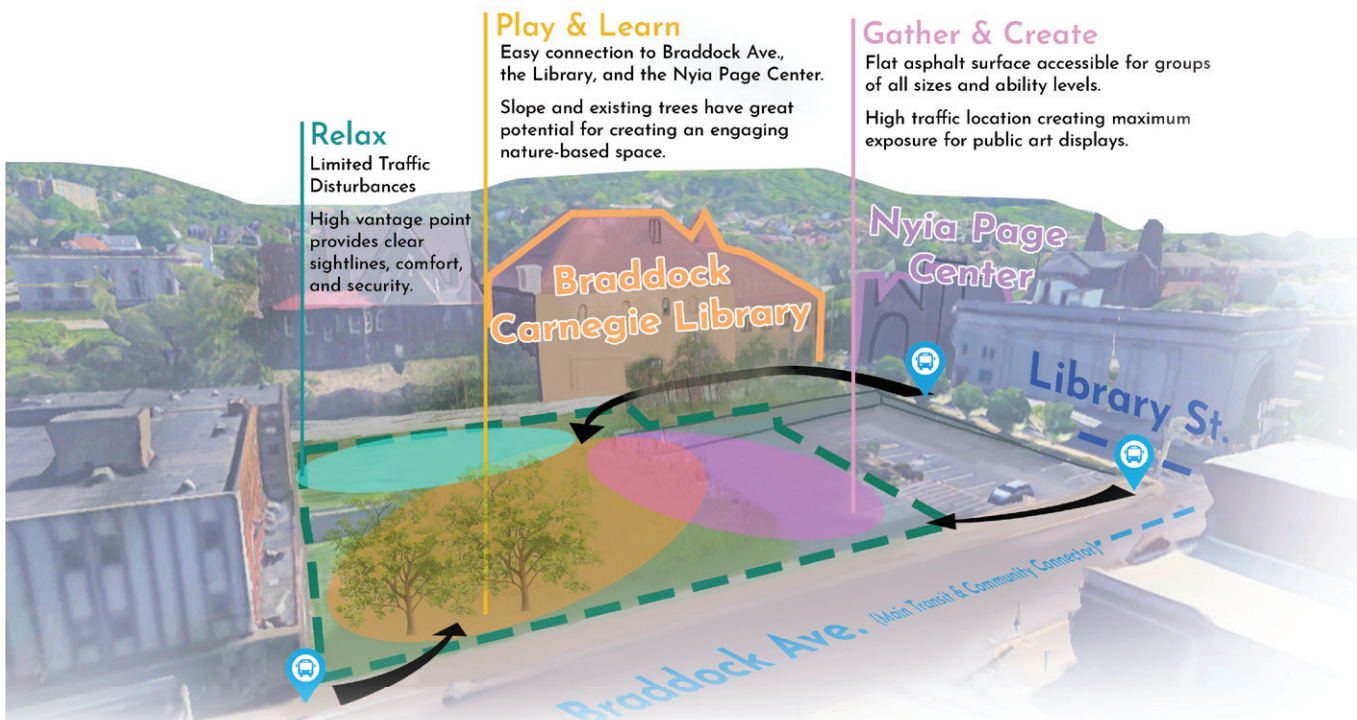
- Work with partners at BYP and community volunteers to prepare site for buildings.
- Coordinate with BYP and Carnegie Library to plan and facilitate community building events, as an effort to engage the community with the design.

Year 4

- Hold community maintenance days, mowing lawn space, cleaning trash, refreshing paint, etc.
- Coordinate with Carnegie Library staff to create sign out system for seating/play structures.
- Keep the area upkept as to keep up interest and use of the space.



1" = 10' -0" 0' 5' 10' 20'



Designing for Healing Framework (Graphic 1)*



Identifying Needs of Young Adolescents (Graphic 2)

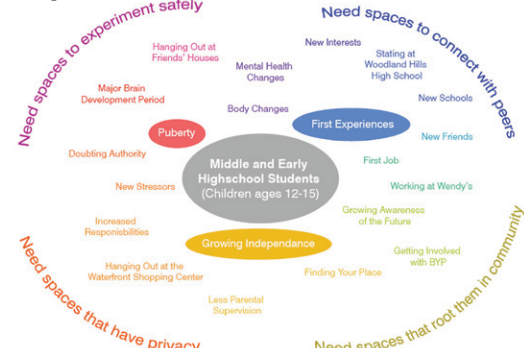


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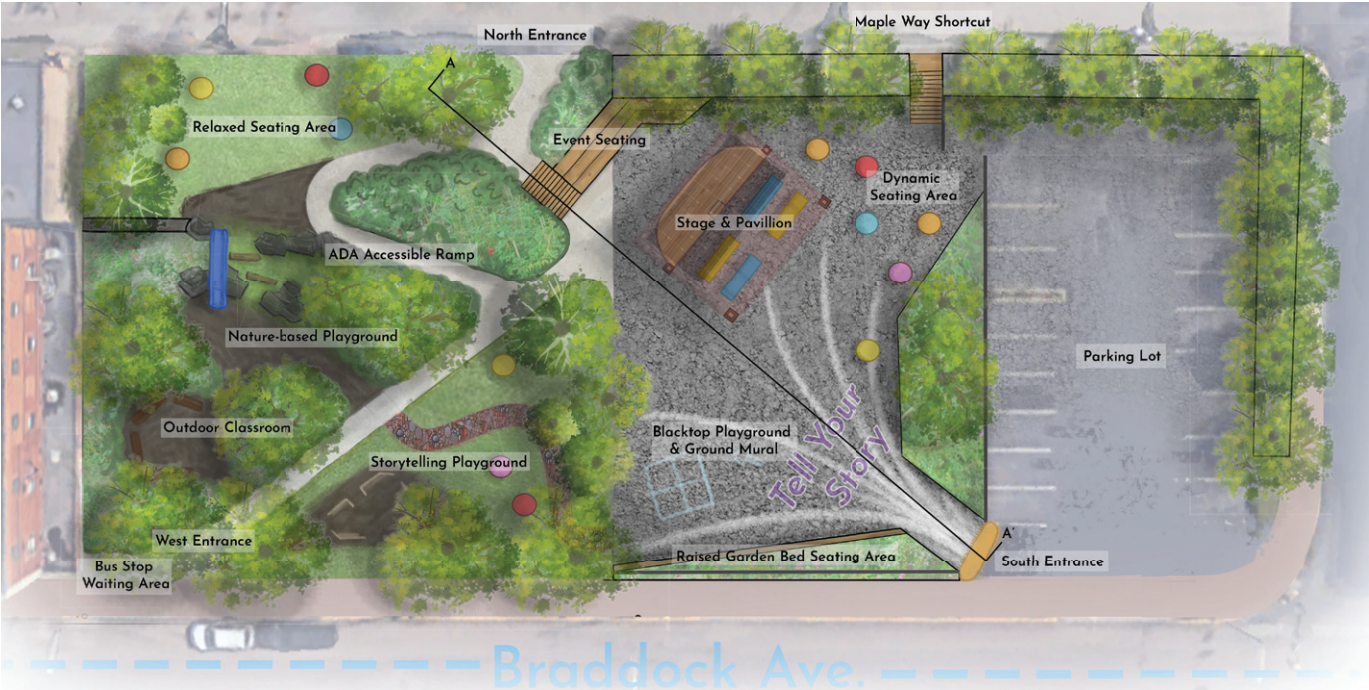
The Vision of Braddock's Storybook

When asking community leaders what they imagine for the children of Braddock they overwhelmingly respond with the same idea: a safe place for kids to be together. The intention for a design at the unoccupied lot on Braddock Ave and Library St. takes from that concept entirely, seeking to serve the young adolescents of Braddock with a place to gather comfortably and explore their interests without feeling dictated or controlled. Even further, this space is intended to be a place teens and tweens are proud of, to learn and grow from the successes of their community, and to create stories of their own for Braddock.

Design Strategies for Braddock's Storybook

In order to achieve the vision set out for Braddock's Storybook, the design uses researched strategies to create comfort and safety. One reference is University of Denver's Designing for Healing Framework (Graphic 1) which stresses community connection and empowerment. Combining this framework with research on the emotional and physical development of young adolescents, four needs for young teens in Braddock were identified (Graphic 2). Addressing these needs is a driving force for this design.

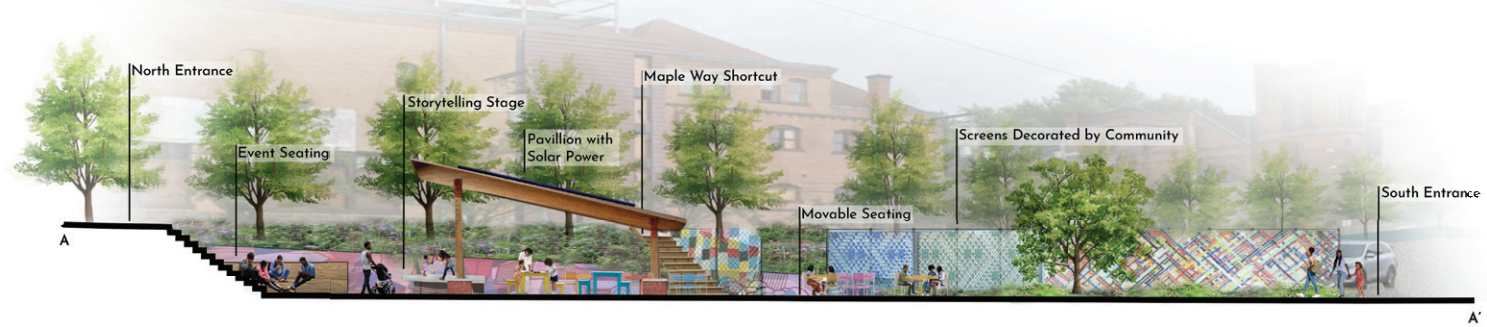
*Trauma-informed Design Framework 'Designing for Healing, Dignity, and Joy (2020). Shopworks Architecture Group, 14 Engineering, & University of Denver Center for Housing and Homelessness Research



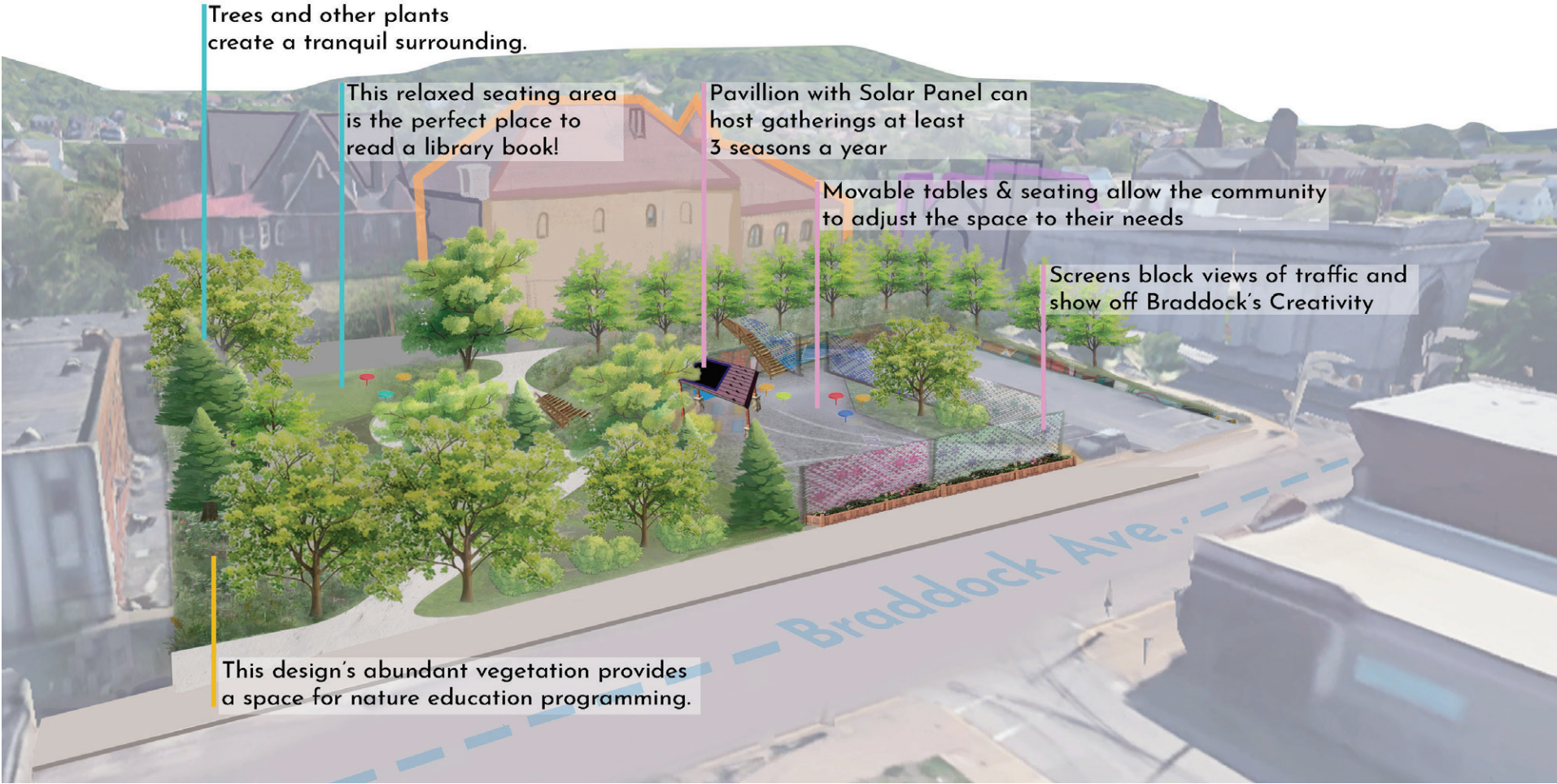
Meet the Authors

Located next to both the Braddock Carnegie Library (BCL) and the Nyia Page Community Center (NPCC), the proposed Braddock's Storybook has incredible potential to work in partnership with both these organizations. Just as the BCL and NPCC shape Braddock, their missions have been instrumental in shaping this design. The design borrows from the BCL's vision of "shared learning" by dedicating space for outdoor education and public performances. Reflecting the NPCC's artistic legacy, the storybook is also meant to serve as a type of public gallery, with space for murals and interactive installations. Abundant seating throughout the design can serve as outdoor seating areas for local restaurants like Aunt Cheryl's Café, located in the NPCC, as well as places to read a library book or host a book club. No matter how the Braddock Community decides to interact with this space, the design will always be rooted in the community-oriented spirit of the BCL and NPCC.

A Page-Turning Plaza



Where Braddock Can Celebrate Tales of Community



The Storytelling Playground

- Links nature-based spaces with built spaces
- Community members can choose meaningful Braddock buildings to highlight Braddock history in play town area
- Path made with recycled building materials from demolished structures in Braddock
- Surrounding seating allows older users, including teenage siblings, to relax while watching over playing children
- Potential for expanded signage and public art detailing stories of Braddock's history

Design Timeline

Year 1 	Year 2   	Year 3   	Year 4 & 5  
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Community Design In-put- Soil Testing- Resource Collecting (Facilitated by the BCL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bench & Table Installation- Community Art Installations (Facilitated by the NPCC)- Path & Planting Installations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Play Space Installations- Community Art Installations (Facilitated by the NPCC)- Tree & Shrub Plantings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pavillion & Stage Installation- Path Network Completed

31 Braddock Wellness Park: A Haven for Mind and Body

Unlocking This Peace of Mind...

VISION STATEMENT...

To build upon sanctuary within Braddock where mental and physical well-being flourish, providing the community, specifically the youth, with safe spaces to grow. Through sustainable design, inclusive activities, and tranquil gathering areas, this park will inspire connection, resilience, and a brighter future for generations to come.

DESIGN ANALYSIS...

To build a brighter future for Braddock's residents, it is essential to focus on their well-being, with a particular emphasis on mental and physical health. Many of Braddock's youth have limited access to safe, nurturing outdoor spaces within their community where they can relax, reflect, and grow. As a result, they often seek opportunities for respite outside of Braddock, which limits local development and stifles future community growth. While the community is committed to creating a safer environment, the need for sustainable spaces dedicated to mental well-being has not yet been fully addressed. By creating spaces for healing and support within Braddock, we can empower its residents, particularly the youth, to thrive and help the community flourish for generations.

The site will feature a place of play and rest. Physical well-being is a large part of a healthy mind being that physical activity produces the happy chemical, edorphins. There are various ways to interact with the site to encourage youth of all ages to feel welcome. The multi-use court, made from the pre existing parking lot, features street hockey, tennis, pickleball, and volleyball. This allows people of various interests to take part in the site. The painted abstract mural on the multi-use court is designed to evoke a range of emotions, including happiness, passion, love, and relaxation, by engaging the brain through vibrant colors and dynamic patterns. Weaving in and around the court is a blue (a color stimulating calmness) rubber path that leads you further inside the design. The path serves as a place for those walking through or passing time. Seen in a bubble-like fashion are patches of shrubs, grass, and sand. Each will incorporate a sustainable place of play due to the reuse of materials around Braddock.

Nestled within the park is a porch. This porch can be used for gatherings, meditation, and however else it is seen to be useful. As the site gently ascends, a stone path leads to a peaceful gathering space, where a fire pit invites visitors—whether with a sibling, cousin, or friend—to pause, relax, and unwind entranced by the small fire. This perched area is slightly secluded due to its height advantage, offering a tranquil view of the park below, allowing guests to observe the flowing energy of play while finding stillness and calm.

This site is constructed through the thoughts and stories of the people who can make this design a place for community, a place for reflecting on memories, and to build upon them.

Minding the Design



5 YEAR PLAN!

Year 1

- Clear the landscape.
- Install a "Coming Soon" sign.
- Organize community workdays to engage residents.
- Building emotional investment.
- Host a design finalization workshop to gather community input.
- Launch a fundraising campaign.

Year 2

- Clean the site again before beginning construction.
- Start construction of key areas: create paths, shape mounds, install play areas, build a firepit, construct a multi-use court, add fencing, and install initial play equipment.

Year 3

- Complete the construction of the playset.
- Based on observations and community feedback, make adjustments as needed.
- Open the site to the community for use and feedback.
- Add a pavilion to provide shelter and gathering space.

Year 4

- Focus on landscaping and additional seating areas.
- Install signage for each area to encourage community use and interaction.
- Begin hosting events and workshops to increase community presence and investment.

Year 5

- Conduct a community survey to assess satisfaction.
- Create maintenance and improvement plan, including any further community needs.
- Establish regular maintenance routines to ensure the site remains safe and inviting.



Peeking Inside the Play Color Stimulation

Colors stimulate emotions by influencing the brain's perception and psychological responses. Warm tones like red and orange often evoke energy, passion, or excitement, while cooler tones like blue and green promote calmness, relaxation, and balance. Bright, vibrant colors can elicit joy and positivity, whereas muted or darker hues may evoke introspection or somber feelings. This emotional response to color is rooted in both biological reactions and cultural associations.

Color helps mental health development by influencing mood, behavior, and cognitive function in ways that support emotional regulation and mental well-being. Different colors stimulate specific psychological responses that can aid in creating environments conducive to growth, relaxation, and focus.

The Emotional Triggers of Colors



Graphics Key:

1. Calming Blue Rubber Path

2. Nature Areas

3. Sandy Zen Area
4. Brick Border

5. Stepping Logs

6. Climbing Net
7. Rock Climbing Wall

8. Imagination Dome

9. Timber Trek Bridge
10. Balancing Logs

11. Sweet Slide

12. Water Stimulation Mural
13. Elevated Firepit

14. Stepping Rocks

15. Swing Area
16. Stump Maze

17. Multi Use Court

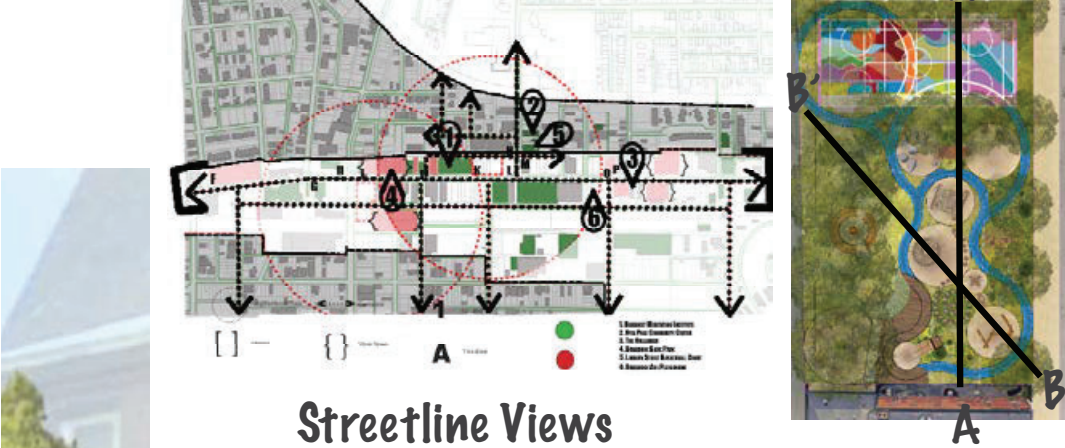
18. Painted Wooden Backstop
19. Wooden Table

20. Wood Bench

Climbing Inside



Existing Conditions



Braddock Carnegie Library Buddhist Meditation Institute NYIA Page Center



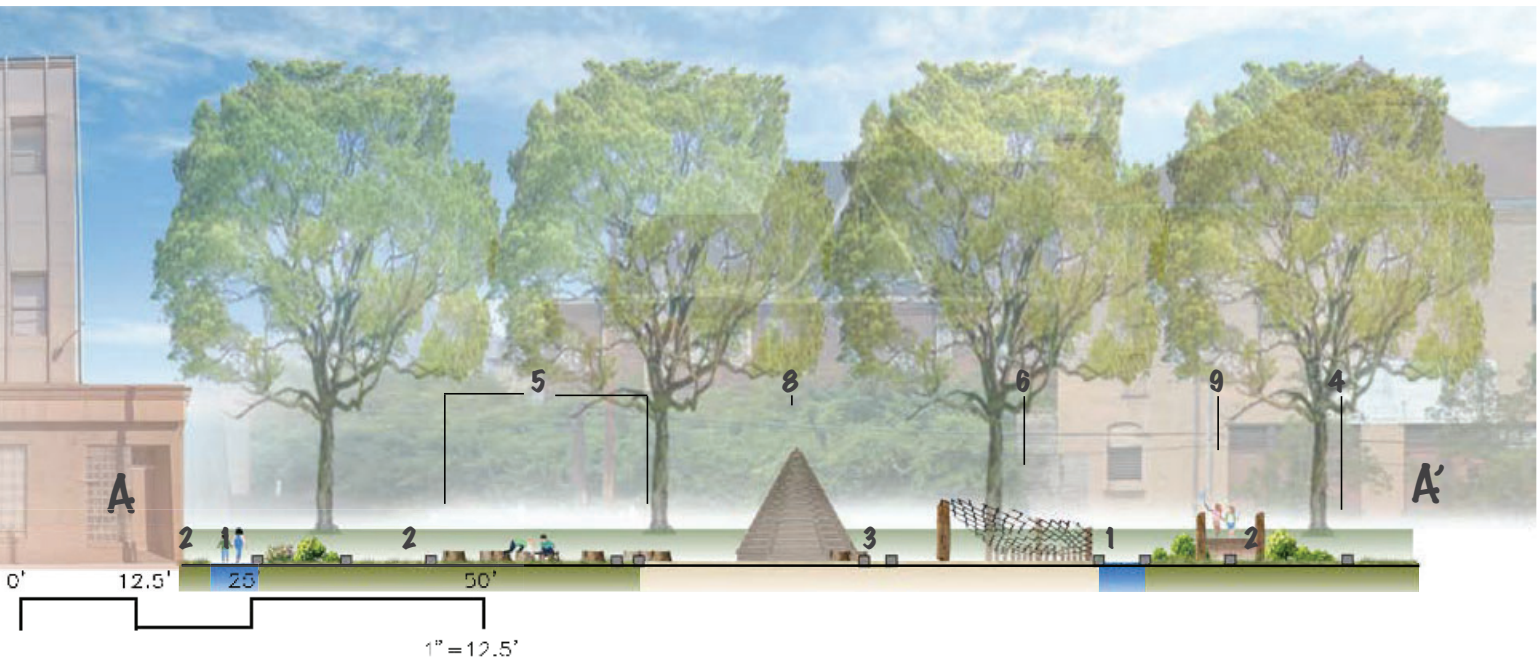
By partnering with the Carnegie Library, we can establish a system to store, check out, and return community equipment, ensuring that these resources are easily accessible to all. The library's central location and established systems provide a strong foundation for implementing this program, supporting the community's needs for both physical and mental well-being, and fostering greater inclusion for everyone.

Sustained mindfulness lays the foundation for deeply focused states, which are achieved through Samatha (calm-abiding practice). Additionally, it fosters Vipassana (insight), which involves seeing into the nature of existence and understanding the impermanence of all phenomena. Not only will this sight design encourage this partner to use the space, but it can also encourage others to use mindfulness through their practices.

When talking with many students involved with this program, there was a wide range of interest in planting. Thus I plan to make the planting minimal. Incorporating sand into my design captivated this group, and with low funding it is possible to include in the final design. What will be asked of this group is to maintain the inevitable plant growth that can occur within the site, especially the sandy areas.



Streetline Views

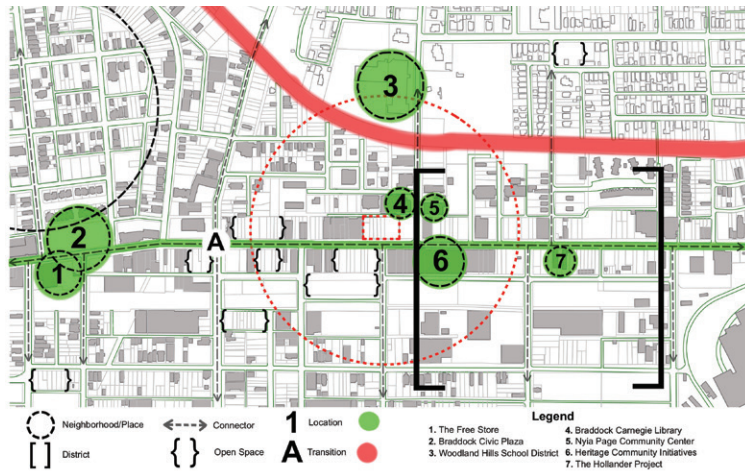


1" = 10"

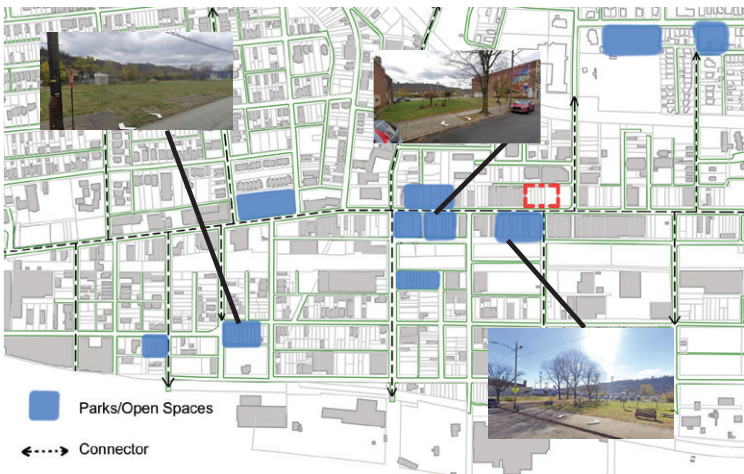
32 Unity Park



Existing Conditions



Current Parks/Open Spaces



Vision Statement

This vision for Braddock is a safe and vibrant space where teenagers and young adults can gather to relax, connect, and play, free from the challenges of generational poverty. By providing a secure environment that fosters community pride and creativity, this space empowers youth to envision a brighter future while addressing the systemic barriers that have long hindered their growth.

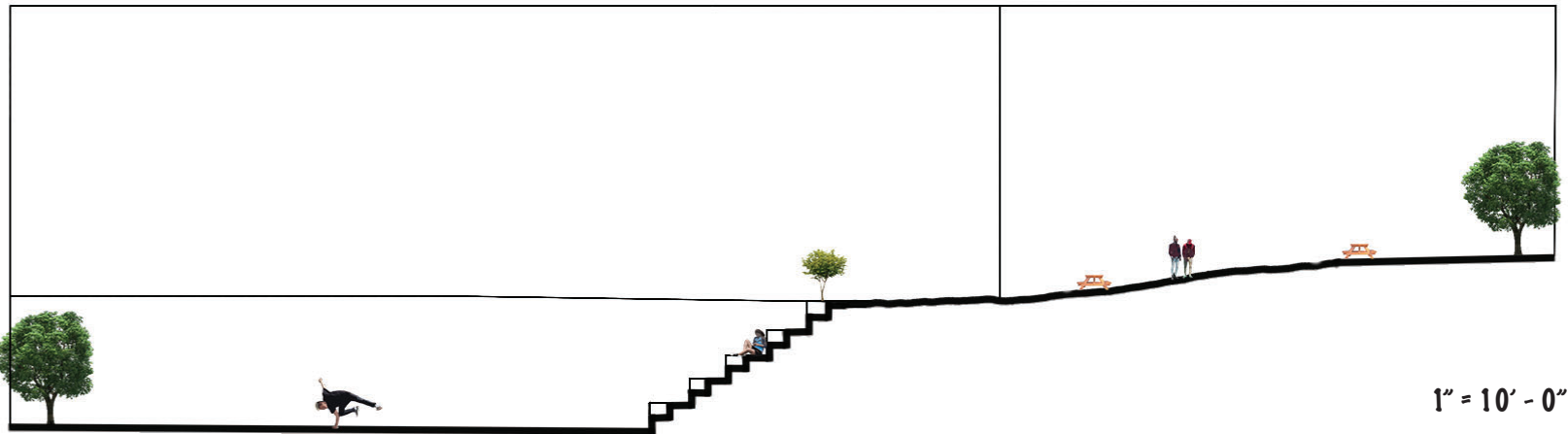
“Hoping to recycle peoples thoughts” - Vicki Vargo

Braddock’s current parks and open spaces struggle to meet the needs of the community, often lacking the features that make public spaces inviting. Many of these areas feel outdated, with minimal infrastructure to support activities or gatherings. As a result, they are often underused, serving as passive spaces rather than vibrant centers of community life. The parks often lack elements like seating or interactive features that encourage visitors to stay and engage with one another.

Axonomic View



Section View



Unity Park’s Design

The new design is a vibrant and welcoming space created to foster connection and community pride. At its core is a terraced seating area, crafted as a natural amphitheater. This feature provides a comfortable gathering spot where residents can enjoy performances, community events, or relax and take in the surroundings. Complementing the seating area is a stage, designed to host a variety of events such as concerts, plays, and celebrations. This stage serves as a platform for local talent and a hub for communal experiences.

“Anything that allows them to be kids again” - Mande Williams

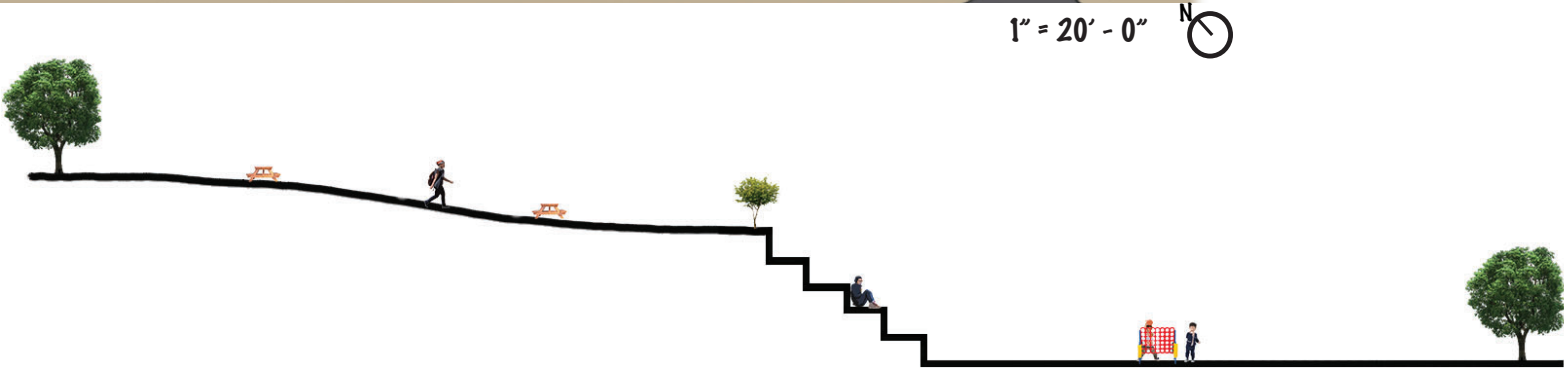
Plan View



Unity Park's Design

Interactive elements bring energy and playfulness to the space. Jumbo versions of classic games like Connect Four and checkers provide opportunities for fun and connection across all age groups, creating moments of joy and interaction. Surrounding these key features, seating areas offer places to unwind and enjoy the park's atmosphere, ensuring everyone can find their own way to connect. This design aspires to inspire community pride by creating a space that feels inclusive and dynamic. It offers a setting where people of all ages can come together and build a stronger sense of unity while celebrating the vibrancy of the community.

Section View

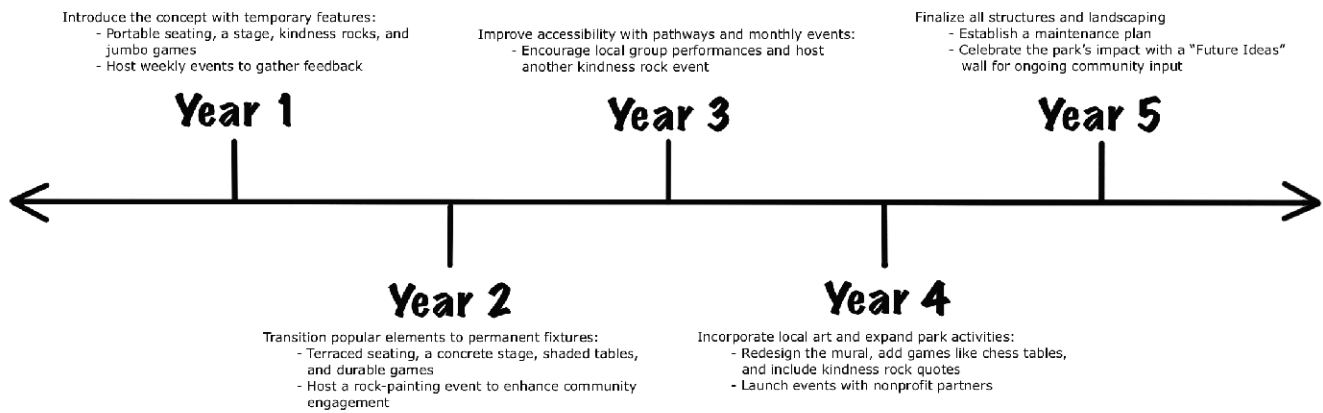


Stakeholders/Partners

Braddock Youth Project (BYP):

- Serve kids the same age as my intended age group.
- Located very close to my site making it easy for those kids to visit my site.
- Their mission statement is "BYP is a work skills excellence program that allows youth, aged 14-19, to design projects based on the needs they perceive in their community. The program's goals are to foster skills that will aid youth in advancing toward positive life outcomes, by providing youth with the means to create meaningful and sustainable community development projects."
- This resonates very well with my design intention through the kindness rocks, allowing the kids to design and create their own rocks with their own inspiring/motivational messages, as well as the jumbo connect four/ checkers as it allows them to play games that require strategic thinking

5-Year Timeline



33 Canvas Park



THE VISION

Envision a Braddock where older youth (ages 14-20) can gather with friends in a space that fosters safety, belonging, and healing. A place alive with vibrant, self-created art, interactive elements that empower them to interact with and shape their



ANALYSIS

Braddock is a unique town with a strong sense of community that inspires creativity. Many youths I spoke with, along with others, expressed a deep interest in creative pursuits like art, music, and nature. However, they often lack the support needed to continue these endeavors in Braddock. Some even mentioned feeling that leaving is essential to achieving success.

This desire to leave is often intensified by the need to escape the pervasive cycle of trauma and violence, particularly among youth. Cathay Welsh of HOOP is aware of this reality but advocates for

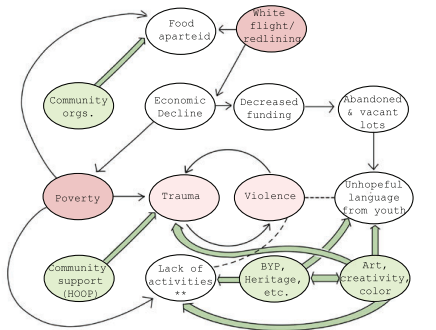
“living on the beautiful side of grief... and really taking any type of pain and turning it into something beautiful and powerful!”

This perspective highlights the importance of transforming tragedy, especially for young people. Art and creative pursuits play a crucial role in this transformation, offering a pathway to channel pain into beauty. Since many young people already show an interest in artistic endeavors, nurturing these passions—through painting, gardening, and other creative outlets—can be a powerful means of healing, both for themselves and their communities.

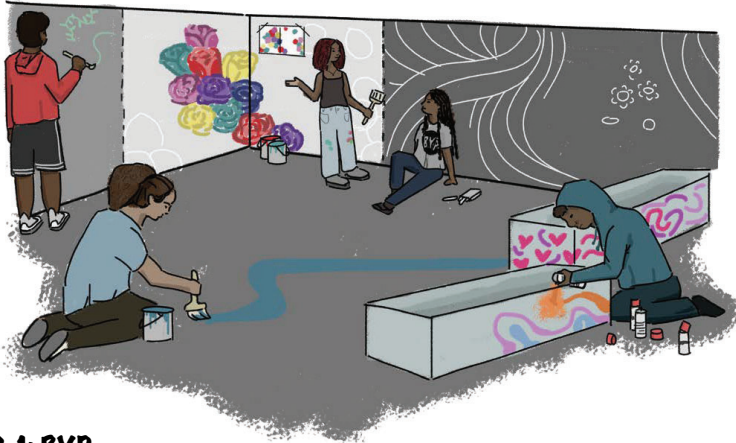
Creating a space full of beauty and art requires first ensuring that kids feel safe. Many youths I spoke to avoid hanging out in Braddock due to a lack of public and safe spaces, often feeling on edge. Adults in the community also emphasized the need for a place where “kids can be.” A potential solution is fostering an ‘eyes on the street’ atmosphere, where the presence of trusted adults creates a sense of security. Ms. Rachelle demonstrated the effectiveness of

this approach, as proximity to a trusted figure provides reassurance. The library and the Nyia Page Center already offer a glimpse of this secure environment, with library staff noting how much the kids trust them. Partnering with organizations like BYP and HOOP to establish regular programs would ensure the space remains active and supervised by trusted adults.

Another essential aspect of this space is healing. Providing an outlet for creative expression and fostering a sense of safety are vital steps in supporting recovery. The concept of choice is also crucial. A pocket park project in Brooklyn, New York, called Restorative Ground highlights the importance of offering varied activity zones—focused, active, and calm—to accommodate individual needs. The proposed site in Braddock has different levels of socialization/ mindfulness instead: solitary thinking, small groups, and social gatherings. Unlike many public spaces that force either socialization or solitude, these zones allow people to engage at their own pace, which is especially important for those who have experienced trauma. The ability to move freely and choose how to engage, even in small ways, supports individuality and is a key component of the healing process.



PHASE 1: BYP PAINTING MURALS



PARTNER 1: BYP

The Braddock Youth Project (BYP) is a critical organization for youth aged 14-20, helping them explore their passions and develop entrepreneurial skills. Located in the Nyia Page Community Center across the street, the BYP is well-positioned to maintain and utilize the proposed park while expanding its programs.

Currently, BYP runs many groups including art and gardening. The gardening team manages several sites but lacks a native plants garden. The project proposal includes planters with native and edible plants, offering a low-maintenance learning opportunity. Activities like native plant scavenger

hunts could connect participants to their environment, teach plant identification skills, and offer meaningful engagement.

The art team could benefit from an annual painting competition on the walls or plaza, providing creative expression and a way to commemorate community members. A proposed stage would also enable a performing arts group, giving local youth a platform to showcase talents like music and theater. This addition creates opportunities for aspiring artists, allowing them to share their work locally and foster community pride while making the site their own.

PHASE 2: STAGE PERFORMANCE BY BYP



PARTNER 2: HOOP

Closely associated with the BYP and physically close to the site, HOOP is an essential asset for this project. HOOP is a crucial community resource that helps its members process grief, and this site could offer them a lot and they could also add a lot. HOOP also has helped BYP establish a garden in the Hollender, and working together, these groups can establish and maintain the native plant garden in this new site. This could be a great opportunity for HOOP as an additional activity, and aids in the healing journey.

TIMELINE

TIME (years)

PHASE 1: PROGRAMING PREP

Have the BYP paint a mural for the parking lot that will be converted into a plaza, and the existing wall. The wall will be sectioned and made into a yearly mural competition for individuals/ groups.

PHASE 2: SITE PREP

Have the BYP build the stage for a hands on carpentry experience. Put up shade sails. Buy tables, chairs, and benches. Source objects for planters, can be creative with what becomes a planter. (Filing cabinets, milk crates, ect.) Source native plants: BYP can go out to abandoned lots and gather native plants to transport. Build stairs and lay pavers for path through the site.

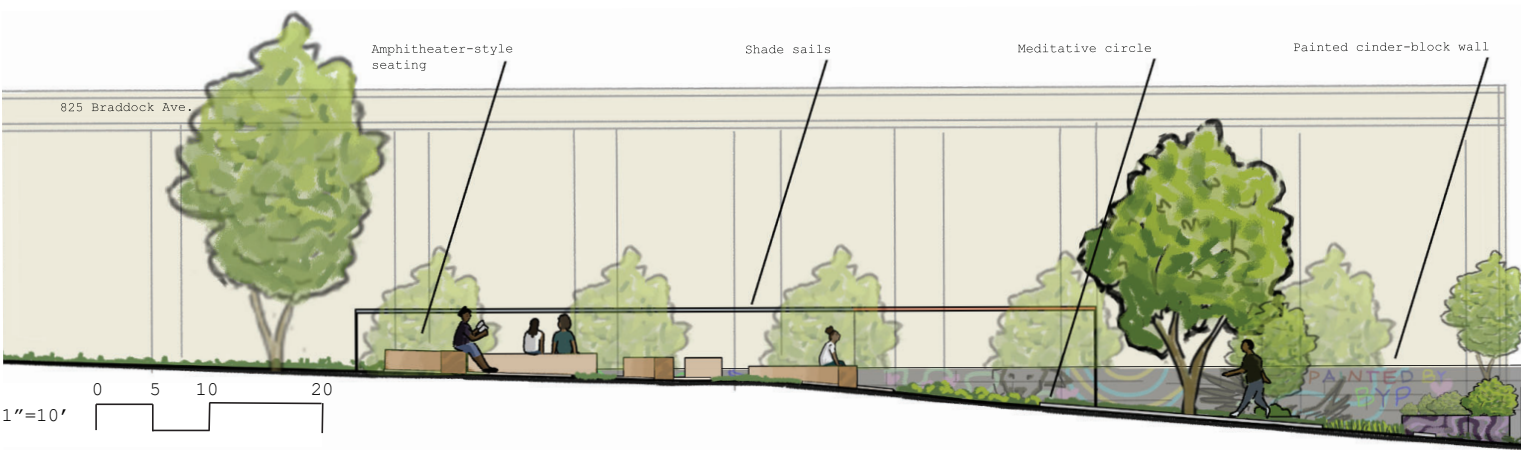
PHASE 3: EXPERIMENTATION/ FUNDING

With these elements, see how the community responds to it. Are they using it? Are there enough programs? Encourage BYP to host events, especially on the stage. Put flyers around town to advertise the events. Depending on the event, it could bring in money, allowing for purchasing new plants, chairs, tables, and benches if damaged or in need of more.

PHASE 4: REACTION TO USER NEED

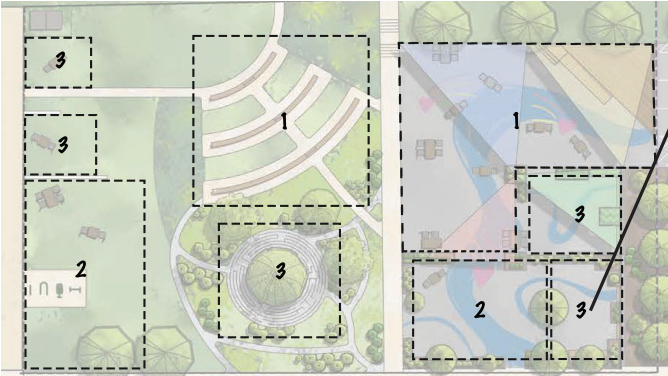
Depending on usage, add seating into the hill. Adjust exisiting conditions based on usage. Add meditative circle. If plant maintenance is not getting done, get rid of those planters or convert the planting areas to lawn.

SECTION A-A'



SEATING ZONES

- 1: social gatherings
- 2: small groups
- 3: solitary thinking



ZONE 3 SEATING





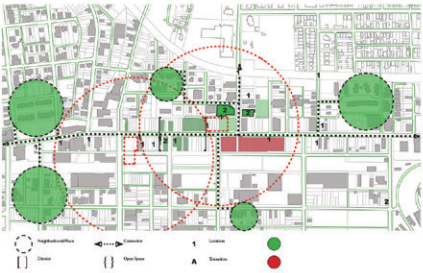
DESIGN INTENT

A design with the intent to amplify the voice of the youth to define how they view themselves and their surroundings. This can be achieved by designated space for the youth’s creative expression supported by local programs, fostering both personal growth and a stronger connection to the community. A space like this requires accessibility for both local programs and residents, a safe culture to encourage true expression, and The map shown on the right is a blown up image of the one before it.

MAPPING THE TOWN

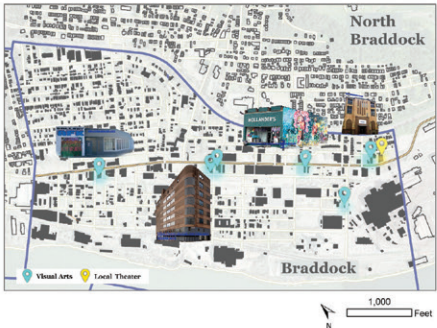


This map above is a diagram supported by the study conducted on Braddock by this studio. The locations denoted in this map, by numbers, are arts projects in the area. The circles show major communities.



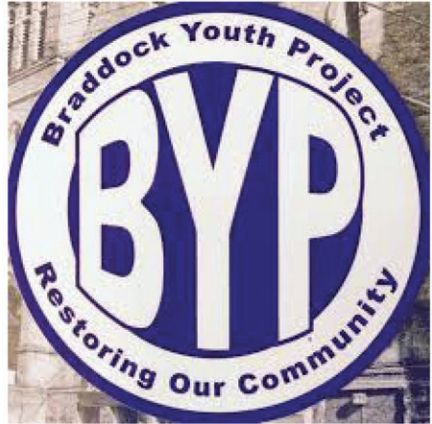
In the study, the site which supports the statement of intent best is Site #3. This location sits in the hub of Braddock’s mural culture, showing its creative relevance. It is also accessible by local programs, being directly adjacent to the Braddock Carnegie Library and the Nyia Page Center. Being so close to those two community pillars and residential communities creates a secondary effect of safety and accessibility.

ARTWORK



Born into the economic ruins of Braddock’s golden years, the youth yearn for expression. During these formative years, an emotional understanding is required to reconcile with your surroundings. Whether that catharsis is brought by drugs, the arts, or playing sports, children and young adults are looking for a way to find individual fulfillment in a place where that is a scarcity. Jay, a Woodlands Hills High School senior and Braddock resident, spends his free time making music in his bedroom. He states that downtown hangout spots and events can be a conduit for dangerous activities. This statement causes a paradoxical design issue: how can a passive space be inherently safe? The answer to this question is intent to create a cultural and recreational hub that drills down on what aspects of Braddock bring about positivity. As mentioned previously, this is a community that holds a pervasive, tangible angst. While these roots are inherently negative, the fruit it can bring is a positive expression of Braddock’s story, as its golden years fade.

LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

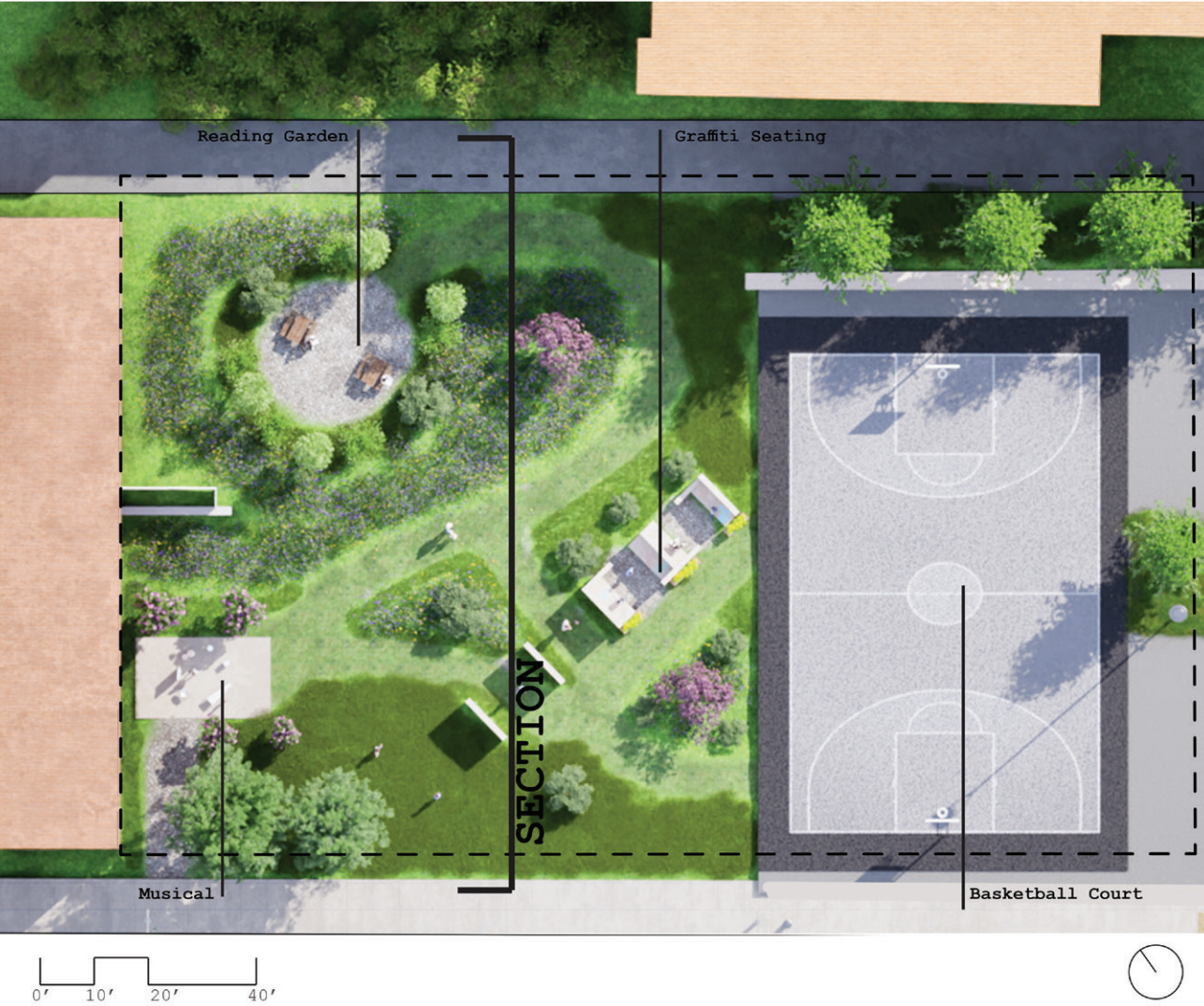


In order for arts and recreation programming to be successful, there needs to be organizations directing the events. Braddock is affiliated with a handful of programs, chief of which being the Braddock Youth Project. In Rasaun’s interview, he mentions leading multiple murals and other small art projects accross Braddock, involving children in all stages of the installation. When asked what he’d wish for the youth of his community, he envisioned a space with programming for music, art, and physical activity.It’s possible Rasaun was not asking for more space to him lead projects, but space for youth-led activity. This would allow for more true expression and emotional security in children.

Another cornerstone of youth community in Braddock is the BCLA and their associated clubs. Many of these clubs provide opportunities for teens to learn and express themselves in a positive way.

Both of these organizations uphold the concepts mentioned in the focal point diagram above. Through recreation and art there are large scale butterfly effects throughout the community.

The Plan



Timeline

- YEAR 1** — Mulch installed with picnic tables. Graffiti walls installed. Trees planted.
- YEAR 2** — Garden expanded to urban hardy shrubs. Graffiti seating installed. Musical playground installed.
- YEAR 3** — Garden expanded to urban hardy seed mixes. Graffiti murals completed for the first time.
- YEAR 4** — Paths maintained and mowed. Graffiti redone for the first time. Basketball court lines painted.
- YEAR 5** — Plaques installed in reading garden. Basketball court hoops installed.



Graffiti Seating:

These walls, meant to be repainted annually, are displays of youth expression, meant to showcase amateur murals. This would be a great opportunity for BYP’s media team to involve themselves. Additionally, the walls double as seating for group meeting from the BCLA.



Musical Playground:

The musical playground, complete with outdoor instruments and sensory plantings is a joyful and enriching space for kids to explore, learn, and grow. It encourages creativity and social interaction in a safe and engaging environment. The outdoor instruments inspire musical exploration. Through sound, smell, and touch, children can engage in sensory development



Reading Garden:

Situated at the top of the site, near Maple Way, space for reading and small BCLA club meetings is made in the middle of a urban hardy garden. This is a place of quiet refuge, furthest from the busy roads. The plants here could be installed by the garden team in the BYP. These plants would be low maintenance, hardy, and tolerant of compacted, urban soils.



Basketball Court:

A basketball court provides a dynamic space for the Braddock Youth Project’s mentoring team to connect with youth. It fosters teamwork, discipline, and communication while offering a healthy outlet for energy and stress. By blending mentoring with play, the court encourages personal growth and builds stronger relationships.



The Hill

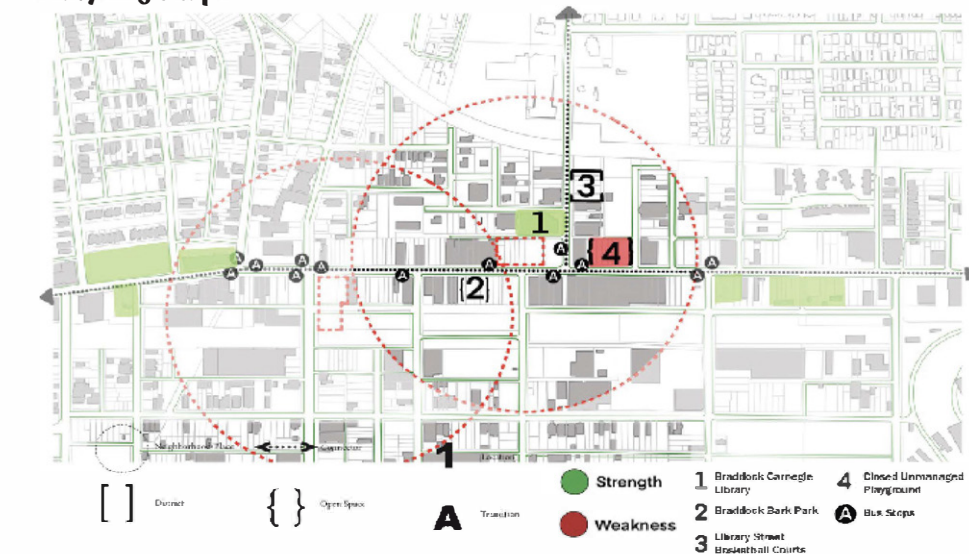
Pictured here is a section-elevation of the hill on the northwestern side of the site. This hill is to be repurposed to better serve the gardening team with the Braddock Youth Project. On the bottom of the hill, there is a playground with sensory play features such as marimbas, kalimbas, steel drums, and cajon. These provide impromptu opportunities for children to express themselves and discover music.

35 “Glow and Grow” : An edible community garden



conceptual design by Haoyue (Ada) Yu

Analysing Maps



Perspective (Night)



Partner

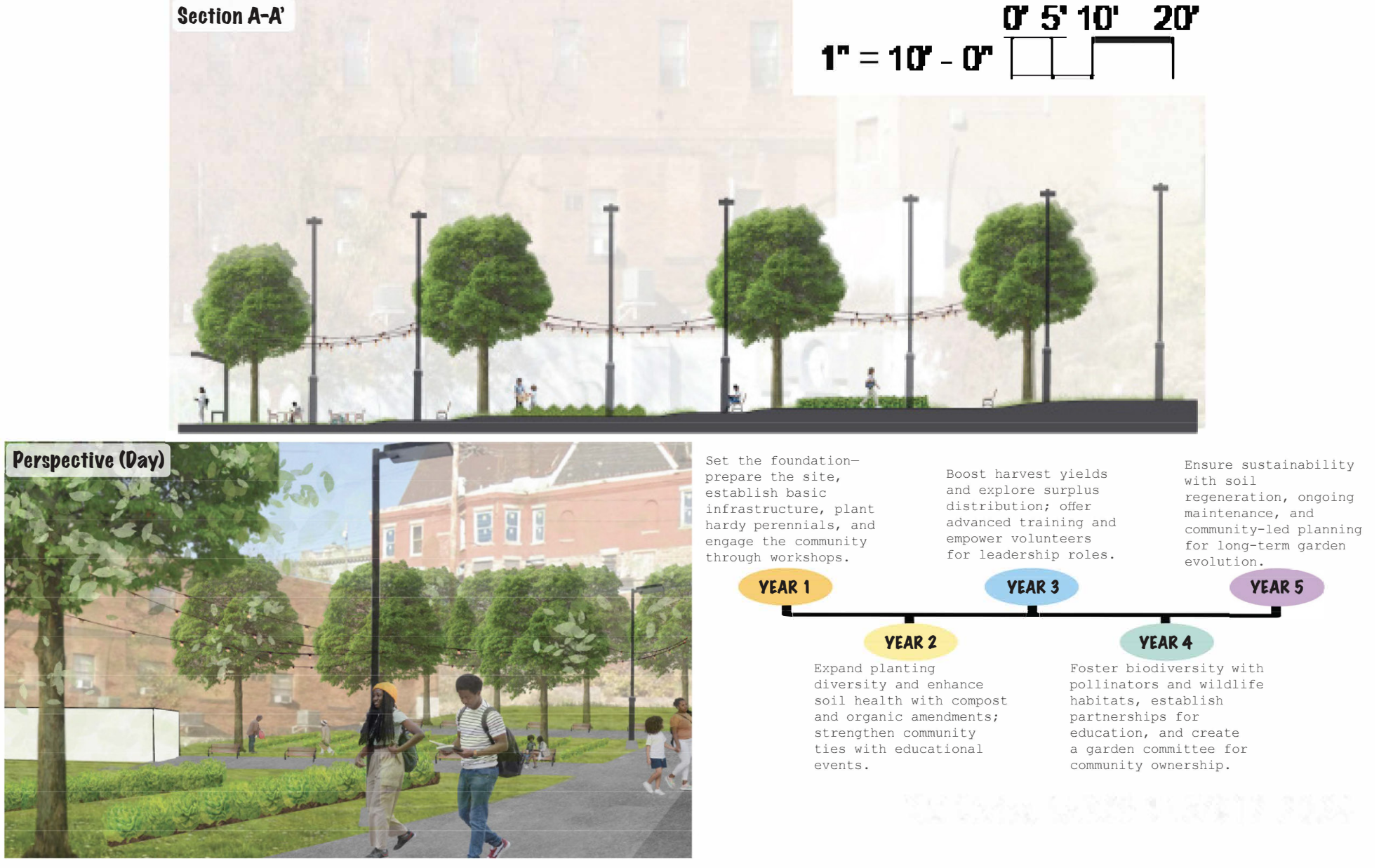
Braddock Farms, established by the non-profit organization Grow Pittsburgh, is an urban farm located in Braddock, Pennsylvania. As one of the region’ largest urban farms, Braddock Farms aims to provide fresh, locally grown produce to a community with limited access to healthy food options. Founded in 2007 on a former vacant lot, the farm serves as a cornerstone of Grow Pittsburgh’s mission to promote food security, environmental stewardship, and community resilience through urban agriculture.

There are many reasons for choosing Braddock Farm, the main reasons are two points.

1. distance. The location of Site 3 is close to the Braddock Farms, which makes the edible plant garden not only an extension of Braddock Farms, but also brings new changes and increases food diversity.
2. Technology. For the edible plant garden, how to keep the plants growing until they are successfully harvested is a very important task. Even if the plants in the site are selected as easy to survive and maintain as much as possible, people who understand edible plants are still needed to lead the management of the garden.

Braddock Farms has a lot of planting experience, as well as experience in leading the farmers market and distributing food after harvest. Based on those reasons, Braddock Farms is the best partner choice.





36

Growing Futures

VISION STATEMENT

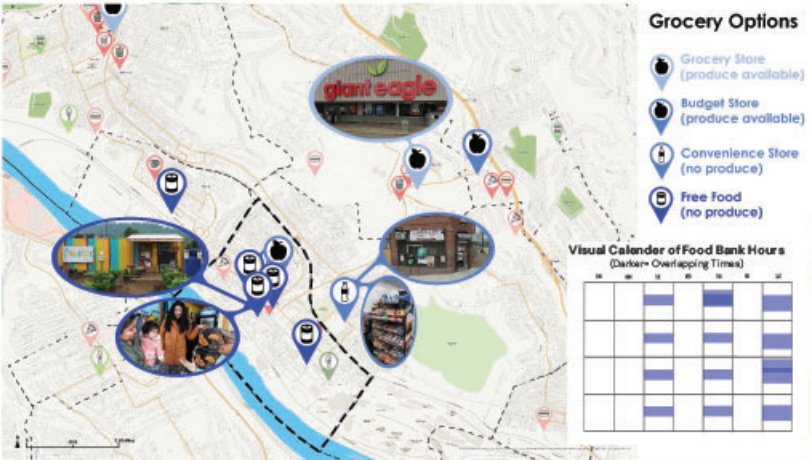
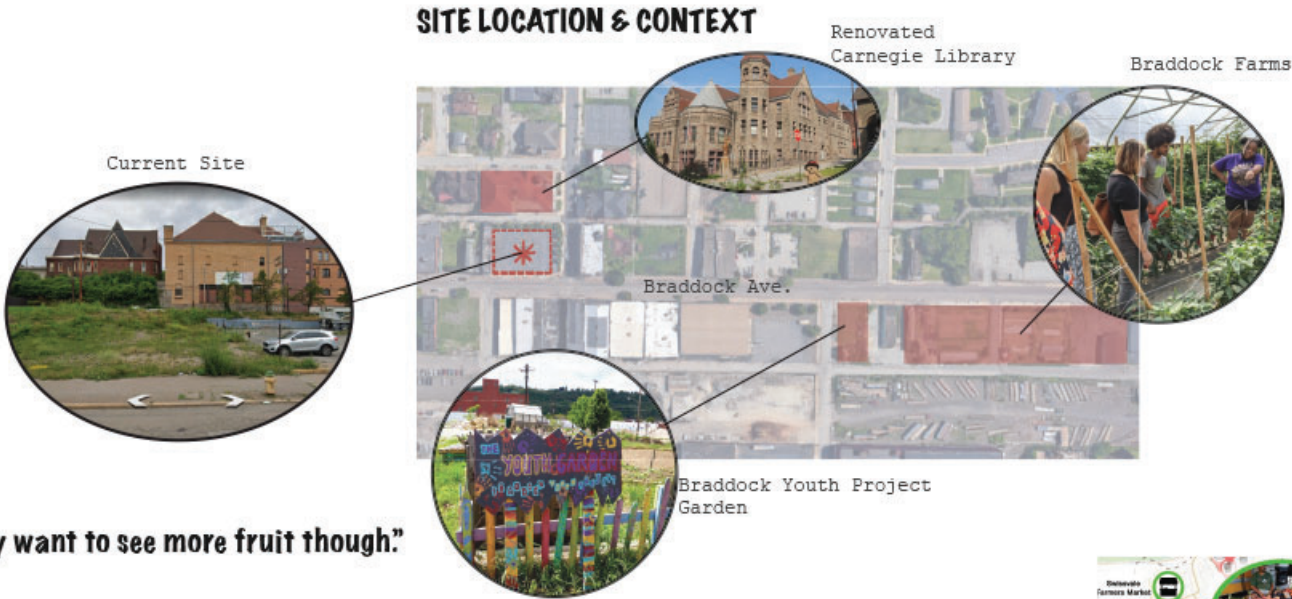
"A vision for Braddock that invites teens to be confident and involved in their futures as well as the future of their town by fostering a safe space to directly engage with and design their environments. This space will bolster opportunities for pursuing future endeavors, strengthened by supportive communities and programs."

"I like seeing what I plant grow. I really want to see more fruit though."
-Destiny, a student member of the BYR

WHY 'GROWING FUTURES'?

Braddock, home to residents that are proud of their community and steadfast in their desire to make their town the best it can be, is a food apartheid. Due to a systemized lack of investment in their food programs, Braddock has a severe shortage of grocery stores that provide nutritious fresh foods. In response, the community began to turn vacant lots into community gardens as seen through Braddock Farms, sponsored by Grow Pittsburgh, as well as the Braddock Youth Project Farm.

In the maps shown at right, provided by my group's work in A.1, a significant lack in local agriculture and grocery options can be noted.



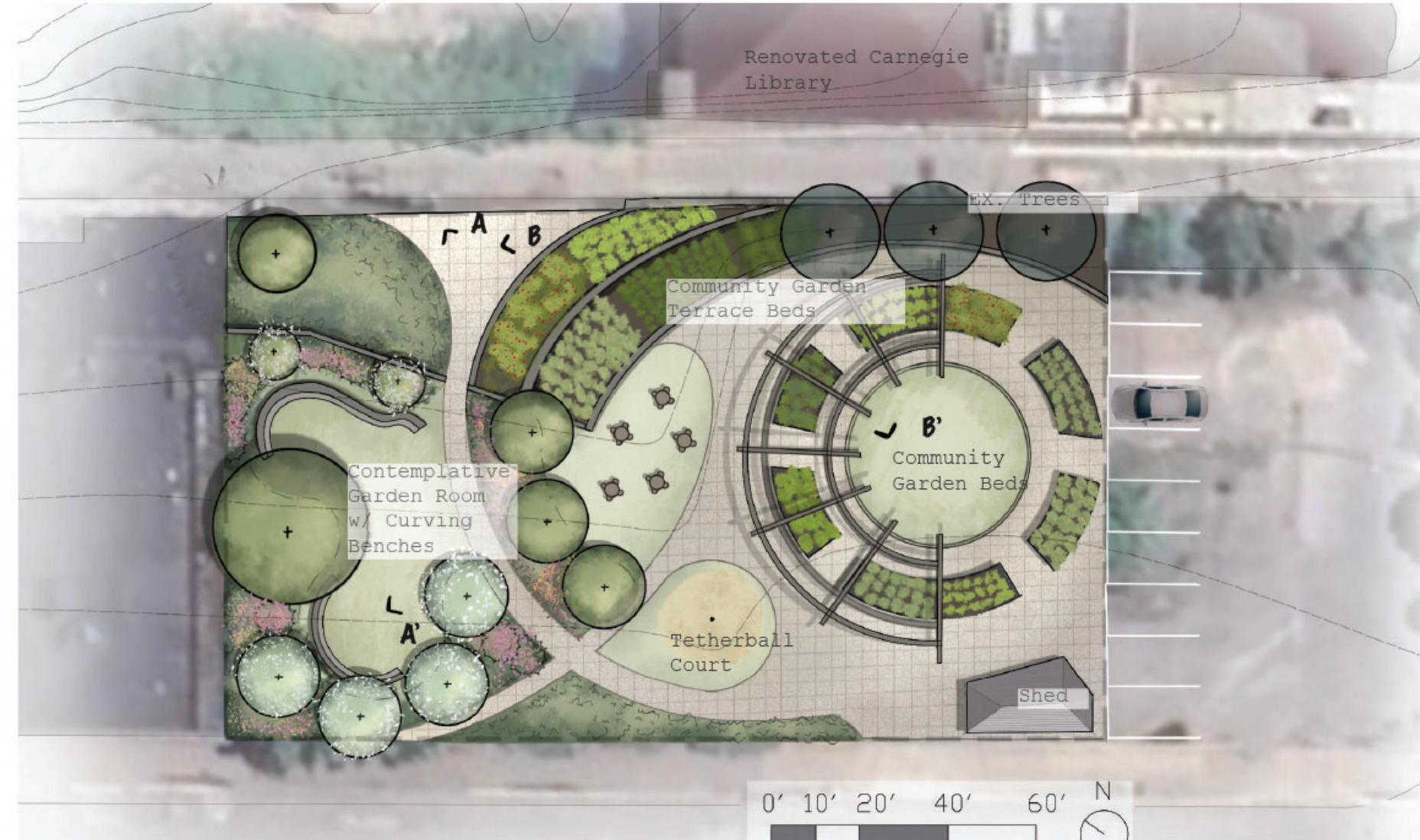
FIVE YEAR TIMELINE

Teens are the future of Braddock, and at this stage of their adolescence, teens in Braddock have the opportunity to pave their futures as well as impact the future of the town around them. For this reason, much of my design conceptualization has been rooted in community-led design, where a skeleton of the site will be made, but the community may design and change their environment as they see fit.



	PLANTING	CONSTRUCTION	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	POLICY & APPROVALS
YEAR ONE	Community-gauging workshop about native planting + community gardening	Begin with volunteer work day to prep site. Lay out and begin changes to grading, stiaars, and paving route.	Presenting design ideas for community consideration and approval.	Application is sent for approval to Grow Pittsburgh
YEAR TWO	Gardening volunteer teams begin specifying plants and where they can be grown in the bed. Garden team begins planting	2' x 2' pavers are placed and grass is planted. Begin Construction of community garden beds and garden shed with Grow Pittsburgh volunteers	Landscape Architect and volunteers construct and place tables and chairs, and place the curving bench.	Funding approval for overhead structure above gardens, tables and chairs, and curving bench
YEAR THREE	Begin specifying garden beds for additional native plantings similar to overall site plan	Proposal for tether ball court approved and installed.	Volunteers encouraged as well as BYP collaboration for planting first phase of planting.	Proposals for native plants approved and sent to nurseries.
YEAR FOUR	Garden beds recieve first phase of native plantings similar to overall site plan	Overhead structure and curved benches are constructed and installed.	Volunteers encouraged as well as BYP collaboration for construction days working on overhead structure and benches.	Internship or job opportunities becomes available for application; employ teens to oversee 'Adopt-A-Plot' program.
YEAR FIVE	Plant conditions overseen and approved by landscape architect.	Site is overseen and approved by landscape architect.	Events held in space to continuously educate community about native planting and community	Landscape architect prepares for future updates with community.

OVERALL SITE PLAN



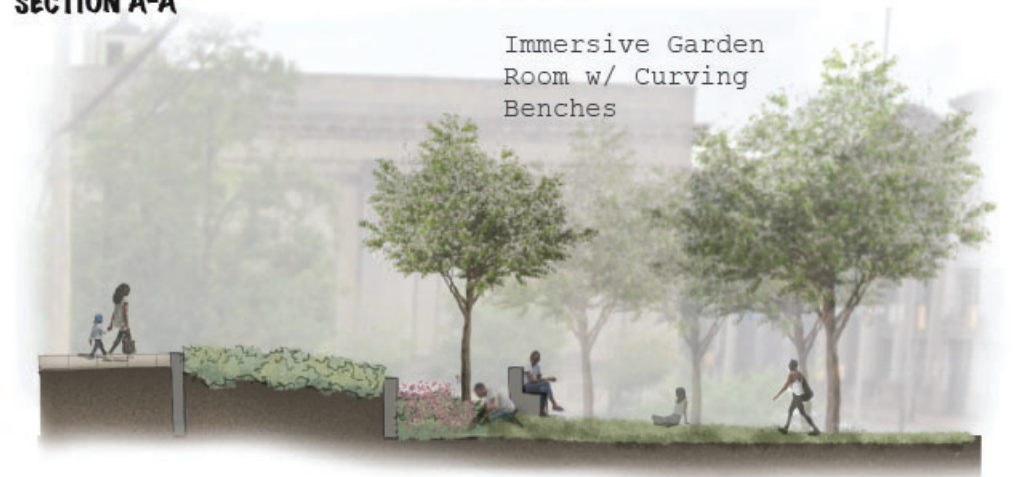
PROGRAM PARTNER - GROW PITTSBURGH

Grow Pittsburgh has been chosen to be the program partner for this design since its mission is to educate communities on how to live sustainably by growing their own food, distribute its produce to the surrounding community, and is constantly looking to support new gardens and volunteers in low-income areas.

As a potential new garden site in Braddock, this program will be sponsored and funded by Allegheny County Economic Development following the application process for a new garden program and contact with the Director of Community Projects, Dora Walmsley. Additionally, a Braddock Farms, a garden program already supported by Grow Pittsburgh's foundation is located just across the street, so supplies, water, and maintenance teams can be conjoined to work on both sites.



SECTION A-A'

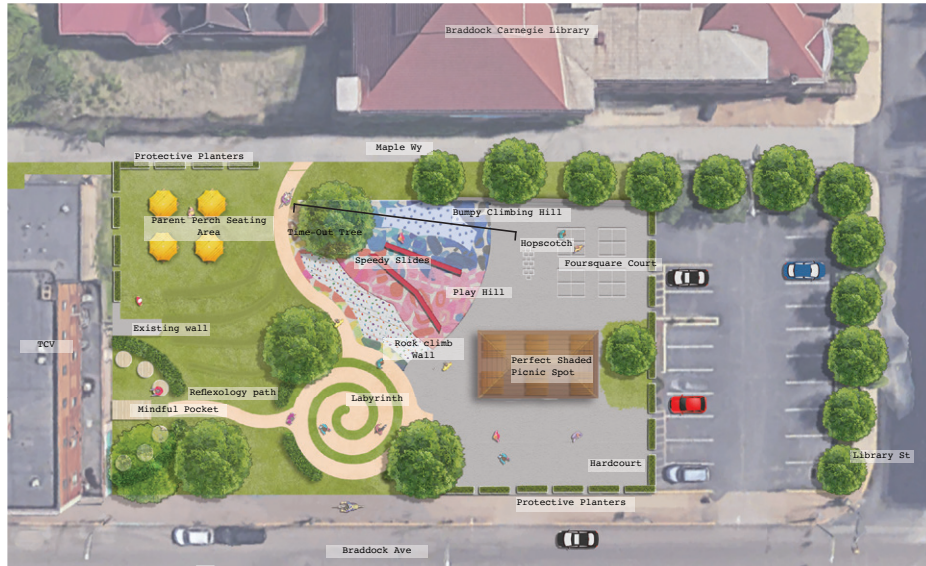


SECTION B-B'



37 M&M Park

Mind & Motion Park: Site Plan



Vision Statement

Mind and Motion Park transforms underutilized space in Braddock into a vibrant, child-centered harbor that nurtures both mental and physical well-being for children ages 5-11 through creative play, exploration, and reflection. By providing this essential public space, we're

addressing the community's critical need for safe, enriching environments where children can develop holistically while simultaneously creating a valuable resource that strengthens community bonds and revitalizes Braddock's shared spaces.

"We need more spaces where children can just be children."
-Cathy Welsh HOOP ALLIANCE

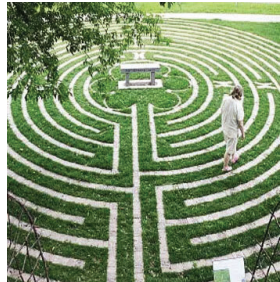
Play Hill Climb, slide, and play on the colorful hillside



Mind

TCV was selected as a **key partner** due to their mission-driven approach and strategic location near the project site. Their mission focuses on empowering individuals and communities struggling with behavioral, mental health, and developmental challenges. With core values emphasizing **compassion, collaboration, and progress**, TCV brings deep expertise in support services. Their proximity to the project site offers a unique opportunity to extend care into the outdoor environment. By partnering with TCV, M&M Park will integrate professional mental health insights into its design, creating a supportive and inclusive space that directly serves Braddock's young residents' well-being.

M&M Park incorporates a **labyrinth**, drawing inspiration from historic designs like this one at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Thunder Bay, Ontario. This architectural element serves dual purposes: as a contemplative space for **quiet reflection** and an interactive pathway for **playful exploration**. The spiral design invites both adults and children to engage with the space through mindful walking or creative movement. Adding to the experience, a **reflexology path** leads to the meditation area. Walking this path provides a gentle massage that can offer a range of benefits including pain relief, **improved mental health**, and improved circulation. By integrating the labyrinth and reflexology path, the park creates a unique environment that supports mental well-being while encouraging physical activity, embodying the site's holistic approach to community wellness.



Mindfulness in Motion Meditation Area Infront of TCV Mural

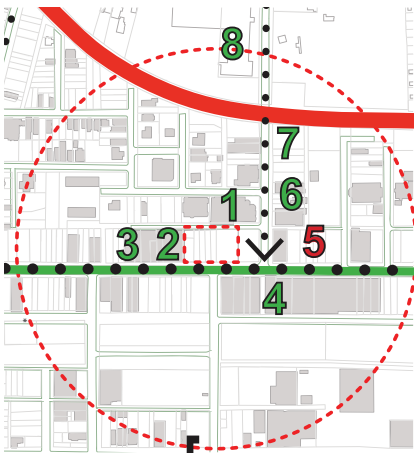


Motion

M&M Park addresses the lack of play spaces for younger children in Braddock by positioning itself on Braddock Avenue. Filling the gap left by the closed playground and complementing the existing basketball court, this new space offers a dedicated area for younger children to play and explore. Located near key community facilities like **Heritage Community Center, TCV, Nyia Page Community Center, Buddhist Meditation Institute, and the Braddock Carnegie Library**, the park benefits from **natural surveillance** and **convenient foot traffic**. By restoring a lost community asset in a familiar location, M&M Park creates a **safe, accessible**

- 1
- Braddock Carnegie Library
- 2
- TCV Community Services
- 3
- Buddhist Meditation Institute
- 4
- Heritage Community Initiatives
- 5
- Closed/Vacant PlayGround
- 6
- Nyia Page Community Center
- 7
- Library Street Basketball Courts
- 8
- Woodland Hills School District

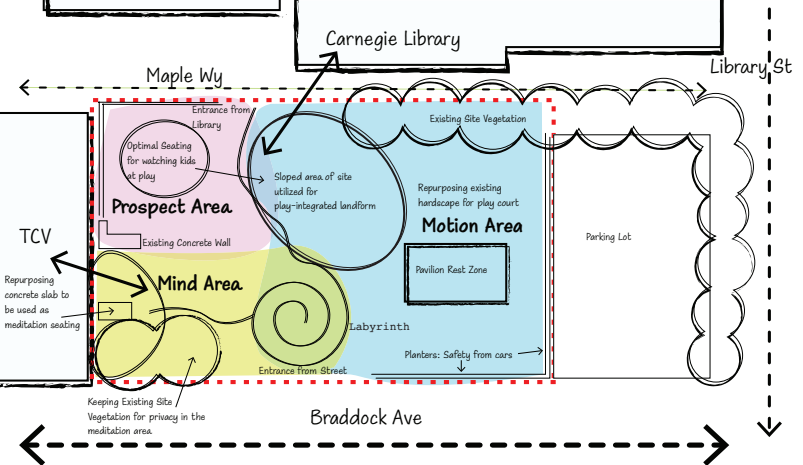
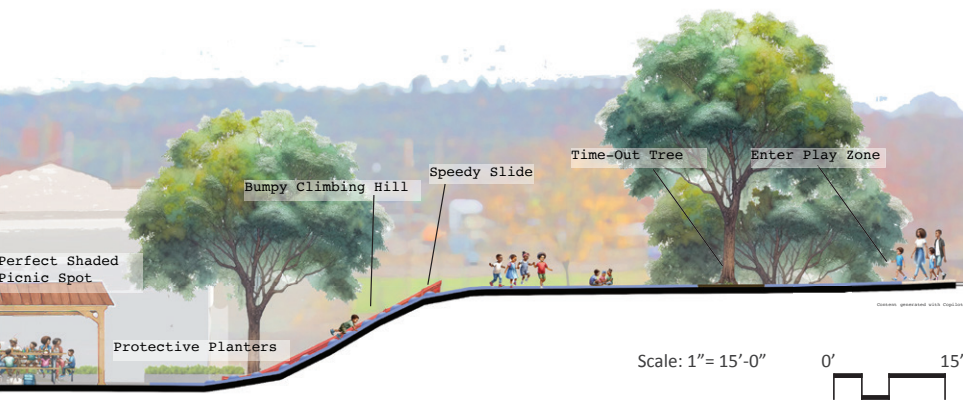
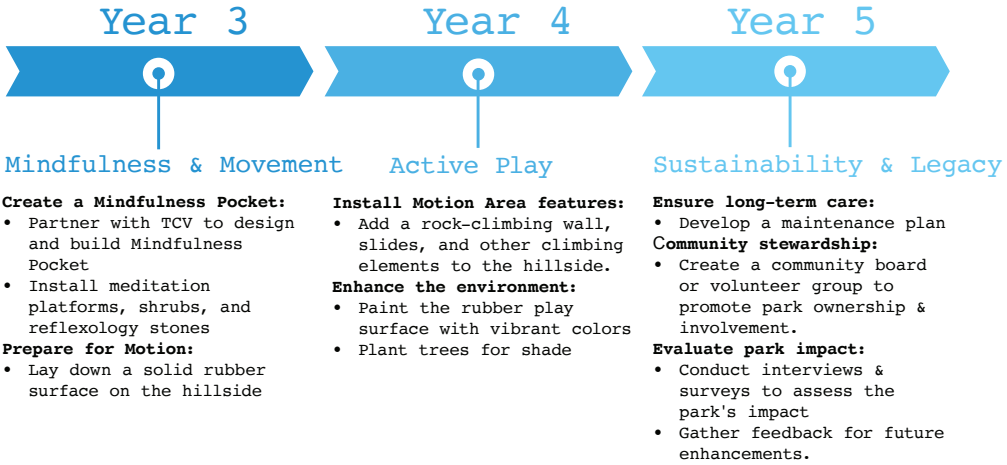
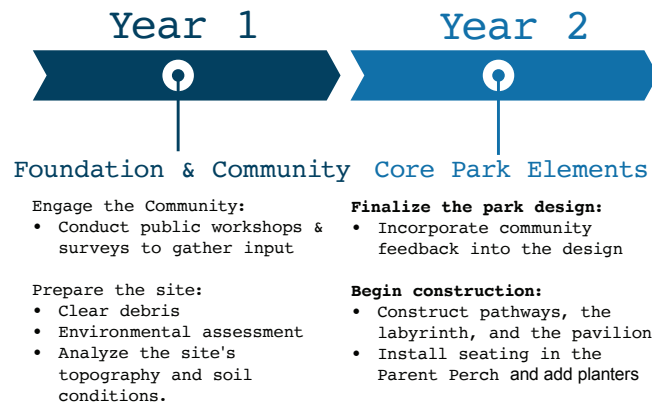
play environment specifically designed for young children. The **Braddock Carnegie Library** is a **crucial partner** for M&M Park, sharing a mission to create enriching community spaces for youth. With programs like anime clubs and STEAM activities, the library provides valuable resources for young people. Its proximity to the proposed site allows for collaborative programming and outdoor learning spaces specifically designed for children ages 5-11. Together, M&M Park and the library will create a cohesive community hub that supports **learning, creativity, and safe play**, addressing critical needs for Braddock's children.



Parent Perch
Keep an eye on the kids while you relax



Development Timeline

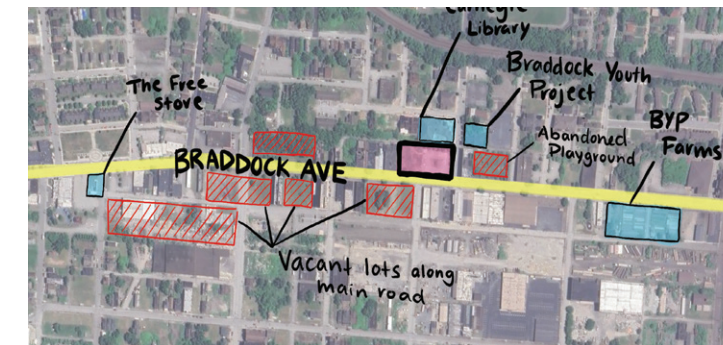
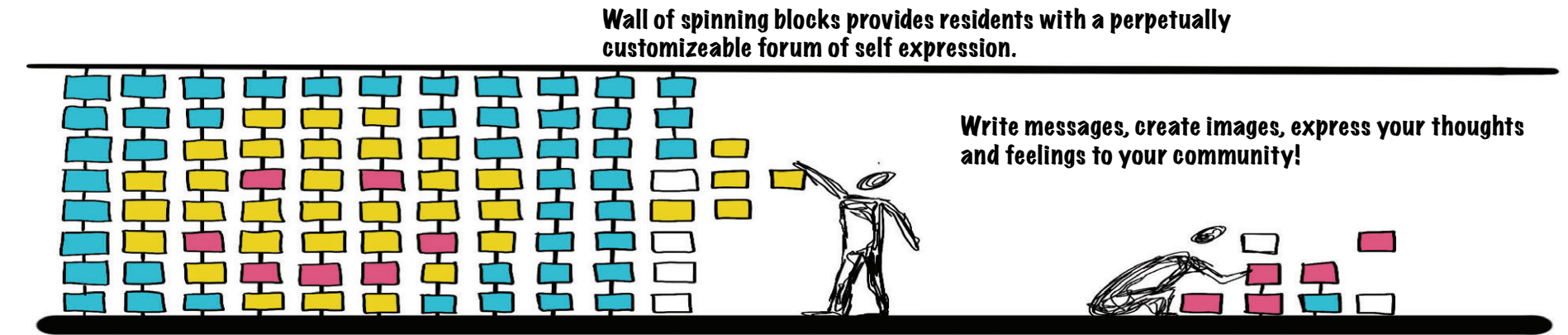


38 Moving Murals of Braddock

An Everchanging Platform for An Everchanging Community.



conceptual design by Johnna d'Ecclesiis



The Vision:

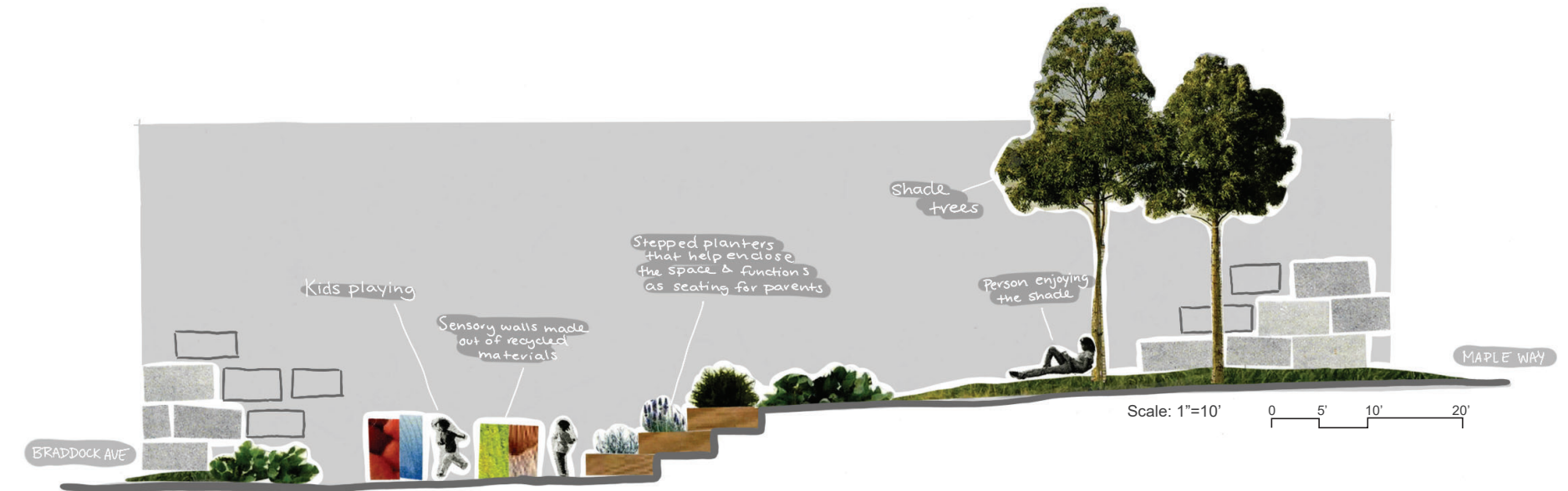
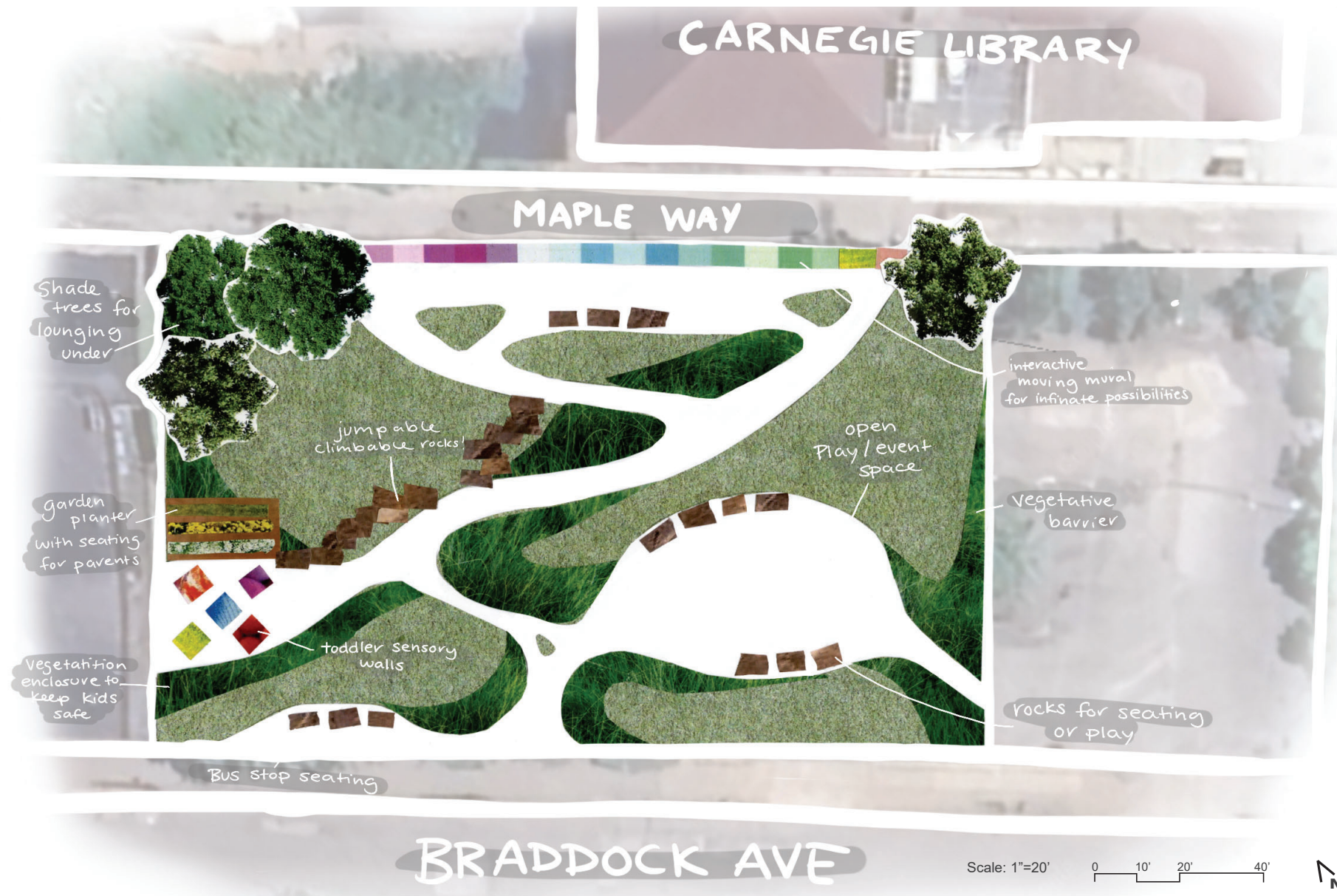
The community of Braddock displays an inherent affinity for beauty and self expression as seen through the numerous murals, sculptures, and pocket-parks sprinkled throughout town. Despite their collective creativity, residents **lack adequate forums for expressing themselves.**

Moving Murals Park aims to give youth a platform to express themselves freely weather it be through **words, pictures, or play.** Kids of all ages are welcome and differnt age groups have areas catered to their needs.

By engaging youth through interactive forums, kids can begin to see tangible effects of their actions, thus making them **active participants** in the future of their community.

by engagign youth in the community through interactive forums, kids can begin to see tangible effects of their actions thus encouraging them to become active participants within their community.



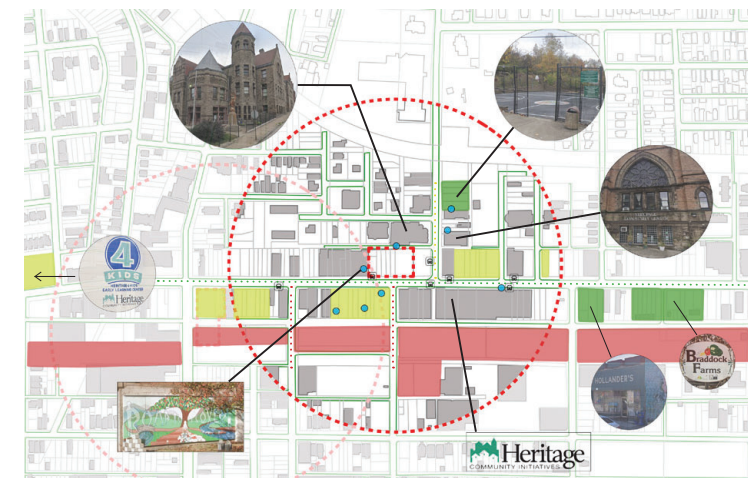


Five Year Vision for Park and Community

Year 1:	Year 2:	Year 3:	Year 4:	Year 5:
Propose a partnership with BYP because their goal of engaging and empowering local youth directly correlates with the vision of the park. The BYP can help in projects like building the mural walls, reinforcing the idea of kids being active participants in their community.	Find other partners in, and around Braddock such as the Carnegie Library, and work with them to coordinate programs and events which can take place within the site. This acts not only as a way to gain publicity for the park, but also a way to actively engage and join community members.	If stepped planters are successful, possibly add more planters in grass patches throughout the site. Offer that space to the BYP as a future extension to Braddock Farms, allowing them to expand their infrastructure, and increase food yield.	Alternate sensory walls, based off of what kids find the most engaging and interesting. Possibly organize a project with BYP in which youth can collect recycled materials and upcycle them into new and engaging walls.	If mural wall is well recieved, look into implementing similar structures in other areas of town. Suggested spots could be near the free store, basketball courts, or other frequented areas. By creating a network of walls, access to forums of self expression can be increased, and a local identity and pride can be strengthened.

Braddock, Pennsylvania is built upon a strong foundation of connected community organizations and engaged residents. The Braddock community is the backbone of the borough and Positive Flow supports their goals to reform the youth's vision of their home.


Located on the edge of Braddock Avenue and Library Street, Positive Flow is a connection point focused on adaptability, dynamism, and personalized exploration. Engaging with BYP's mission to provide positive, culturally relevant changes to the community, the design forms the framework to explore different facets of learning in youth, from hands-on, musical, and performance to interpersonal and individual. There are spaces to actively support all youth, offering an outdoor area to learn and can also be quickly molded to fit another event. People can traverse through the site between Braddock Avenue and Maple Way and the stores, businesses, and organizations along the main road. Aesthetic small-scale lighting promotes safety and security at night, supporting more opportunities for use after dark.



Legend Key

Programmed

 Unprogrammed
Green Space


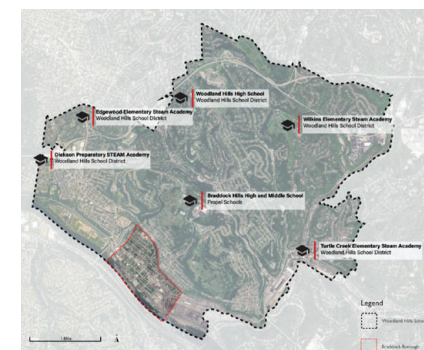
 Industrial Zone

..... Accessible

..... Semi-accessible
Connector

..... Inaccessible
Connector

Public Artwork

 Bus Stop

Credit: Amelia Derr

Accessible spaces with the public resources to support Braddock residents, especially youth, through growing independence, exploration, and meaningfully forming a sense of community pride.

Outside of school, Braddock youth have few places to go in their town; this makes the community's organizations so much more important to them. Heritage 4 Kids supports younger children, and the BYP and Library offer more opportunities for older youth. To engage and design with Braddock's adolescents, the ideal site would be a place significant and familiar to the community.

Situating Positive Flow along Braddock Avenue and Library Street has the potential to better connect residents to the town's resources and act as a "more well-resourced approach," as wished for by Mandee Williams, the manager of the Children's Library at the Braddock Carnegie Library. It is directly accessible to the revived library, the Nyia Page Center and Braddock Youth Project, and two bus stops. The site is also surrounded by Braddock public art, bringing vibrancy to the street, and can be continued with the site design.

"They like to come back and give back to the community that they came from. And that's what I push for." - Rasaun Brown, Media Coordinator at BYP

Credit: Braddock
Youth Project



Credit: Braddock
Carnegie Library

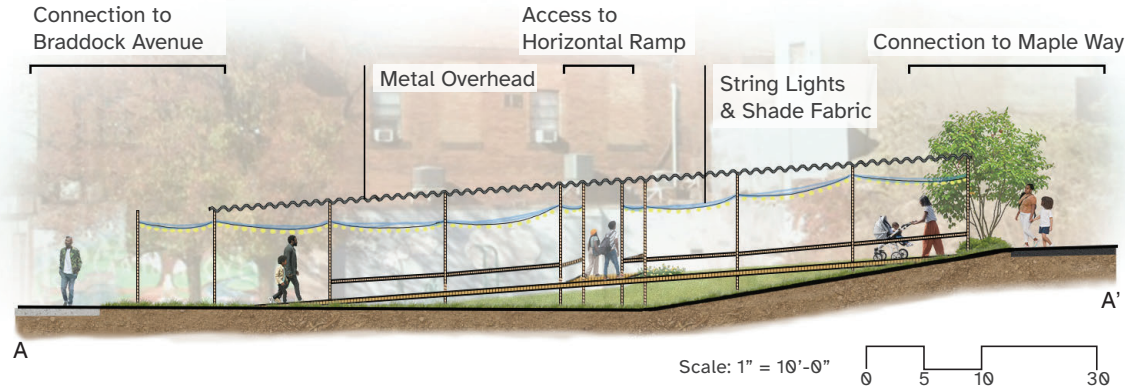
Stated to reopen its original location in May 2025, the library is a destination near the designed site, generating an audience of community members to use the space.

As a larger organization, the Braddock Carnegie Library can support outreach for the project and utilize the space for community events.

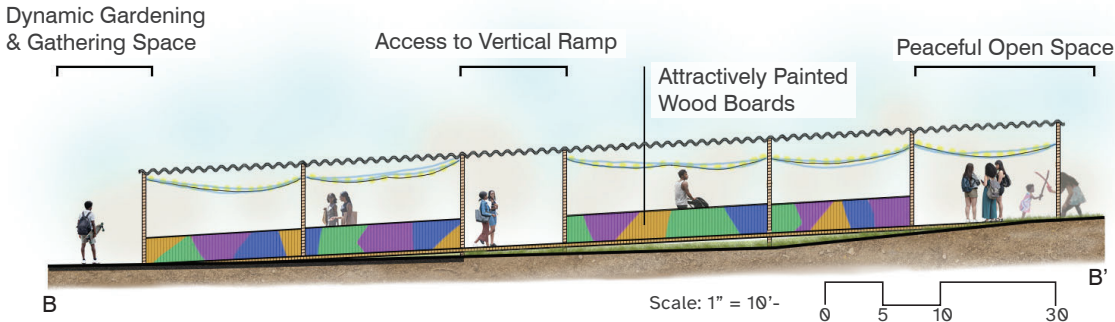
Overhead View of Site and Programs

The site design is split into four cohesive areas of programming suited to best fit BYP's goals and objectives. The creative maker space and event spaces along Braddock Avenue support the youth's artistic endeavors and provide an outdoor area to showcase and present their work. The existing parking lot has been transformed into dynamic spaces for gardening and media production, equipped with colorful art and vegetation. An open lawn sits at the northwest corner for peaceful activities. Two ramps run vertically and horizontally across the site as corridors to connect visitors internally and externally around Braddock Avenue.

Scale: 1" = 20'-0"



View of Vertical Ramp Between Braddock Avenue and Maple Way



View of Horizontal Ramp Across Site

Five Year Project Timeline

Year One - Ramp Access



- Assemble ramps
- Place wooden posts on site and attach shade fabric
- Hold community meetings to get input on site and mural ideas

Year Two - Color and Identity



- Plant vegetation in early Spring
- Host outdoor events during summer and winter to gain community feedback

Year Three - Expansion and Funding



- Invite community members to paint asphalt mural in late Spring through Summer
- First grand opening of park with all site designs in late fall

Year Four - Updates and Renovations



- Work with PennDOT to improve lighting and access on nearby sidewalks.
- Include permanent bus stop renovations by the site.

Year Five - Permanence and Extension



- Open for larger community
- Improve local streetscape with lighting, seating, vegetation, and art to further attract local users and visitors.

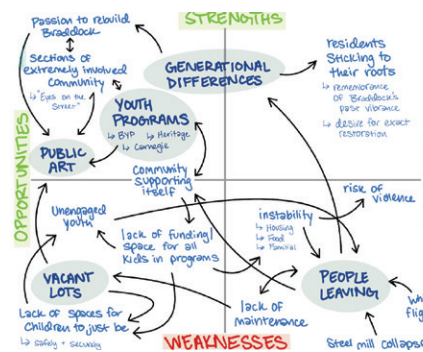
40 The Power of the Past

VISION STATEMENT

The intention of this design is to create a vibrant space aimed at fostering intergenerational communication through both active programmatic elements and passive informal interactions in order to address intergenerational differences in perspective.

The programmatic elements will be centered around public art, interactivity, and community events, and work alongside Braddock's strong, tight-knit community to bolster younger generations' sense of pride in the borough's rich history.

The design's focus on intergenerational communication is two-fold; creating a space for a young age bracket (8-13) to interact with both older teenagers (14-18) and older adults (>50), and aims to encourage all generations to engage with Braddock's past and future in a meaningful way through perspective, community, and materiality.



CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

In the 1970s, the steel industry suffered a devastating collapse, and this, combined with white flight, was a major catalyst for several long-term consequences in Braddock that are still present today.

- Deindustrialization in the 1970s and 1980s of Pittsburgh mill towns left many spaces of Braddock abandoned
- Over half the population of Braddock is gone due to the closing of the Carrie furnace
- Around 350 abandoned properties

Lizzie Sherman

However, many members of the older generations (>50) look back to Braddock's past with nostalgia, and express just how badly they miss that "vibrance and life".

This significant generational gap in perspectives creates a disconnect between the older generations who have personal experience with the borough's past, and the youth, who don't. Amongst youth, this contributes to a negative view of the borough, with 3 of the 4 most repeated descriptions of Braddock being negative.



Word cloud adapted from the collective interview responses of Woodland Hills high school students view on Braddock

Janhavi Rajwade

PERSPECTIVE



Vacant lots in Braddock



Vacant lot located at 606/608 Halket Street, an opportunity to reuse historical materials and help further brighten Braddock.

INTERVENTIONS

This design addresses these issues, along with the wants and needs of Braddock youth in several ways:

- 1.) Fostering intergenerational communication through both active and passive spaces
- 2.) Implementing elements of interactive public art
- 3.) Creating more space for Braddock's already thriving community-based programs
- 4.) Presenting Braddock's history through a different lens; reusing historical materials

PARTNERS



BCLA - Braddock Carnegie Library Association at the Carnegie Library



BYP - Braddock Youth Project at the Nyia Page Community Center



WHY THE BCLA/BYP?

One of Braddock's greatest strengths is its strong sense of community; this design's partners are important to the active programs in the site. The site's two potential partners play valuable roles within the community that coordinate well with the design intent.

The BCLA offers many creative programs for youth which are complemented through the site's public art and stage. Their message involves making change where you can, and emphasizes community strength. Libraries are common spaces for older residents to visit regularly, and the Carnegie Free Library of Braddock, as the first Carnegie library, demonstrates Braddock's resilience and history.

"KIDS NEED TO KNOW THAT THEY CAN BE PART OF THE CHANGE, THAT THEY AREN'T STUCK WITH BRADDOCK'S CURRENT ISSUES FOREVER."

- Vicki Vargo, BCLA

Partnering with the BYP's Mentoring Team would be mutually beneficial. The event space and stage have the ability to hold many people, and the mentoring team is in charge of throwing the BYP's biggest events, including one for seniors. Also, the youth involved in the Mentoring Team have already shown an interest in intergenerational communication.

The BCLA and BYP's reputations as pillars of the community have led to partnerships with many other significant organizations. These existing partnerships increase the chances of securing future funds and reaching more youth. The library and Nyia Page Center are also located extremely close to the site, offering easy access.

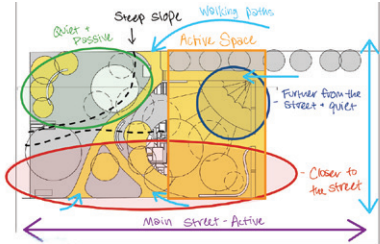
DESIGNING FOR BRADDOCK

Intergenerational communication, fueled both by everyday interactions and large-scale events, presents a significant opportunity to bridge the differences in perspectives on Braddock. Having younger generations engage with older ones helps keep Braddock's history alive and helps both groups reconcile their differing perspectives on their home.

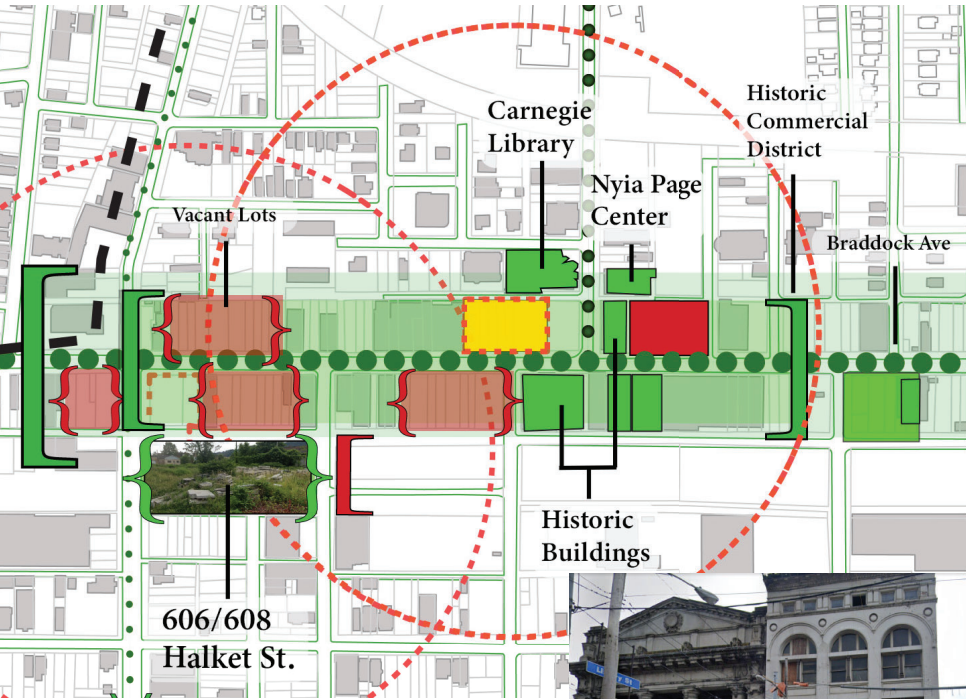
This space's multi-purpose nature means areas are integrated throughout the site for everyday interactions between community members, intimate conversations and bold large-scale events. These different sections help further foster intergenerational communication by appealing to a wide range of ages.

Public art's transformative nature pairs with the bright colors and vibrance of the site, offering younger users the chance to engage with a more positive perspective on Braddock, and older ones a space reminiscent of Braddock's past. In this design, art is integrated into the site's creation not only through the use of painted asphalt, history-focused murals, and individualized colorful lanterns but also through programmatic elements. The stage is able to host any of the BCLA or BYP's programs, with the plaza furniture being moveable and stored in the on-site shed. The intended customization of many elements helps the design to feel uniquely Braddock.

ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE SPACE



EXISTING CONDITIONS & RELEVANT LOCATIONS

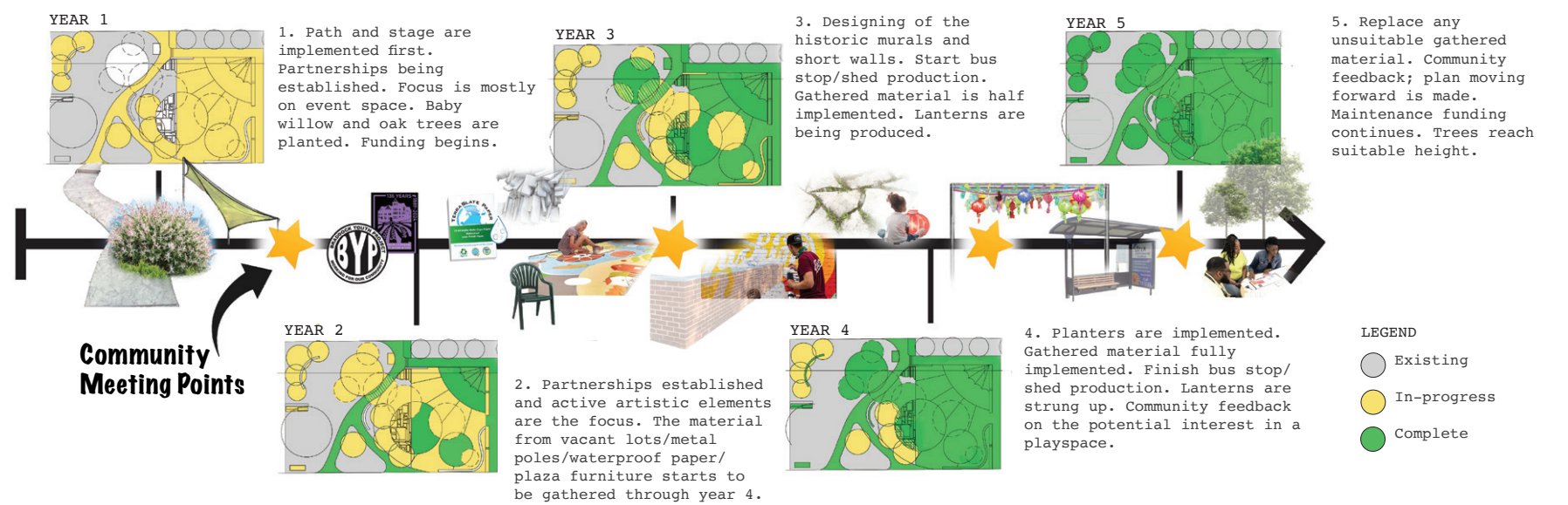


The use of history-themed murals (designed by the community) along the sides of the short seating walls is interactive art matching Braddock's abundance of murals. The gathering and reuse of abandoned materials found in vacant lots provides low-cost hardscape material to create interesting textures and an environment reminiscent of a vacant lot turned into something beautiful and welcoming. The eventual vegetation poking through the cracks of the closely placed material and dense willow/oak tree canopy creates a magical garden-esque environment. These strategies all help provide a positive perspective on Braddock's past.

With the design's focus on expanding perspectives and the importance of a place's history, choosing this site location was a strategic choice: having the highest number of intact historical buildings and being centered in Braddock's densest historic commercial district provides a unique historical backdrop, and sets the underlying tone for one theme in this design. Buildings that may have been written off as only abandoned or underutilized take on a new context.



TIMELINE FOR DEVELOPMENT



41 The People's Place

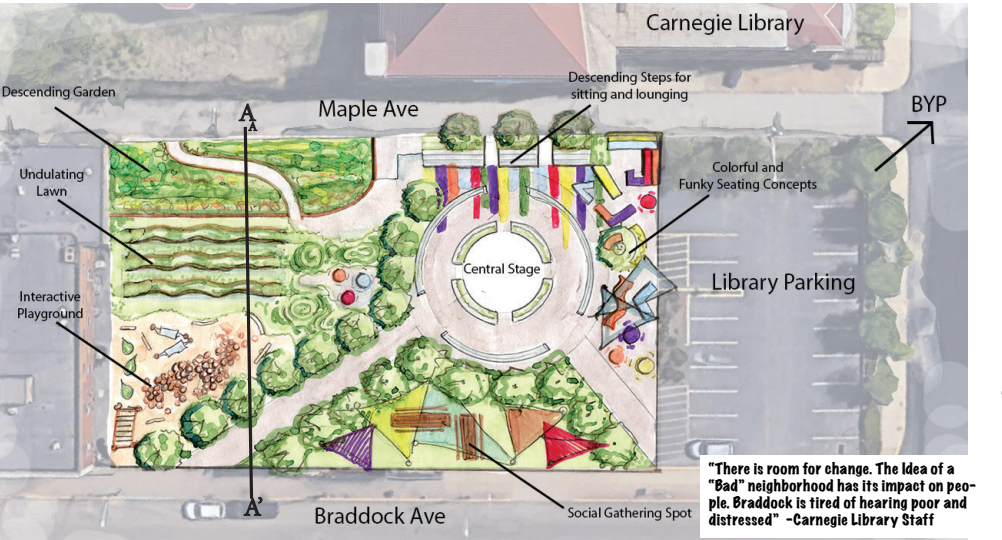
The People's Place

The People's Place adjacent to the Carnegie Library in Braddock, PA is a free open space operating as an interactive play park for social connectivity for youth ages 11-16, but not limited to those ages. The use of color and playfulness is for all ages, working to uplift the community. Being beside the Carnegie library on Braddock Ave, the site would be an additional accessible resource for the youth, acting as an event space, program space, and recreational space which would address the limited accessibility to play space, desire for color and art in Braddock, areas of relaxation, and safe gathering space.

FUNKY SEATING



THE CENTER



THE PEOPLES PLACE PLAN
SCALE 1"= 40'-0"



SECTION A MAPLE AVE TO BRADDOCK AVE
SCALE 1"= 10'-0"

The section shows the change of elevation from Maple ave to Braddock Ave. From left to right, it shows the layered garden that eventually descends into the interactive playground, event space, and into Braddock Ave.

conceptual design by Sylvie Crawford

THE CONCEPT

The main focus in the site plan is the traditional central civic space that has encompassing seating. The central stage serves as a community gathering space surrounded by steel backed seating alluding to the history of the Steel Mill and its long term rootedness in the community. It builds upon the strong connectedness of community members and the rootedness of the steel economy. Big steps descend from the library, allowing a place to sit or walk down into the site. The big steps are where color murals begin to flow on the floor, painted in a line that curves and spirals to entice movement and play. Color is all throughout, in funky seating, painted on the floor, and even on overhead shade covers in the Social Gathering spot. People can play sports or even cook BBQ's in the social event space. Parents would feel confident in allowing their child to roam off into the playground and into the wavy lawn. Undulating and mimicing the ebb and flows of life, the wavy lawn introduces a tranquil and natural seating concept aimed for teens and adults.

"There is a desire for improvement. Braddock has disappeared." -Carnegie Library Staff



Left: This conceptual birds eye of the playground shows the types of playset to be designed and built. Right: A young girl climbs and descends the wooden play structure in the Interactive playground. She rushes to go on the seesaw with her brother.



range of elevation from Maple ave to Braddock Ave. shows the layered garden that eventually descends into the interactive playground, event space, and into Braddock Ave.

0' 10' 20'

UNDULATING LAWN

The Site also consists of a wavy lawn that undulates, allowing for user to sit where they desire. The organic and flowy nature of the lawn invites and draws people in. The waves are bordered by steel, alluding to the history of the Steel Mill in Braddock and also giving it structure. This feature is intended for relaxation and lounging, in a way that connects people to nature and brings them peace.

The corner focused lawn is like a getaway and also can be a proper refuge, allowing people to feel safe while also having a good eye on the site. The seating is for all ages, undulating at different levels to accommodate the youth and adults of Braddock.

"We need a space that is safe, accessible, and has upkeep" -Heritage Community Initiatives Staff



Year 1 consists of opening up to the community for ideas and feedback. The site gets cleared and prepped. The site is budgeted and approved. Grants are sought out.

Year 3 The site nears completion, and programs are now allowed to begin. All site features are installed. The community starts to meet at the site. The library uses the site for programming.

Year 5 The site opens up to additions and feedback once again. A long term maintenance plan is constructed. Funding is sought out for the future of the Peoples Place. The site continues to thrive.



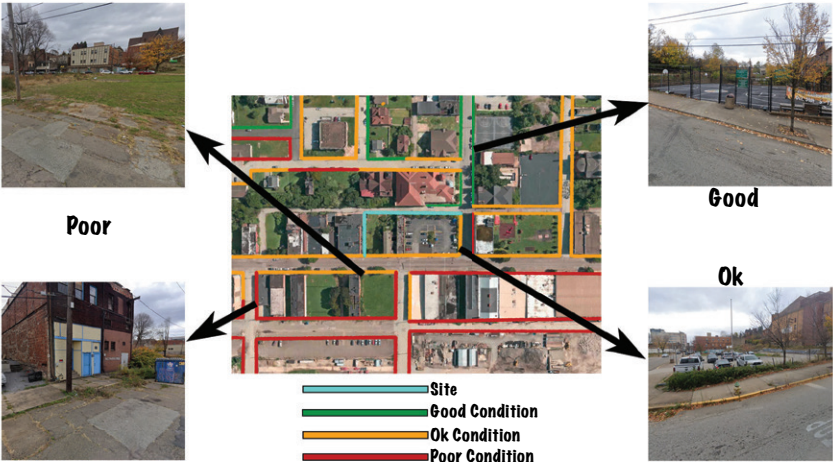
Year 2 the feedback gets processed and the plans reflect the community's desires. The Site construction begins. Seating concepts are designed and planned out.

Year 4 Braddock sees an increase in engagement in the community, the youth feel safe in public to hang out with their peers here, and the "Peoples Place" is now the most accessible and hip place to meet up.

42 Playground of Possibilities



WALKABILITY OF BRADDOCK



Since the walkability in Braddock is far from perfect, going from one place to another is close to unsafe, and definitely unsafe for the disabled people of Braddock. As mentioned before with the gameboard, this site was chosen specifically for its location in relation to the hotspot areas in Braddock such as The Braddock Carnegie Library, the Nyia Page Community Center, and the public basketball courts. Having a site close in walkability to other popular hotspots in the area can limit the distance that residents and visitors have to travel from one to another.

VISION STATEMENT

This project illustrates a Braddock in which the older youth have positive and confident relationships with themselves and each other and are included in the greater community through education and recreation. The future Braddock will build upon community involvement, including programs and other opportunities that value a strong community engagement process and strengthen unity within Braddock.

SITE SECTION A-A'



TIMELINE

- PHASE 1**
Year 1
 1. Clear out and clean up the parking lot and add the median in the middle
 2. Construct the smaller boxes and the drop-in ramp for the other half of the parking lot
 3. Form seating mounds for the open green space grass waves and place grass seeds on dirt that was reformed into a seating mound.
- PHASE 2**
Years 2-3
 1. Construct the stadium seating structure and place it on the edge of the parking lot near the side adjacent to the library near the grass edge and existing retaining wall
 2. Examine site for any need of fixes
 3. Improve the conditions of the nearby sidewalks to increase safety near the site.
- PHASE 3**
Years 3-5
 1. Keep a point of contact with an individual in Braddock who can manage maintenance.
 2. Fix broken items in the site and check on the condition frequently ensuring the safety of the community.
 3. Continue reaching out to locals to see what can be improved to make the site better for the community.

EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL SPACE



**“I rollerblade and my friends either ride their bikes or use their rip sticks. I think the idea of having the halfpipe ramp is cool”.
~ Braddock Youth Project Student**

The idea of the halfpipe ramp came from analyzing the issue of transportation. Knowing that kids and young teens rely on other forms of transportation such as bikes, rollerblades, rip sticks, etc. established the idea to give them another way to use their form of transportation more recreationally.

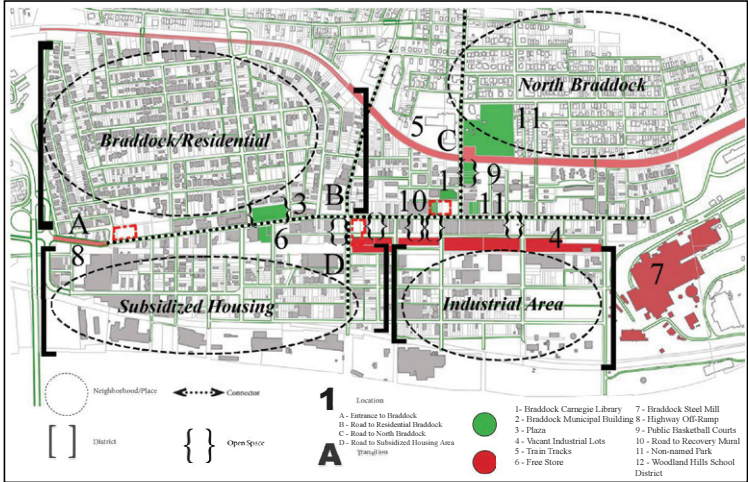
GRASS MOUND SEATING



“I would leave some of the green space open. Kids will go throw a football or something and have fun”. ~ Braddock Youth Project Student

Located to the left of the parking lot area is an open green space divided into two. The more flat side of the green space is left open for young teens to use for whatever they please. The side with the more steep existing slope is populated with a man-made mound grass seating area. In the perspective capture it is highlighting the usage of the seating mounds. Overall the mounds give another leisure area to the design giving more versatility to the site.

GAME BOARD



The location of the site is chosen based on the information provided by the map above. The map highlights both positive and negative features of Braddock. The site located on the far right is located near all of the highly populated hotspots of Braddock. This includes the Braddock Carnegie Library, the Nyia Page Community Center, and the public basketball courts to name a few. As a result of site three being located near all of those hotspots, it was chosen for the design.

DESIGN PARTNERS



Braddock Carnegie Library:

- The library provides a safe space for children to go after school.
- The site location is close enough to the library that there can be indirect supervision from the library building. Having this ability allows for the site to be supervised from multiple locations without sacrificing any visibility.

The Braddock Youth Project:

- The Braddock Youth Program enhances the skills of teens in Braddock by hosting clubs, events, and other activities that promote increasing knowledge. They use the library for most of these programs because the library is seen as a safe place with supervision at all times.

Connection to the Site:

- Work with the library and the programs that the BYP hosts there and create an outdoor learning area for kids ages 12-15, even though this space accommodates too many age groups that go to the afterschool programs.
- This site also includes an area that is focused on both education and recreational play. The way the objects are placed, they are close enough for intimate conversations, and when they are not in use for educational purposes, not only kids in those programs but all the teens in Braddock can use them as a recreational play area.



Play:Full Speed Ahead

After speaking with Braddock's youth and community members of all ages, a clear desire for a play space and a community gathering space came to light. Many community members expressed concerns about the vacant lots scattered throughout Braddock, often neglected and used as illegal dumping grounds. Among the debris, discarded tires stood out—not just as litter but as an opportunity to reimagine. This inspired the concept of a recycled park, where tires and other found materials are transformed into an engaging playscape.

Tire-based structures, such as tire dinosaurs, provide opportunities for climbing, exploration, and imaginative play. The faces of the tires serve as canvases for artistic expression, allowing children to leave their mark and create a dynamic, ever-changing space. Additionally, there is integrating loose-parts play. The youth truly make their environment their own, further fostering creativity and a deep sense of ownership over their surroundings.

Adjacent to the play area, the asphalt plaza will be revitalized with painted games, and a ground mural, transforming the once parking lot into a vibrant space for play and gathering. This multi-functional design offers structured and unstructured play opportunities while incorporating seating and shaded areas for families. It also allows the space to grow and transform with community needs. Its strategic location near the Carnegie Library, Nyia Page Community Center, and basketball courts ensures accessibility and creates a central hub for children and families to gather.

By involving the community in the creation process—through “Build Days,” mural painting, and cleanup efforts—the project fosters pride and ownership while addressing environmental issues like illegal dumping. Ultimately, this



Year 1: Foundation and Engagement

- Site Prep: Repair asphalt, paint inviting patterns, and woodchip play areas.
- Community Involvement: Host a design day with "loose parts" play (focus on tires). Collect community sketches and ideas.
- Workshops: Train community members in playground building with BYP.
- Tire Collection with Allegheny CleanWays
- Youth Participation: Plan a "Build Day" with BYP.

Year 2: Feedback and Adjustments

- Feedback Sessions: Gather input from community and organizations to improve the site.
- Site Updates: Add signage, shade, and adjust as needed. Repaint plaza if it's not meeting needs.
- Annual Event: Launch an annual community event.
- Maintenance: Begin regular upkeep.

Year 3: Looking Forward

- New Feature: Build new feature decided on by BYP.
- Annual Event: Continue and Grow ex: farmers market, artist meetup
- Monitoring: Track feedback and assess engagement.
- Maintenance: Continue regular checks.

Year 4: Expansion

- New Equipment: Add playground features based on community input.
- Maintenance: Repair and ensure site durability.
- Paint: Repaint asphalt and or tires with new designs.

Year 5: Sustainability

- Community Partnerships: Hold bi-yearly meetings with local groups (library, daycares, BYP).
- Improvements: Add features like sensory elements or more shaded seating.
- Sustainability Check: Develop a long-term plan for upkeep and updates.

Braddock Youth Project (BYP)

Why Partner: BYP engages local youth with the Braddock community. Their teams specialize in community beautification, creative design, and youth mentoring. BYP participants have a strong connection to the neighborhood, making them ideal partners for creating a playground that reflects the community's needs and identity.

Proposed Collaboration: Host a "Build Day" where BYP youth help construct tire-based playground features and landscaping. Work with the Media team to design and paint a mural on the asphalt and walls, incorporating themes of Braddock's culture and pride. Facilitate community input sessions with BYP youth to gather their ideas on playground features that address local needs. Collaborate with the Gardening team for ongoing maintenance of green spaces and periodic youth-led improvements to the playground.

Allegheny CleanWays

Why Partner: Experienced in organizing community cleanups and removing debris, including over 44,000 tires to date.

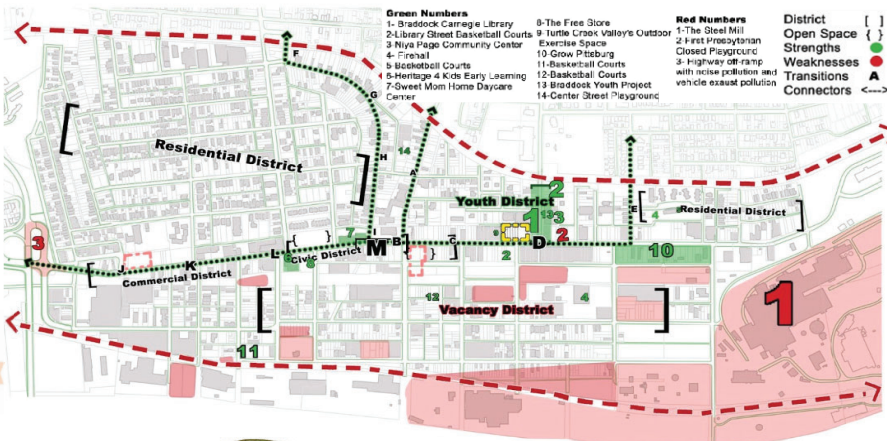
Proposed Collaboration: Coordinate a community cleanup event to collect discarded tires and other reusable materials for the playground. Their expertise in volunteer engagement and cleanup logistics can ensure an efficient and impactful collection effort.

Junk Car Pittsburgh / Pittsburgh Auto Salvage

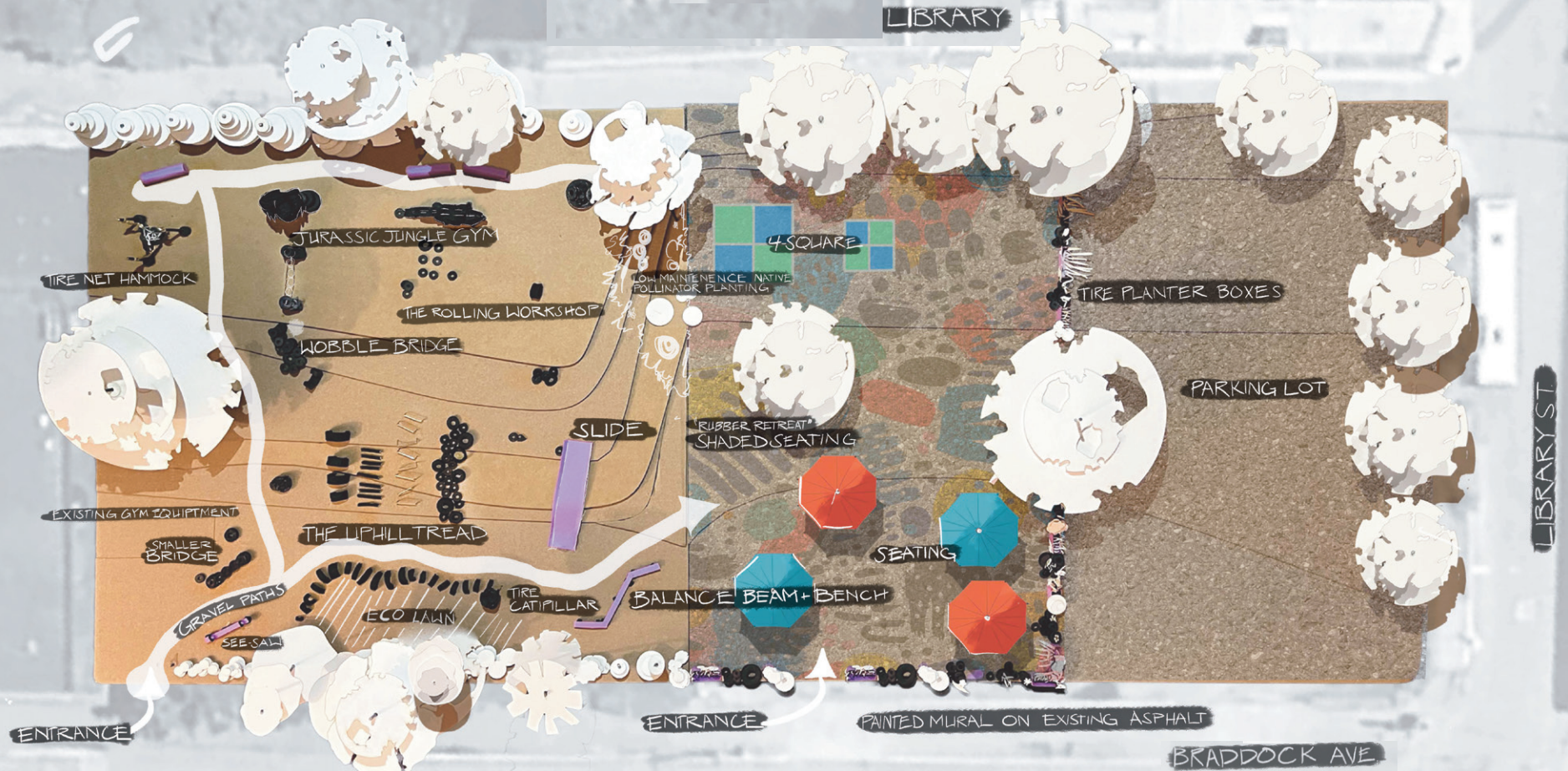
Why Partner: Local business with access to a large supply of unwanted tires and loose parts.

Proposed Collaboration: Request bulk donations or discounted rates on used tires and other salvaged materials. Engage them as a community partner by inviting them to participate in the project.

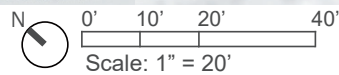
This sites proximity to child-centered activities, and its place along the bus route makes it accessible and relevant to the community. Youth in Braddock spend time in the Library, and having a playspace adjacent to the Carnige Library would give children more space to grow and connect with eachother.



Pittsburgh Auto Salvage, LLC Map of Tire Litter



Site Plan Overview





Steel Rebirth

SteelRoots Farm honors Braddock’s steel industry roots by supporting the local food system and offering a flexible outdoor learning space tailored to community needs.

This adaptable space provides opportunities to teach residents how to grow fresh produce at home or in community gardens. Through engaging lessons and hands-on activities, participants form deeper connections with the space and are inspired to take ownership.

Where plants grow, hope flourishes.

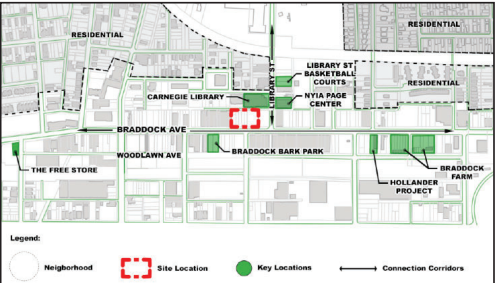
Partnering with Braddock Farm increases fresh produce, provides flexible community space, and strengthens ties.

The design boosts output, supports education with movable planters, and encourages participants to farm and garden at home.

Plants soften the hardscape, creating a welcoming space for all.

“We are a transitional community, and transition is upward.”
- Mandy, Carnegie Library

Site Context



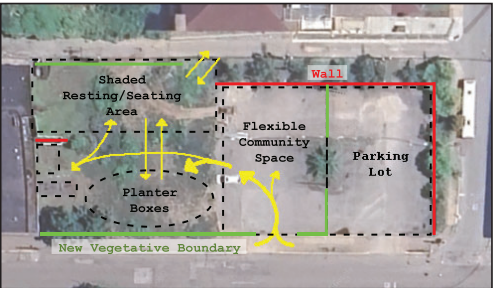
This central location increases access to fresh produce in Braddock.

The site is located on the east end of Braddock, within walking distance of key community locations like Carnegie Library, Nyia Page Center, Braddock Youth Project, The Free Store, The Hollander Project, and Braddock Farm.

Many of these organizations host events and programs for the community, and nearby residential areas make the site ideal for community activities.

Strategically placed between Braddock Farm and Greater Valley Community Garden, the site offers an excellent opportunity for a new community farm.

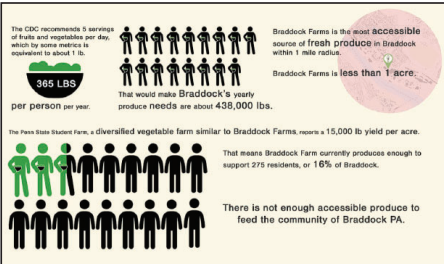
Site Organization



Spatially, the design has two entrances/exits that weave users through every single area and creates a back-and-forth relationship between active and less active activities like tending to the plants and resting under the shade.

The flexible community space provides a degree of enclosure that, unlike the Civic Plaza, makes the space feel safer and more intimate while allowing passerby’s to visually engage and develop interest in the activities going on.

Design Analysis: Food



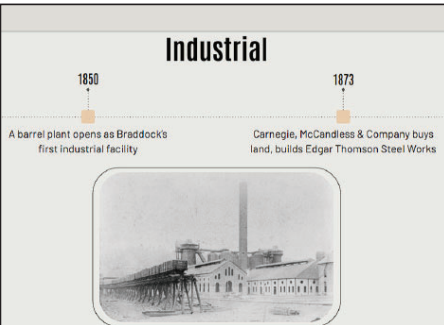
Braddock Farm and Greater Valley Community Services’ garden provide some relief but cannot meet demand consistently.

This design aimss to enhance availability, access, and stability.

It adds space for growing fresh produce while establishing a central community garden bridging Braddock Farm and Greater Valley.

Additionally, creating a spacious, customizable space for Braddock Farm to hold their educational programs and events.

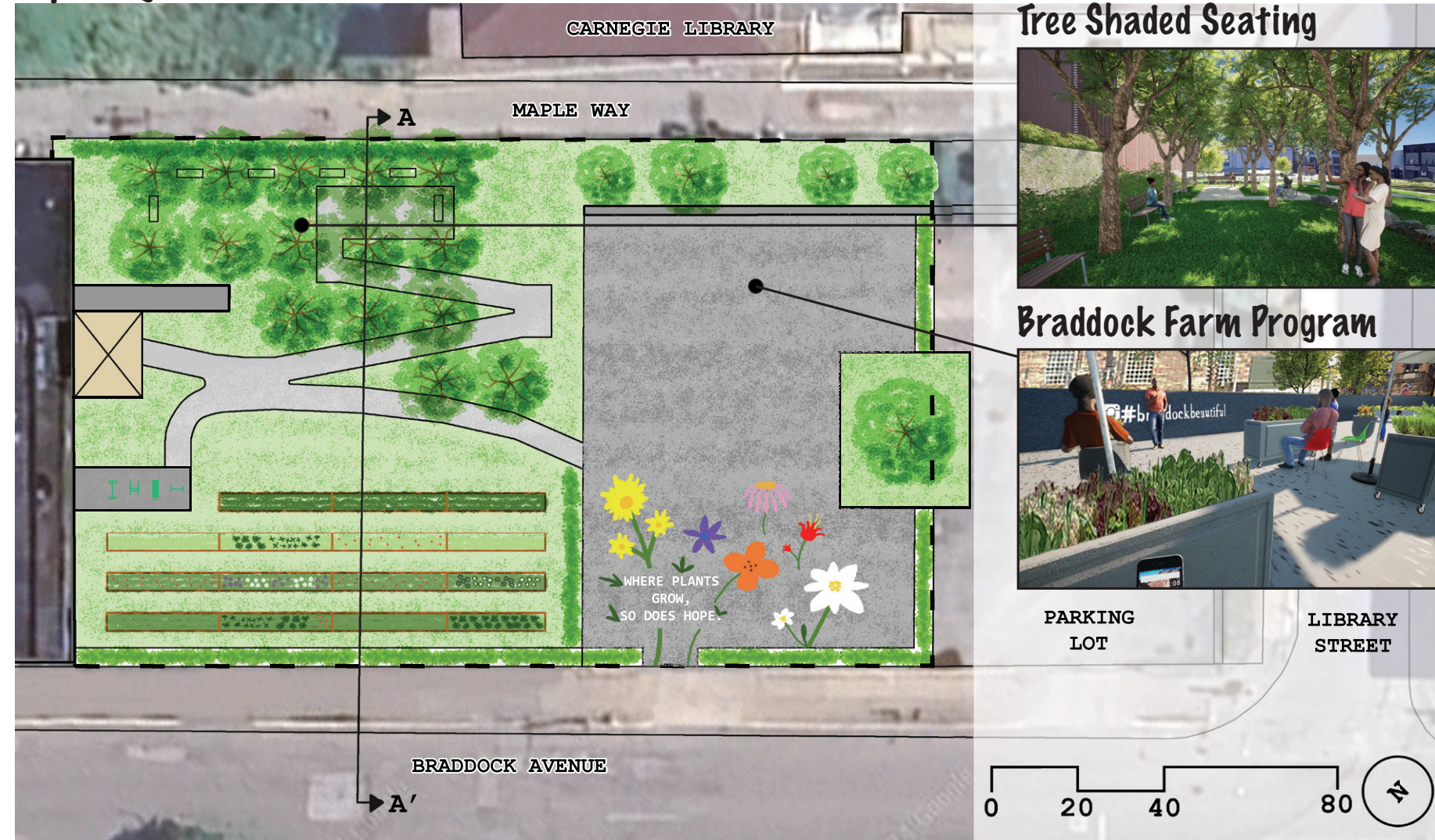
Design Analysis: History



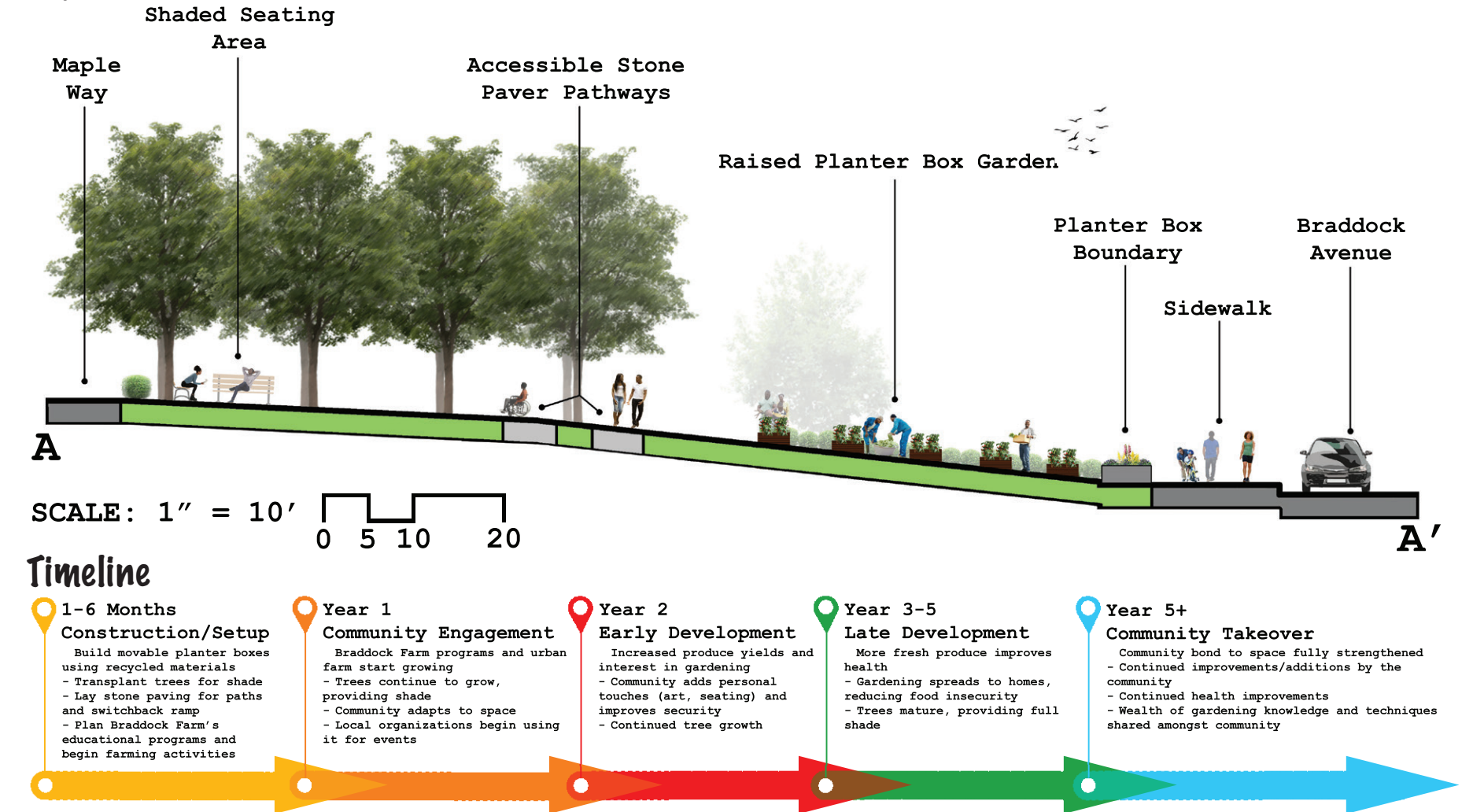
History shapes identity, revealing our foundations and guiding the future by acknowledging past struggles and achievements. Braddock’s legacy as an industrial steel powerhouse, despite its challenges, reflects resilience and perseverance—qualities that still define the community.

Inspired by this spirit, SteelRoots Farm, honors Braddock’s steel roots and its ongoing rebirth. Custom planter boxes can be made to honor the town’s past, while thriving plants symbolize perseverance and growth for a brighter future.

Exploring the Site



Exploring the Site



45 Sprout and Play: Art, play and nature for little learners



SCALE: 1"=20'-0"

"We are always in ongoing efforts to improve and build new things" - Carnegie Library Staff Member

"Soft job skills helping them get ready for their future and showing them what they are interested in and push them for what the choose" - Rasaun Brown (BYP)

"We try to get the after school program children to go to parks and playing with other children there to help develop their social skills" - Vicki Vargo

Vision Statement:

Sprout and Play creates an immersive, interactive space where young learners engage with nature, art, and imaginative play. Through nature-inspired play features, whimsical sculptures, and dynamic murals, the space fosters early learning, creativity, and environmental education while encouraging physical activity and social development. This project responds to the needs of Braddock, PA, by offering an accessible, inclusive environment that nurtures curiosity and environmental appreciation from a young age.

Exploring Wonder: A Full View of Nature’s Playground



The design effectively blends nature, art, and interactive play to create a dynamic, engaging environment for young children. Featuring a nature-inspired mural, stickwork sculptures, and playful elements like a watering can stickwork as well as a lady bug-inspired stickwork and carrot tube that leads you to both parts of the space, the space provides creativity, physical activity, and connection to the environment. Including colorful stepping pads that match the interactive mural ensures visual harmony while giving an engaging tactile experience that encourages exploration. Additionally, including raised flower boxes along the road enhances safety by creating a natural barrier, offering both separation from traffic and a more defined boundary for the play area. Including raised flower boxes throughout the play site also allows the kids to interact safely with the garden theme, promoting environmental education, while the thoughtful design elements—such as an accessible ramp and hillside seating—ensure inclusivity for children of all abilities. With valuable input from local organizations like the Braddock Youth Project and Braddock Carnegie Library, the design meets the community’s needs by offering a safe, educational, and playful space for young learners.

Whimsical Roots: Where Play Blooms



Outdoor Amphitheater
Inspired by: Swathmore College, PA.



Stickwork Sculpture
Inspired by: Patrick Dougherty

Roots of Imagination: A Growing Space for Creativity



Feedback provided by a Braddock Carnegie Library employee during the first visit made the strongest connection to their community. She put us in the shoes of the children and thought about the different types of experiences they have. From this, the importance of providing children in Braddock opportunities for environmental engagement and a positive place became clear, leading to the choice of a gardening theme that would be able to both educate and entertain. Engaging children with nature at a young age can give them an appreciation and a positive outlook for their environment, while providing them with an enjoyable and memorable experience of being outdoors.

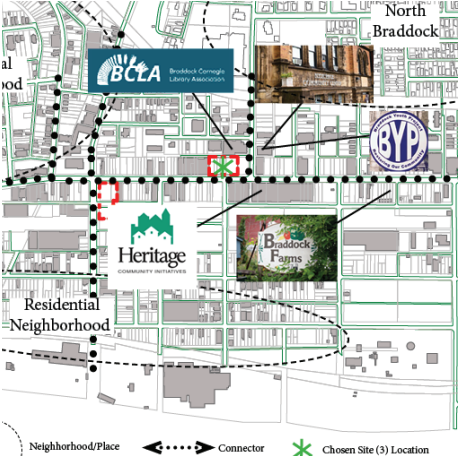
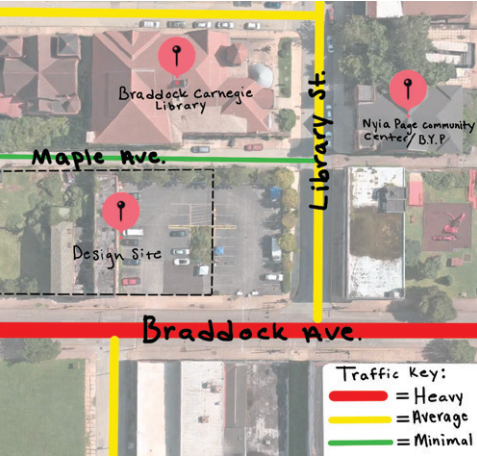
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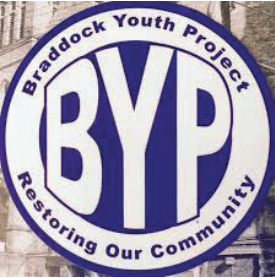
The Gathering Patch: A Seat in the Garden

Site Analysis



The surrounding locations—the Nyia Page Community Center, Heritage Community Center, Braddock Farms, and the Braddock Carnegie Library—create a network of resources that strengthen the community and contribute to the site’s overall vision. The proximity of these sites to the chosen location of Site 3 adds to the importance of this space, providing a focal point for connection and engagement across Braddock. The intersection of Braddock Ave and Library St is the closest way in the existing landscape to get to the Library. Incorporating a cut-through in the design site that connects from Braddock Ave to Maple Ave allows a quicker and safer way to get to the Library instead of the busy intersection.

Potential Partners



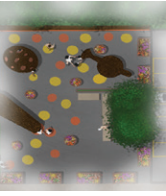
The Braddock Youth Project (BYP) empowers youth by providing leadership, creativity, and community engagement opportunities. Their programs, such as after-school activities, mentoring, and environmental education, align perfectly with the interactive, nature-inspired elements of the site design, like the garden-themed mural and stickwork sculptures. These features offer children hands-on experiences that promote creativity, social interaction, physical activity, and the development of fine motor skills, all while fostering a deeper connection to nature. The Braddock Carnegie Library, a central community hub, supports education, cultural experiences, and inclusivity for all ages. Their programs, such as early literacy initiatives, adult education workshops, and community events, make the library an ideal partner in utilizing the space for workshops and outdoor learning experiences. Collaboration between BYP and the library will greatly enhance the proposed site to ensure it is actively used for educational and community-building programs while also helping to maintain the space.

Site Timeline

Phase 1:



Phase 2:



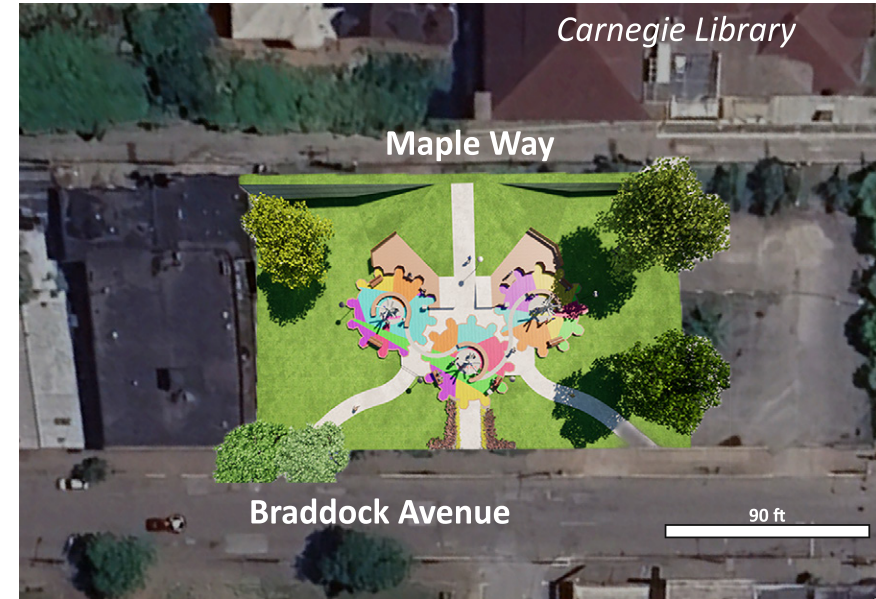
- | Phase 1: | | Phase 2: | |
|--|---|--|--|
| Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Engage the community (kids, parents, local groups) for feedback.- Start fundraising and gather support from BYP and the Library | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Clear and prepare the site (remove debris).- Start and finish the amphitheater seating on the hill.- Install walkway/ramp.- Reseeding where grass was removed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Install the interactive gardening mural.- Begin building the stickwork sculptures.- Finish and place stickwork and ensure safety.- Add colored stepping pads. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Conduct final safety checks.- Host a community opening event.- Set up an ongoing maintenance plan involving BYP and the Library. |

46 The Braddock Machine

The Braddock Machine is intended to provide an open space of inspiration, gathering, and interaction for the youth and young adults of Braddock, PA. Focusing primarily on older teenagers, the space provides an opportunity to express feelings, hopes, and future aspirations; all in a vibrant setting at a central location. The Machine projects colorful positivity and initiates optimistic visions of the future for the youth of Braddock.



View showing portion of site; facing towards intersection of Braddock Avenue and Library Street.

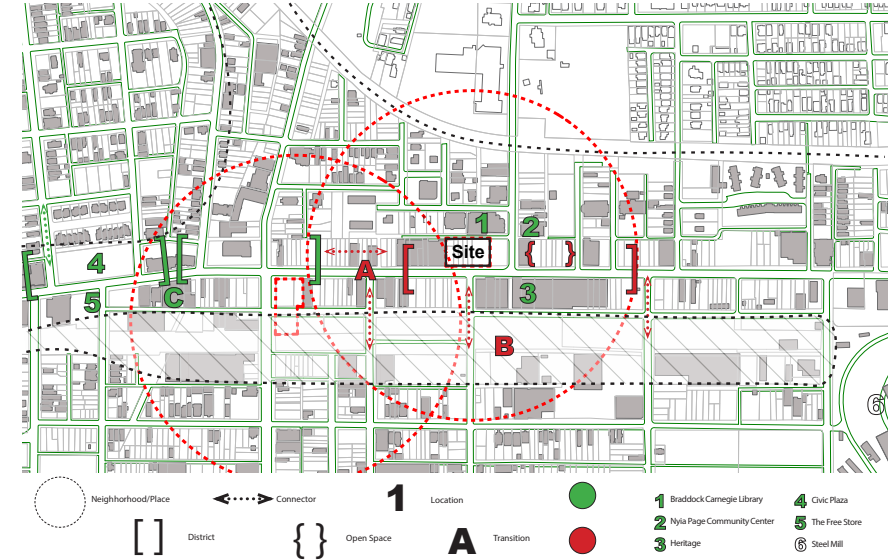
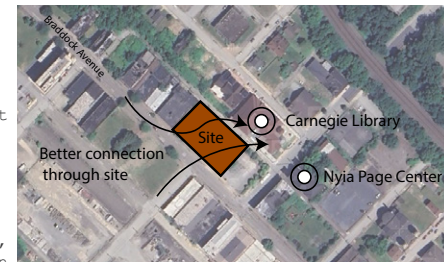


Through conversing with community leaders and organizers, the youth themselves, and actually going to Braddock, it has become clear that despite its visual appearance, Braddock is a place of important historical significance, vivid optimism, and possesses a creative youth that will shape its future.

Braddock is an important city for the industrial history of Pennsylvania and of the entire country. The impacts of its golden age are still clearly evident; present in its architecture, physicality, and the many diverse groups of people that have inhabited it since its inception.

Along with its historical roots, Braddock has a vibrant and creative youth population. Talking with the youth, many envision more spaces of vibrancy and of gathering in Braddock to further express this creativity and to promote general optimism amongst the community.

As such a culturally and historically significant place, and having the vibrant youth that it does, Braddock can pave an optimistic path forward, remembering its important history while encouraging its future.

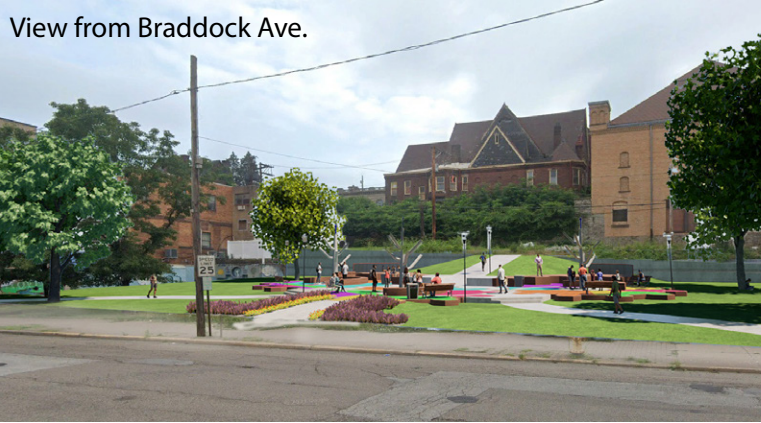


For the location, Site 3 adjacent to the library was selected because it's at a key, central point in downtown, at a point of intersection for many community members and especially youth. This makes the site, especially being right next to the Braddock Carnegie Library and the Nyia Page Community Center, a desired and open spot for community engagement and interaction. Creating a vibrant, positive space at such a central location would go a long way in promoting optimism amongst local youth.



"Braddock is not a hopeless place"

The quote that stuck out the most in the interviews was in our talk with the Carnegie librarians. "Braddock is not a hopeless place" is something that was a general idea that many community members shared. Physically realizing that in a central, vibrant space, would go a long way in encouraging more of that optimism.



“The Braddock Machine” is designed to foster vibrant community involvement and gathering, especially among youth. The Machine is comprised of three gears - commemorating Braddock’s roots as an industrial city - that each work in tandem to make Braddock and its youth great. The gears equally support each other; the “machine” would not work without them. Each gear represents a facet of Braddock youth that are encouraging signs of a positive future: Vibrant, Hopeful, and Creative.

At the center of each gear is an interactive “tree” that represents growth and opportunity for Braddock youth. These trees, along with most of the installation would be directly interactive. Murals applicable to each “gear” would be created by the youth and go on the trees along with on the wooden decks of the gears themselves. At the base of each tree and winding through the space, there are surfaces for chalk art, encouraging continuous interaction with the space. Additionally, users would be able to hang items from the branches of the trees.

To encourage intimate community interaction there is seating winding through the space, allowing for personal conversations. For larger gatherings, there is a stage that would be constructed on the slope on the northern edge of the site.

To encourage local youth involvement, youth (likely members of the BYP) would be involved in the construction and design/decoration of the space. Murals and artwork would be left entirely up to the youth, to fully let them visualize and express their hopes and aspirations.

The majority of the space, aside from the entrance paths, would be constructed out of wood, minimizing cost and maximizing efficiency. The installation is also minimally alternative of the existing site, preserving existing equipment and trees, minimizing necessary up-keep.

The Braddock Machine creates a visual reminder of what Braddock is at its core. It is a vibrant circuit through which youth can express their feelings and aspirations for themselves and for Braddock.



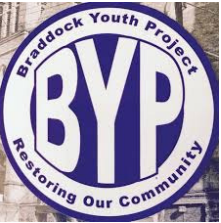
Section-Elevation



View of interactive tree, seating



1" = 10'



The likely community partner for this project would be the Braddock Youth Project (BYP). As an existing organization promoting creativity and positive-thinking amongst Braddock youth, it would be the perfect partner to help install and design such a space.

Existing Conditions

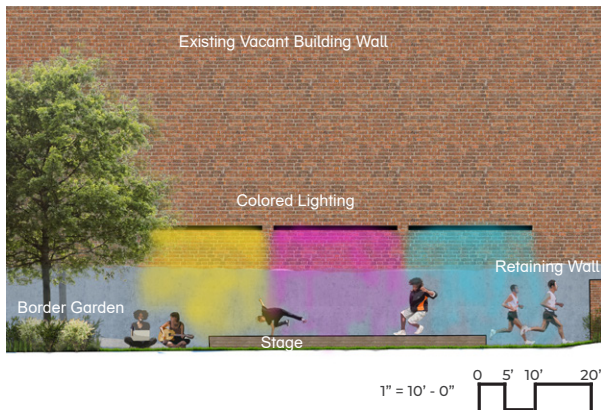


Plan View



Section B-B'

Main Event Lawn



The heart and soul of Braddock is its sense of community - the people who form it are resilient, driven individuals. They work relentlessly to end the cycles of generational trauma and isolation, but the community needs a place that weaves together opportunities for physical and mental wellbeing. This project envisions a social hub - a place where individuals and groups can find a sorely needed respite from the numerous challenges they face. Whether hosting one of Braddock's vibrant community events or a casual hang with friends, this space offers an uplifting, vibrant forum rooted in its community's spirit.

Situated on a hillside overlooking Braddock Avenue along Library St, the site holds immense potential due to its proximity to numerous nonprofits that will benefit from a multifunctional group space. These community assets will benefit from a space to host events in that represents their local community. By using it, they will help cultivate and maintain that identity, and in turn the space will be enhanced by their involvement. It represents an asset for Braddock, which will be transformed simultaneously with the space.



Rising from a grove of foliage at the site's summit, Inspiration Point welcomes visitors from multiple directions with the promise of expansive views of the area.

They become immersed in the site during their journey up here, becoming part of this place and the community it represents. From up here, groups can take in panoramic views of the entire site, and benches welcome them to stay and do just that, with string lights giving them warm security into the evenings. Here you are within the action that defines the site while also absorbing it from above.

Inspiration Point is overflowing with purpose. It can be a site for photos with friends, it can be an after school hangout, it can be a place to take in kids playing on the lawn below, it can be a seating area during a community event. The possibilities are as limitless as the ideas that could have their origin here, the zenith of Braddock's unlimited potential.

5 Year Timeline

The site's signature overlook structure will be unveiled for the second year along with expanded landscaping and lighting across the lower portion of the site. The entrance sign will also be built after a name is chosen by the community.

Year 1

In order to establish the park and its identity, the parking lot included in the site will be transformed into a vibrant, colorful gathering space, perfect for events while the rest of the site is being prepared.

Year 2 ♀

Year 3

With the core catalyst ideas positioned for success, the community will be asked for feedback on what works and what doesn't and local organizations will collaborate on turning that feedback and vision into reality.

Year 4

A key aspect of the catalyst plan is that the space evolves with its community, who both maintain the space and enhance it with improvements. All of Braddock benefits from that ability to shape the space to its needs.

Year 5

Art, festivities, and more should change with the community, and the aim is for this to be a living escape. In year five & beyond, maintenance, engagement, and more allow the space to remain purposeful and pleasant for future generations.

Braddock Youth Project

Braddock Youth Project has a strong group of youth invested into "meaningful and sustainable community projects," making them well suited to this project. Their experience with grassroots art projects and passion for the local community will allow them to make the catalyst idea's goal of creating a colorful & enjoyable space a reality. They have construction skills as well and are resourceful, so implementing creative site furniture and building the central structure are both projects they can help with. They will also benefit



tremendously for the space, as they have a need for places to host outdoor events of varying sizes, and even the presence of youth just enjoying the space at various hours of the day will activate the park and give it the eyes on the street factor that any successful outdoor space requires.

